Understanding China’s Rise

Competing Online Identity Discourses behind Short-term Changes in Foreign Policy

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Academic dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations at Stockholm University to be publicly defended on Friday 4 February 2022 at 13.00 in Nordenskiöldsalen, Geovetenskapens hus, Svante Arrhenius väg 12.

Abstract
China has undergone a remarkable rise in the past four decades, its economy and material power growing substantially. These developments have led to several interlinked debates about how we should understand this rise. What determines China’s foreign policy as it rises? Will this rise be peaceful, seeing China integrate into the current international order, or will it result in large-scale conflict? Existing research engaging in these debates has tended to focus on the longer-term evolution of China’s foreign policy and paid less attention to short-term changes, even though these appear to contribute to its evolving foreign policy. When research does attempt to explain short-term changes, use of realist, liberal, and mainstream constructivist international relations (IR) theories have only been partly effective in doing so.

This thesis contributes to these debates by employing critical constructivist IR theory to study the short-term foreign policy changes China has shown towards different issues. It seeks to make sense of these changes through an examination of changes in the identity discourses which underpin foreign policy, focusing on those discourses produced online. It examines two case studies in which there have been puzzling short-term changes: China and North Korea and China and the South China Sea, studying foreign policy regarding these issues between 2014 and 2018. In each case study, a mixed-methods approach is used and the analysis employs qualitative discourse analysis and quantitative text analysis to examine changes in identity discourses produced by both the Chinese state and the public. It uses a large corpus of articles from the online edition of the Chinese state newspaper People’s Daily and around half a million posts from the social media platform Weibo. By analysing discourses produced by the Chinese state and public, the research examines the role of both “bottom up” and “top down” forces in shaping foreign policy.

In both case studies, the analysis found that changes in dominant identity discourses corresponded with short-term changes in foreign policy, where these shifts in dominance were partly the result of the “bottom-up” production of identity by the Chinese public. For the China and North Korea case, the dominance of a “Stakeholder” identity discourse was seen when the Chinese government showed greater willingness to cooperate with the international community in taking action against North Korea. In the South China Sea case study, a very resonant “Peaceful Asian Leader” identity discourse appeared when the Chinese government shifted to a foreign policy of greater cooperation with Southeast Asian states. I argue these dominant identity discourses, partly produced by the Chinese public, made possible the observed short-term changes in foreign policy.

These findings speak to the debates about China’s rise. They indicate that China’s foreign policy towards different issues is made possible by the construction of its identity in discourse. They provide evidence to suggest that the Chinese public, by contributing to this identity construction, can have a “bottom up” influence on its foreign policy. The findings suggest there is considerable contingency in whether China’s rise will ultimately be peaceful. China’s adoption of conflictual or cooperative policies regarding different issues, including relations with the US, depends on the ongoing construction of identity in discourse by Chinese society.

Keywords: China, foreign policy, North Korea, Southeast Asia, the South China Sea, rising powers, international relations, security, the Internet, critical constructivism, identity, mixed methods, discourse, Lacan.

Stockholm 2022
http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:diva-199406
UNDERSTANDING CHINA’S RISE
Nicholas Olczak
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ........................................................................ iv  
List of Tables and Figures ............................................................. 1  

## 1 Introduction .............................................................................. 1  
### 1.1 Introduction ........................................................................... 1  
### 1.2 Research problem: Three debates about understanding China’s rise .... 1  
#### 1.2.1 Will China’s rise be peaceful? ........................................... 2  
#### 1.2.2 How is China and its foreign policy changing? .................... 3  
#### 1.2.3 What determines China’s foreign policy as it rises? ............. 4  
### 1.3 A critical constructivist approach to studying short-term changes ...... 6  
#### 1.3.1 The need to understand short-term foreign policy changes ....... 7  
#### 1.3.2 The need for a critical constructivist approach ................... 11  
#### 1.3.3 The need for a Lacanian account of short-term foreign policy changes .... 12  
### 1.4 Research questions ............................................................... 14  
### 1.5 Research Design ................................................................. 14  
#### 1.5.1 Theoretical framework .................................................... 14  
#### 1.5.2 Case selection ............................................................. 17  
#### 1.5.3 Material and methods of analysis ..................................... 18  
### 1.6 Contributions ....................................................................... 19  
### 1.7 A roadmap of the thesis ......................................................... 22  

## 2 Literature Review ..................................................................... 25  
### 2.1 Introduction .......................................................................... 25  
### 2.2 The focus on the long-term trajectory of China’s rise ................. 26  
### 2.3 Approaches to explaining China’s short-term foreign policy change .. 28  
#### 2.3.1 Realist approaches ......................................................... 29  
#### 2.3.2 Liberal approaches ....................................................... 32  
#### 2.3.3 Constructivist approaches .............................................. 34  
#### 2.3.4 Domestic approaches .................................................... 36  
### 2.4 Conclusion: Towards a critical constructivist approach ............... 40  

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*Note: The page numbers are not fully visible in the provided image.*
# Theory

3.1 **Introduction** ......................................................... 43

3.2 **A critical constructivist approach** ........................................ 43
    3.2.1 The poststructuralist theory of identity .................................... 44
    3.2.2 Critical constructivism: identity discourses and foreign policy .......... 46
    3.2.3 Foreign policy change and identity change .............................. 50

3.3 **Lacanian theory to explain the dominance of identity discourses** ............ 52
    3.3.1 Lacanian Theory to explain resonance ........................................ 53
    3.3.2 Applying Lacanian theory in a Chinese context ............................. 60

3.4 **Identity discourses on the Internet** ..................................... 63

3.5 **Conclusion** .................................................................. 66

# Methods

4.1 **Introduction** .................................................................. 69

4.2 **Research design** .......................................................... 70
    4.2.1 Ontology and epistemology ..................................................... 70
    4.2.2 Case selection ..................................................................... 72

4.3 **Data and data collection procedures** ..................................... 77
    4.3.1 Choice of data ...................................................................... 77
    4.3.2 Data collection ..................................................................... 82

4.4 **Data Analysis** .............................................................. 84
    4.4.1 Three main steps of analysis .................................................. 87

4.5 **Conclusion** .................................................................... 102

# Case Study 1: China and North Korea, 2014-2018

5.1 **Introduction** .............................................................. 103

5.2 **Background** .................................................................. 104
    5.2.1 Short-term changes in China’s foreign policy towards North Korea ....... 104
    5.2.2 Existing literature about China’s North Korea Policy .................... 105

5.3 **Method** .................................................................... 110
    5.3.1 Research questions ............................................................... 110
    5.3.2 Method of analysis .............................................................. 110

5.4 **Analysis** .................................................................... 113
    5.4.1 STEP 1: Discourse analysis to recover the main identity discourses ... 113
    5.4.2 STEP 2: Quantitative analysis ............................................... 166
    5.4.3 STEP 3: Lacanian analysis to explain dominance ....................... 205

5.5 **Case Study Conclusions** ..................................................... 235
Case Study 2: China and the South China Sea, 2014-2018

Introduction

Background

Short-term change in China’s foreign policy in the South China Sea
Existing literature about China’s policies towards the South China Sea

Method

Research questions
Method of analysis

Analysis

STEP 1: Discourse analysis to recover the main identity discourses
STEP 2: Quantitative analysis
STEP 3: Lacanian analysis to explain dominance

Case Study Conclusions

Conclusions

Introduction

China and North Korea
China and the South China Sea

Discussion: Engaging with the debates about China’s rise

Is China becoming more assertive and is it adopting international norms?
The debate about China’s peaceful rise

Reflections on Approach and Method

The study of China’s changing foreign policy as it rises
A discourse approach to studying foreign policy
Limitations of this study and suggestions for future research

Conclusion

Bibliography

Appendix

Sammanfattning på svenska
Acknowledgements

There is a long list of people I would like to thank for their help and support with completing this doctoral dissertation.

First, my thanks go to my two supervisors. Karl Gustafsson, for giving me the opportunity to come to Stockholm to do a PhD and for being an excellent supervisor throughout, pushing me to be ambitious and pursue my own ideas and always diligently reading and offering comments on my writing. Linus Hagström, for always taking the time to meet with me and talk through parts of the project and for encouraging me to develop different ideas. I have really enjoyed our many, stimulating discussions and have also learnt a lot about doing IR research from both of you.

I am fortunate to have been able to complete my PhD in the warm and supportive environment of the Department of Economic History and International Relations at Stockholm University and thank everybody from the Department who has helped me in different ways during the past four years. Particular thanks to Mark Rhinard, for ensuring my project was launched on the right track and giving guidance throughout, to Gonzalo Pozo Martin, for providing precise and helpful comments on my first year project plan. Thank you, also, to everybody else who commented on my work, especially Lisa Dellmuth, Karina Shyrokykh, and Stefan Borg. I am grateful to Gustav Ingman, for help using R, and to the other PhD students who accompanied me along the way: Akinbode Fasakin, Anna Hammarstedt, Sarah Backman, and Ece Kural. Particular thanks to Nina Krinkel-Choi, who despite being busy with her own PhD project also always found time to give constructive comments and engage in discussions along the way. I also wish to thank Thomas Jonter and Emma Rosengren, for being welcoming and getting me involved in the activities in the Department, as well as thanking the Department’s administration for their excellent all-round support.

Outside of the Department, thank you to Johan Lagerkvist, who provided many excellent comments and suggestions during my half-time seminar, and to Elina Sinkkonen, who did the same during the final seminar, offering exactly the kind of rigorous but constructive criticism needed. I am grateful to King-wa Fu, at Hong Kong University, who was generous enough to provide the Weibo data used in this project, without which my analysis would not have been possible. Thank you, also, to Kenneth Benoit, creator of the Quanteda text analysis package, for responding to all of the questions I sent him as I worked out how to best use this tool. I am grateful to Florian Schneider, for
first encouraging my interest in Chinese politics and IR when I was studying at Leiden University. This PhD project was made possible through the financial support of the Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg Foundation (MMW 2016.0036).

Whilst completing this PhD, I consider myself very lucky to have been based at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI) and to have been a part of the Institute’s Asia Programme. Thank you to Björn Jerdén, for taking an interest in my research and providing many useful comments. My thanks, also, to Henrik Aspengren, who has shown enthusiasm and interest in my research and always been extremely encouraging. In addition, my thanks also go to the other members of the Asia Programme, both past and present, who have provided many helpful comments on my work, including Nicola Ny-malm, Stephanie Winkler, Magnus Lundström, Axel Nordenstam, Erik Isaks-son, and Tim Rühlig. I am also grateful to Lars Erslev Andersen who has offered much support along the way.

Outside of the Asia Programme, I would particularly like to thank other researchers from UI, especially Jan Hallenberg, who has provided wonderful mentorship throughout the four years of my PhD, and Gunilla Reischl and Niklas Bremberg, for engaging with me and offering me supportive suggestions about my research. More broadly, I would also like to thank everybody at UI for being very friendly and welcoming, particularly Lena Karlsson, but also Astrid Benkö, Ylva Pettersson, and Anna-Karin Jonsson.

My biggest thanks of all goes to my parents, who have provided me with a massive amount of help and support while I have been working on this PhD project over the past four years. Thank you for always reminding me why what I was working on was worthwhile, for being willing to talk about my research with me and read through different drafts, and for more generally giving me support and encouragement in a way that has helped to make this PhD possible.
List of Tables and Figures

Chapter 3 - Theory
Figure 3.1: Model of four discourses ................................................................. 59

Chapter 4 - Methods
Table 4.1: Summary of data used in the two studies........................................... 84
Table 4.2: An overview of the three main steps of the analysis.............................. 87
Figure 4.1: The chains of linking and differentiation in the "Revolutionary discourse" .... 91
Table 4.3: Example of the framework of main identity discourses in the first case study...... 92
Figure 4.2: Example of co-occurrence analysis..................................................... 94

Chapter 5 - Case Study 1: China and North Korea

Step 1:
Table 5.1: Statements of difference between China and the US in People's Daily......... 121
Table 5.2: Statements of similarity between China and North Korea in People's Daily...... 129
Table 5.3: Statements of difference between China and the US on Weibo. .................... 137
Table 5.4: Statements of difference between China and North Korea in People's Daily..... 146
Table 5.5: Statements of difference between China and North Korea in Weibo posts........ 156
Table 5.6: Framework of the main identity discourses found.................................... 161

Step 2a:
Figure 5.1: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "strong" ....................... 168
Figure 5.2: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "communist" ................. 169
Figure 5.3: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "opening" ..................... 170
Figure 5.4: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "intl. society" ............... 171
Figure 5.5: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "Security Council" .......... 172
Figure 5.6: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "influence" ................. 173
Figure 5.7: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "responsible" ............... 174
Figure 5.8: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and "imperialist state" ........ 175
Figure 5.9: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and "hegemony" ............... 176
Figure 5.10: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and "capital" .................. 177
Figure 5.11: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and "balancing" .............. 178
Figure 5.12: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and "interfere" ............... 179
Figure 5.13: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and "cooperate" .............. 180
Figure 5.14: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and "co-ordinate" ............ 181
Figure 5.15: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and "common" ............... 182
Figure 5.16: Frequency of co-occurrence between International Society and "cooperate" .. 183
Figure 5.17: Frequency of co-occurrence between International Society and "common" .. 184
Figure 5.18: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "wartime friend" .... 185
Figure 5.19: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "brother" ............ 186
Figure 5.20: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "socialism" ....... 187
Figure 5.21: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "revolution" ....... 188
Figure 5.22: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "evil" ............. 189
Figure 5.23: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "ruthless" (cruel) ........190
Figure 5.24: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "hereditary".............191
Figure 5.25: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "dangerous"..............192
Figure 5.26: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "threatening"...........193
Figure 5.27: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "acquire nuclear"........194
Figure 5.28: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "violate"...............195
Figure 5.29: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "provoke"..............196
Figure 5.30: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "harm"..................197

Step 2b:
Figure 5.31: The changing dominance of the “Revolutionary” and “Stakeholder” discourses in the Weibo posts.................................................................201
Figure 5.32: The changing dominance of the “Revolutionary” and “Stakeholder” discourses in the People’s Daily articles...............................................................202

Chapter 6 - Case Study 2: China and the South China Sea

Step 1:
Table 6.1: Statements of difference between China and Southeast Asian nations in People's Daily articles.................................................................260
Table 6.2: Statements of difference between China and Southeast Asian nations in Weibo posts.................................................................270
Table 6.3: Statements of similarity between China and Southeast Asian nations in People’s Daily articles.................................................................286
Table 6.4: Statements of similarity between China and Southeast Asian nations in Weibo posts.................................................................300
Table 6.5: Framework of the main identity discourses found ........................................305

Step 2a:
Figure 6.1: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "rise"...............................312
Figure 6.2: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "big country"......................313
Figure 6.3: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "BRI"..............................314
Figure 6.4: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "trade"..............................315
Figure 6.5: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "partner".........................316
Figure 6.6: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "illegal"...............317
Figure 6.7: Frequency of co-occurrence between Vietnam and "illegal".........................318
Figure 6.8: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "violate".............319
Figure 6.9: Frequency of co-occurrence between Vietnam and "violate"......................320
Figure 6.10: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "invade"............321
Figure 6.11: Frequency of co-occurrence between Vietnam and "invade" (occupy)........322
Figure 6.12: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "provoke"...........323
Figure 6.13: Frequency of co-occurrence between Vietnam and "provoke".................324
Figure 6.14: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "patrol"............325
Figure 6.15: Frequency of co-occurrence between Vietnam and "patrol"......................326
Figure 6.16: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "the US"............327
Figure 6.17: Frequency of co-occurrence between Vietnam and "the US".....................328
Figure 6.18: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "cooperate" ..........329
Figure 6.19: Frequency of co-occurrence between Vietnam and "cooperate" ...............330
Figure 6.20: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "trade" .............331
Figure 6.21: Frequency of co-occurrence between Vietnam and "trade" ..................332
Figure 6.22: Frequency of co-occurrence between ASEAN and "the US" .....................333
Figure 6.23: Frequency of co-occurrence between ASEAN and "BRI" .........................334
Figure 6.24: Frequency of co-occurrence between ASEAN and "collective" .................335
Figure 6.25: Frequency of co-occurrence between ASEAN and "effort" ......................336

Step 2b:
Figure 6.26: The changing dominance of the “Great Power” and “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourses in the Weibo posts ..................................................................................340
Figure 6.27: The changing dominance of the “Great Power” and “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourses in the People's Daily articles .............................................................................341

Chapter 7 - Conclusions
Table 7.1: An overview of how the findings from the two case studies relate to the three main debates about understanding China's rise .............................................................................387
1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

On 1 October 2021, the Chinese national day, China’s air force made a record 38 flights over Taiwan’s air defence zone. What should we take these flights to mean: were they more evidence of China’s steadily increasing assertiveness which will inevitably bring it into conflict with the United States (US) and its allies, or were they one aggressive action from a China that in other areas is increasingly integrating into the existing international order? What drove the decision to take this action: was it the natural outcome of China’s increasing material power in the international system, occurring alongside the US’s steady decline, or was it the result of a Chinese Communist Party (CCP) that feels compelled to put on a show of the nation’s strength in a bid to secure legitimacy amongst an increasingly restless and nationalistic Chinese public?

This thesis engages with questions such as these through close analysis of different short-term changes in China’s foreign policy. It contributes to debates about how to understand China’s rise by asking how we can make sense of these short-term changes that China displays in relation to specific issues. These debates about China’s rise revolve around questions of how its foreign policy is changing as it develops and gains material power. Analysing short-term changes, which by accumulating and setting the context for subsequent changes play an important part in longer-term foreign policy change, this research helps to provide new answers to these questions.

This introductory chapter begins by describing the debates about how to understand China’s rise. It then discusses how my research contributes to these debates by analysing identity discourses to make sense of China’s short-term foreign policy changes. The chapter outlines the theoretical approach and research design used to study these changes in foreign policy. It concludes by summarising the main contributions made by this thesis.

1.2 Research problem: Three debates about understanding China’s rise

Since embarking on “reform and opening” in 1978, China has undergone staggering economic growth and with this its material power relative to the US and involvement in the world have also increased. These developments have led to debates amongst international relations (IR) scholars about how we
should understand China’s rise and what it means for the world. There are essentially three main, interlinked debates. The first is about whether or not China’s rise will ultimately be peaceful: will its growing power inevitably lead to large-scale conflict? Or can China be peacefully integrated into the existing international order and even become a leader of this order? A second closely connected debate concerns how China’s foreign policy is changing so far: is it becoming more “assertive” as its capabilities grow? As it interacts with other states, is it showing signs of aligning with international norms? Finally, a third debate that underpins these is about what we should understand as determining China’s foreign policy: is this driven by its increase in relative power in the international system, or do China’s identity or domestic factors shape the foreign policies which it adopts? A key part of this third debate is also an ongoing discussion about whether or not the Chinese public can have a “bottom up” influence on foreign policy. I shall now proceed to discuss these debates in more detail.

1.2.1 Will China’s rise be peaceful?

The first main debate about how to understand China’s rise is fundamentally about whether or not this rise will be peaceful, with research dividing into “pessimist” and “optimist” camps (Friedberg, 2012). There are those who argue that China’s increased material power will lead to large-scale conflict as it resorts to force to overwhelm other states and redefine the international order (Jung & Lee, 2017; Mearsheimer, 2001). Others argue China can be peacefully integrated into the existing order and that this will then work to constrain its behaviour (Ikenberry, 2008).

This debate is particularly focused on China’s relations with the US and the existing international order and its institutions, especially the United Nations and Bretton Woods Institutions. Those in the pessimist camp argue that China and the US are bound for conflict and that China will seek to reshape institutions to suit its interests, while the optimists instead argue that China will increasingly cooperate with the US and participate in the existing institutions. A related discussion for the second position concerns whether China will not only integrate into the existing international order, but also contribute to leading it (Breslin, 2013). There are some that see it as likely China will take a greater global leadership role (Kirton & Wang, 2021) and others that instead hold that it will continue to be either a reluctant participant (Pu, 2018; Zhao, 2020) or a disruptor of this order.
Some of the studies engaging in this debate do look at the potential for cooperation or conflict in relation to specific issues. For example, there are some studies that have particularly focused on territorial disputes (Fravel, 2010; Roy, 2019) and others focusing on specific regional issues such as the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait (Goldstein, 2007). Others focus on potential for cooperation and conflict in relation to specific institutions, with many focusing on China’s role in the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund (Hongying Wang, 2016). However, these accounts of China’s rise mainly focus on the longer-term trajectory of its foreign policy change or more broadly on its international orientation, paying only limited attention to short-term changes in foreign policy that are seen in relation to specific issues.

1.2.2 How is China and its foreign policy changing?

Connected to this debate about the long-term trajectory of China’s rise is a discussion about how much and in what ways China and its foreign policy are changing. There has been an ongoing debate about whether or not China’s foreign policy is becoming broadly more “assertive”. A number of studies have argued that since the financial crisis China has abandoned its strategy of “lying low and biding time” and shown greater assertiveness in its foreign policy (Friedberg, 2014; Liao, 2016; Scobell & Harold, 2013; Zhao, 2013). In recent years, those in this camp have particularly pointed to China’s growing diplomatic assertiveness and its use of what has been labelled “wolf warrior” diplomacy (W. Hu, 2019; Shumba, 2021). However, others have challenged the idea that China has become more assertive across all issues, suggesting the evidence is more mixed (Jerdén, 2014; Johnston, 2013). There have also been those that have argued that China has not completely abandoned the “lying low” approach and continues to largely adhere to a policy of peaceful rise (Poh & Li, 2017; J. Zhang, 2015). While China’s foreign policy under Xi Jinping since 2013 has added weight to arguments that it has become more assertive (Roy, 2019; Smith, 2019), debate remains about whether this applies to all issues and also how sustained it is.

This debate amongst academics has been paralleled by broader public debate about the evidence for China’s growing “assertiveness”. Recent years

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1 In Chinese, this is 韬光养晦 (tao guang yang hui) which has been translated in a range of ways including: “hide your capability, bide your time”, “keep a low profile”, and “lie low, and bide time”. The phrase is generally attributed to the former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, who is said to have used it during the late 1980s and early 1990s (although how much is unclear). It is understood to have become a main guiding principle in China’s international relations in the decades after this (D. Chen & Wang, 2013)
have seen an increasing number of articles arguing that China has become comprehensively more “assertive” in its foreign relations (Small & Jaishankar, 2020). As evidence, these articles frequently point to actions such as China’s use of so-called “Sharp Power” and “Wolf Warrior” diplomacy (“How China’s ‘Sharp Power’ Is Muting Criticism Abroad,” 2017; Palmer, 2021). These debates make it important to understand whether China’s foreign policy is changing in a more assertive direction and if so in what ways.

A parallel discussion is about the extent to which China’s integration into the international system has changed its identity and norms to bring these into alignment with those of the international order. There have been arguments that during the reform era China has gradually shifted to closer normative alignment with the international order (Foot & Walter, 2010), as well as arguments that it has been “socialized” through its participation in international organisations (Johnston, 2008). However, there remains debate about how much international cooperation has acted to change China’s behaviour and constrain it (Mastanduno, 2014). This relates to the public discussion about engaging with China and the potential for outside influences to “change” China. This discussion can also be seen as a debate about in what ways China’s identity is changing as it rises and what this means.

1.2.3 What determines China’s foreign policy as it rises?

Underlying the discussion about how China’s rise will play out, and what the evidence shows so far, is a debate about what determines China’s foreign policy. There are those who argue that China’s foreign policy is largely determined by the balance of power in the international system (Lemke & Tammen, 2003; Levy, 2008; Tammen & Kugler, 2006), or by both relative material power and pursuit of survival under conditions of international anarchy (Jung & Lee, 2017; Mearsheimer, 2001; Nathan & Scobell, 2012; Noguchi, 2011). Those taking this position tend to reach more pessimistic conclusions about the foreign policy that will result from China’s growing power.

Then there are those who argue China’s foreign policy is shaped not only by material power and anarchy, but also by interdependence and the constraining effects of economic interests (Ikenberry, 2019; Mastanduno, 2014). These come to more optimistic conclusions about China’s rise. However, these rationalist and system-level accounts of what is determining foreign policy have proven limited in their ability to account for all the changes seen in China’s foreign policy.
This debate about what determines China’s foreign policy therefore echoes the broader debate in international relations between those who posit material and those who posit ideational explanations for changes in state behaviour. On one side you have those described above who view China’s foreign policy as driven by material factors, while on the other side there are those proposing that ideational factors, including public opinions, values, norms, history, and culture, also shape China’s behaviour.

Within this ideational camp, a number of studies have made convincing arguments that identity plays a role in China’s foreign policy (Johnston, 1998, 2008; Uemura, 2013, 2015). However, there remains a lack of agreement about exactly how identity shapes policy outcomes. Many of these accounts argue identity works alongside material factors in determining China’s foreign policy and they assert that China’s identity is largely fixed and unchanging, or is very slow to change (Easley & Park, 2016; R. Li, 2016; Noesselt, 2014). This has limited their ability to explain China’s changing foreign policy at particular times. Accounts have for example proposed that a part of China’s identity is the importance it places on guanxi (or reciprocity) and argued that this shapes its interactions with other states such as Japan and the US (Uemura, 2015). However, because China’s guanxi identity is taken to be constant, it remains unclear why relations with these other states shift to the extent that they do within short periods of time.

Another group in this debate argues that domestic factors also determine China’s foreign policy (Friedberg, 2014; Reilly, 2011; Sinkkonen, 2014; Weiss & Dafoe, 2019; Zeng et al., 2015). These studies assert that different processes, taking place within China involving the leadership (He & Feng, 2013), the foreign policy making bureaucracy (Qingmin, 2016), and the public (Gries et al., 2016), have an impact on the foreign policies that it adopts.

Amongst researchers who emphasise domestic factors, there is also an ongoing discussion about whether the Chinese public can have a “bottom up” influence on China’s foreign policy. There have been studies arguing that even in an authoritarian state like China the public can influence government policy (Callahan, 2015; Gries, 2005; Gries et al., 2016; Hao & Su, 2005), with some arguing that it can do this in a range of ways and others suggesting only very strong nationalist sentiments matter.

Others have contended that the Chinese Party-State is able to control the public so that they are not able to have any significant influence over policy (Friedberg, 2014; Nathan, 2016; Reilly, 2011; Weiss, 2013). The tightening of control in China under Xi Jinping since he became president in 2013 has given greater weight to this latter view (Economy, 2018), leading to much
less attention being paid to the question of whether the public can influence policy. An additional assumption is often made that even if the Chinese public can in some ways influence government policy about different issues, there is limited variance in the views of different members of the public.

However, there remain some indications that the public might continue to influence policy under certain circumstances, so this debate is ongoing. This discussion about the potential for “bottom up” influence makes its way from academia into the broader public discussions about China and its rise, with assertions both that rising nationalism amongst the Chinese public is pressuring the Chinese government and also that the population is entirely “brainwashed” by propaganda (Qi, 2012). Because of the potential impacts that the public might have on China’s foreign policy, which could push this policy in either conflictual or cooperative directions, it is important for both researchers and policymakers to understand with greater clarity whether, and under what conditions, the Chinese public has a “bottom up” influence. This has a bearing on our understanding of how China is acting, and will act, in different issue areas, as well as on policies regarding China adopted by other states.

1.3 A critical constructivist approach to studying short-term changes

My research contributes to these different debates about understanding China’s rise in a number of ways. It focuses on understanding China’s rise by studying the short-term changes in foreign policy neglected in many other accounts. Moving away from the use of mainstream IR theories, it adopts a critical constructivist approach that focuses on identity discourses to more effectively make sense of these changes in China’s foreign policy. It re-examines the question of whether and how the Chinese public has a “bottom up” influence on foreign policy. The thesis therefore provides a detailed analysis of the ways in which evolving identity is working to shape the direction of China’s rise. In this analysis, I focus on particular case studies and examine the ways in which changes in the identity discourses related to these issues make possible short-term changes in China’s foreign policy regarding the issue. However, I argue that these examples of how identity discourses make possible short-term changes reflect the broader ways that changing identity shapes China’s overall rise. The following section further motivates the approach I have taken.
1.3.1 The need to understand short-term foreign policy changes

One aspect of China’s rise less well understood is the short-term changes in its foreign policy seen in relation to specific issues. I argue that it is necessary to pay more attention to short-term changes in China’s foreign policy that occur in relation to specific issues. By short-term changes, I mean those changes China makes in its foreign policy in relation to specific issues within the space of one to five years, in contrast to the longer-term overall evolution in its foreign policy over multiple decades. These short-term changes may occur as a back-and-forth pattern, or foreign policy variation, but they may also be a series of changes that are in the same direction. As I have noted already, many of the studies engaging in debates about how to understand China’s rise pay only limited attention to these kinds of short-term foreign policy changes in relation to specific issues, instead focusing on the longer-term trajectory of China’s rise overall and whether this is resulting in conflict or cooperation. In this thesis, I develop arguments and provide evidence that these short-term changes matter and we should pay more attention to them because they often appear to set the context for subsequent changes and to be cumulative, so they are a significant part of the longer-term change in foreign policy and international orientation that is the focus of most research.

China has displayed considerable short-term foreign policy change (Breslin, 2013; Legro, 2007; Shambaugh, 2011). It has participated in and supported the existing international order, but also sought to obstruct or challenge this order (Breslin, 2013). For instance, China has changed its approach to specific areas of United Nations (UN) activities over time. As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, it has moved from blocking intervention in conflicts to greater support for international action (Garwood-Gowers, 2012). Until 2007, it obstructed UN involvement in the civil war in Sudan and provided protection to the Sudanese government, but it then switched to far greater support for international efforts to resolve the conflict (Yahuda, 2007). In UN environmental cooperation, China similarly shifted in a short space of time from an “obstructive” approach at the 2009 Copenhagen climate conference to a more cooperative approach at the 2015 Paris conference (Cui, 2018). There has also been much change in China’s approach to the international economic order and the Bretton Woods Institutions (Breslin, 2010).

These changes in policies regarding the international order are paralleled by changes in China’s approach to its bilateral relations with different
states. In its relations with the US, which are key to China’s rise, the relationship over the last 40 years has been “both competitive and cyclical, careening from periods of relative stability and cooperation to ones of frustration and antagonism” (Medeiros, 2019, p. 94). Meanwhile, China’s foreign policies towards its Asian neighbours have also displayed short-term change. While it has shown a willingness to settle many of its territorial disputes through bilateral agreements (Fravel, 2010), it has also at times shifted to adopting more conflictual policies in pursuit of territorial claims. The current tensions with India are an example of this. It has switched between cooperation and confrontation with Japan (Reilly, 2011) and moved from tensions to warmer policies towards South Korea (M. H. Kim, 2017).

**Short-term change and long-term change**

When seeking to understand China’s rise, I would argue it is important to study these short-term changes in China’s foreign policy because they appear to set the context for subsequent changes, suggesting they are consequential for the longer-term developments in foreign policy typically focused upon.

For example, in 2015 China made a short-term policy change to cooperate more actively in the UN Paris climate change conference. This meant China became a signatory to the Paris Agreement, an overarching treaty governing international cooperation to tackle climate change, and it was recognised as an emerging climate leader both internationally and domestically. This seems to have set the context for subsequent foreign policy decisions. It meant that international and domestic audiences had expectations for China based on its obligations under the Paris Agreement as well as the identity as climate leader it had adopted. It created a process which led to further foreign policy change, such as the 2020 declaration that China would become carbon neutral by 2060, as well as the 2021 decision to halt all overseas coal power development.

Another example of the cumulative effect of short-term foreign policy changes might be China’s behaviour in the South China Sea, where instead of building in a cooperative direction, short-term policies appear to have created mounting tensions, setting the context for subsequent changes. Researchers have argued that recurrent episodes of tension between China and other Southeast Asian states such as the Philippines create a path for future friction and escalation (Chong & Hall, 2017). A decision to engage in conflictual behaviour with another state, such as the 2012 standoff between China and the Philippines near the Scarborough Shoal, can increase the tendency to view others’ actions as more provocative, produce a general hardening of positions, and
impact public opinion and expectations (Chong & Hall, 2017). The result is that this short-term foreign policy change then impacts on subsequent foreign policy choices, leading to a longer-term move in a more conflictual direction.

As well as being important in perpetuating change in the same direction, short-term changes also appear significant in shaping future policies in other ways. A foreign policy change at a particular point can sometimes appear to lead to a subsequent reversal of direction. An example of this might be the policy change in 2011 which saw China agreeing to the passage of UN Security Council resolution 1973 authorising use of force in Libya (Garwood-Gowers, 2012). After this change, China’s sense of the excessive use of force by western powers then led it to back away from supporting UN actions in subsequent situations, such as the Security Council votes regarding action in Syria (Garwood-Gowers, 2012). The change made in 2011 might be seen to have formed the context for subsequent foreign policy choices, but resulted in change in the opposite direction.

These three empirical examples provide reasons to believe short-term changes in foreign policy matter because they influence long-term changes. It often appears that China’s longer-term moves in a more cooperative or conflictual direction are the product of cumulative short-term foreign policy choices. I therefore argue it is important to examine short-term changes in China’s foreign policy because they might be contributing to longer-term evolution in behaviour and the overall trajectory of its rise.

**The contradictory nature of short-term changes**

Another reason why we need to understand these short term changes is because they often are observed to be “contradictory” (Ruhlig, 2022). The shifts in policy China makes regarding different issues sometimes appear to be in different directions, being conflictual for one issue and cooperative for another. For example, at the same time as China switched to greater cooperation with the UN on environmental issues and peacekeeping, it also changed to more competitive policies towards the economic institutions which are also part of the international order. While in the early 2010s China changed to become more conflictual in behaviour in the South China Sea, during the same period it also increased cooperation with the international community regarding North Korea’s nuclear development. This has led to studies which argue that China’s foreign policy regarding different issues is contradictory (Gegout & Suzuki, 2020; Zhang, 2019), and also to researchers describing China as “conflicted” (Shambaugh, 2011).
We need to make sense of the “contradictory” moves in contrasting directions that are often seen in China’s short-term foreign policy change in relation to different issues. These contradictions challenge the assumption often made in accounts of China’s rise that its foreign policy is moving in one particular direction. To fully understand China’s behaviour in the world as it rises, and to potentially predict future behaviour, it is not sufficient to have only broad conclusions that China is acting in a conflictual or cooperative way across all areas. We need to understand the distinct ways China is behaving in specific contexts: how and why it acts differently with regards to international cooperation on the environment and peacekeeping operations in the UN, for example, or how its foreign policies are different for security issues surrounding North Korea and the South China Sea. My approach focuses on these two issues, North Korea and the South China Sea, in separate case studies that each seek to make sense of specific foreign policy changes in relation to the issue. It therefore disaggregates China’s foreign policy to examine this in connection with particular issues separately, whilst also comparing across cases.

The “real world” importance of understanding these short-term foreign policy changes should also not be forgotten. Short-term changes in China’s foreign policy matter not only because of the ways in which they contribute to longer-term evolution in China’s behaviour, but because of the effects that they have in themselves. If China makes a short-term change in its South China Sea policy, and engages in conflict with one of the Southeast Asian states, then this can impact massively on the lives of people within the region. Similarly, if China chooses not to comply with UN sanctions to punish North Korean nuclear activity, then this may allow the North Korean regime to continue nuclear development, impacting the security of the whole region. The significant impact of these changes means they warrant detailed study.

For these reasons, my analysis focuses on short-term changes in China’s foreign policy and seeks to explain them as they appear in relation to specific issues. It examines why the short-term changes in foreign policy differ between issues and may be in a cooperative direction in one particular issue area whilst at the same time being in a conflictual direction in another. Both this disaggregation of China’s foreign policy changes into those occurring in relation to different issues, as well as the focus on short-term foreign policy changes, are the main ways in which this research differs from other research which has sought to understand China’s changing foreign policy as it rises. It also differs by adopting a critical constructivist approach which analyses the changes in identity discourses as a way of making sense of foreign policy change.
The need for a critical constructivist approach

To understand China’s rise it is useful to take a critical constructivist approach that sees China’s foreign policy as produced by underlying identity discourses constructed in society. This approach is beneficial because, as I will summarise in the following section, other approaches to explaining changes in China’s foreign policy have proven limited in their ability to do so.

Studies using offensive realist theory, which expects states to behave in more conflictual ways as they become more powerful, can only explain some of the changes in foreign policy in a more conflictual direction and do not explain those short-term changes in foreign policy towards greater cooperation (Jung & Lee, 2017; Mearsheimer, 2010; Noguchi, 2011). While studies that instead use defensive realism are better able to account for some of these more cooperative actions, they have trouble accounting for times when China acted more provocatively to disturb the status quo (Nathan & Scobell, 2012; Tang, 2010; Twomey, 2008). The literature using liberal theories (Copeland, 2003; Ikenberry, 2008; Weede, 2010) can account for more of China’s foreign policies when it acts cooperatively, but struggles to explain times when China has acted against its economic interests and taken conflictual actions. Meanwhile, mainstream constructivist studies can often explain China’s changing foreign policies over the longer term, but because of their treatment of China’s identity as fixed or slow to change they still do not explain all the observed short-term changes.

There are also studies that have sought to explain changes in China’s foreign policy by looking inside the “black box” of the state. These have shown that domestic politics can contribute to change in foreign policy alongside structural factors. However, these rarely provide a full account of how particular foreign policy changes occur. In addition, there is a lack of clarity on whether, and if so when and how, “bottom up” influences affect foreign policy. In general, these domestic approaches to studying China’s foreign policy also tend to be disconnected from the other international relations theories so they do not show how processes taking place domestically within China interact with other factors.

Because of the limitations of these approaches to understanding China’s foreign policy, I argue we can more effectively make sense of this policy and how it is changing in the short-term by taking a critical constructivist approach. In contrast to the approaches described above which focus on
material factors or deeply embedded properties of China’s identity, this approach instead looks at how underlying identity discourses in China make possible particular foreign policies in relation to specific issues. As such, it rejects a positivist notion of causation, where material and ideational factors are held to determine foreign policy, instead understanding foreign policy as made possible by discourse. This means analysing identity discourses to understand China’s rise. The study of China’s identity can arguably offer a particularly effective way of understanding China’s rise, allowing for engagement with the debates described earlier in this chapter.

My research therefore focuses on identity and uses critical constructivist theory to make sense of China’s foreign policy. It sees this policy as being made possible by dominant identity discourses. Because of the way this theory sees identity as constructed by not just the Chinese state, but society more broadly, and it contains ideas about legitimacy, it provides an effective way of engaging with the debate about whether the Chinese public has a “bottom up” influence on foreign policy. I therefore use it to investigate the extent to which the Chinese public influences China’s foreign policy by helping to produce those dominant identity discourses that make certain foreign policies possible.

1.3.3 The need for a Lacanian account of short-term foreign policy changes

As part of a critical constructivist approach, I argue that it is necessary to employ the theory about identity and discourse developed by the French psychologist Jacques Lacan. This theory understands people to have an underlying psychological desire for a full identity which is ultimately impossible to achieve. It therefore explains why people use particular identity discourses. Using Lacanian theory allows me to examine the underlying psychological reasons why members of Chinese society invest in particular identity discourses. This is necessary because these underlying psychological drives that make people adopt and reproduce particular discourses form the reasons why these discourses become dominant in society. As already discussed, critical constructivist IR theory holds that when identity discourses become dominant, they make possible certain foreign policies. Lacanian theory can explain why particular identity discourses dominate.

In China, there appears to be a strong connection, in this way, between identity discourses and people’s psychology. Many of those identity discourses that become dominant in Chinese society appear to do so because of
how they connect with people’s emotions and underlying psychology. For instance, this seems the case with discourses about the “century of humiliation” and “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” (Kallio, 2015; Z. Wang, 2012), and related discourses about Japan (Suzuki, 2007). Much of the research looking at nationalist discourses in China and its foreign policy (Gries, 2004; Sinkkonen, 2013), as well as related research about different narratives concerning recent history and their effects on China’s present day behaviour (Gustafsson, 2020; Z. Wang, 2012), also points to links between psychological factors and the force of identity discourses. In my research, I study how changes in the dominance of identity discourses, where one discourse becomes more dominant over another, make possible short-term changes in China’s foreign policy. To effectively describe the rise to dominance of certain identity discourses as a part of this process, my account therefore also needs to analyse the underlying psychological reasons why particular discourses become dominant. Use of Lacanian theory provides a way to do this.

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed how short-term change may create the context for subsequent foreign policy change. This makes it important to investigate the underlying psychological reasons why certain discourses dominate to produce foreign policy change, so we can understand the context in which future foreign policy is being made. If short-term changes set the context for what comes after, then it becomes important to understand the psychological drivers that lead to societal dominance of particular identity discourses and make possible these changes. The psychological investment that the public makes in a particular identity discourse (as a part of their desire for a full identity), which then leads to this discourse’s dominance and makes possible a foreign policy change, may also be important for foreign policy at a later time.

Uncovering the psychological reasons why discourses become dominant and short-term changes occur provides an understanding of exactly how they then create a context for subsequent changes. In the example discussed earlier in this chapter regarding China’s shift in approach towards UN climate cooperation, changes in identity were arguably closely connected with the foreign policy change and participation in the 2015 Paris Climate Conference (COP21). If so, these identity dynamics would then be key to the context in which foreign policy decisions were made in the years after this.

Meanwhile, in the second example discussed earlier, regarding the South China Sea, psychological factors related to China’s repeated unresolved conflicts with the Philippines appeared influential in shaping the context for subsequent foreign policy decisions. It has been observed that during the early
2010s the Chinese public invested in an identity discourse presenting China as “strong” which created pressure for the government to adopt more aggressive maritime policies (Wirth, 2020). If these policies were seen by the public as being successful, and China seemed to be living up to this identity, then this could create a context where the public continued to invest in this identity discourse and it remained dominant. I argue that the Chinese government would therefore face sustained pressure to continue to act in ways that corresponded to this identity.

1.4 Research questions

My research therefore engages with debates about how to understand China’s rise. The following operational questions are used to guide my analysis:

- How can an examination of identity discourses make sense of the short-term foreign policy changes China displays in relation to specific issues?

With secondary questions:

- Does the Chinese public have a “bottom up” influence that contributes to producing these short-term changes in foreign policy, and if so in what ways?
- Why do certain identity discourses, that make possible Chinese foreign policy, at times become more dominant and resonant within Chinese society?

1.5 Research Design

To answer these questions, I use critical constructivist IR theory to analyse China’s foreign policy in two case studies concerning key areas of its international relations. The following part of the chapter describes in more detail the theoretical framework employed and the issues chosen for these two case studies, then outlines the material and method of analysis.

1.5.1 Theoretical Framework

My research focuses on identity in order to make sense of China’s rise and changing foreign policy. Within international relations research, there are numerous understandings of state identity, so it is necessary to be clear about the
understanding of identity adopted in this thesis. In my use of critical constructivist IR theory, I take China’s identity to be intersubjectively constructed in a discourse that is shared between members of a society. Members of the Chinese state and the public are understood to construct an identity for the Chinese Self through differentiation from a range of Others. This identity is therefore fluid and continually subject to change.

My research makes use of the critical constructivist understanding of foreign policy. This sees the dominant identity discourses practiced within states as making possible foreign policies (Doty, 1996; Hansen, 2006; Weldes, 1999). It therefore explicitly rejects the positivist notion of causation and sees foreign policy instead as made possible by discourse. When making foreign policy, a decision maker cannot articulate an identity that differs too greatly from the dominant identity discourse without encountering a challenge or social ridicule, and instead they will produce policies that “fit” the dominant identity discourse (Hansen, 2006; Weldes, 1999). The theory therefore contains an understanding of the social legitimacy of foreign policy appropriate to studying the public influence on policy in China, where the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has a strong desire to sustain its legitimacy.

My research employs this critical constructivist IR theory in a specific way. First, it focuses on construction of China’s identity by the state and public in discourse on the Chinese Internet. To look at the state’s “top down” construction of identity in online discourse, I use articles from the online edition of the state-owned newspaper People’s Daily. To examine the public’s “bottom up” construction of identity in online discourse, I use posts from the Chinese social media platform Weibo. I decided to focus on online construction of identity because I argue that the Internet is a key site for the discursive construction of identity within society. Many critical constructivist studies look primarily at construction and contestation of identity in the political sphere, analysing official policy statements or parliamentary debates (Campbell, 1992; Doty, 1993; Gustafsson et al., 2018). However, in the study of China such discussions and debates within the government are generally inaccessible and it is also unclear whether there actually is much political de-

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2 The online edition of People’s Daily (people.com.cn) goes under a different name from the print newspaper: 人民网 (renmin wang) which might be roughly translated as People’s Net. The website carries the same articles as the offline printed newspaper and also a much greater amount of content. The background of People’s Daily is discussed in more detail in the methods chapter, Chapter 4.
bate of this kind. For this reason, it makes sense to broaden the range of material examined to analyse the way in which China’s identity is being debated within wider society.

While many critical constructivist studies of foreign policy in different states have remained focused on analysing identity discourses in official political materials, they have recognised that these discourses may also emerge in other kinds of material (Doty, 1996; Hansen, 2006). Analysis that only looks at the construction of identity within official materials can arguably miss competing identities that emerge from other spheres. It should not be assumed in advance that the only identity discourses important for foreign policy are those within official statements or media articles (for a good discussion of other sources of identity discourse that can impact on foreign policy, in the case of the Soviet Union, see Hopf, 2002). My study broadens the range of material analysed beyond official and media texts to also analyse discourse produced by the wider public on the Internet. This opens up the analysis to the possibility that new identity discourses relating to foreign policy might emerge in a “bottom up” fashion from the wider public.

Secondly, I take a critical constructivist approach that seeks to account for how people’s underlying psychological desire for full identity becomes interwoven with their investment in particular identity discourses. To do this, I make use of Lacanian theory about how identity discourses are connected to our desire for a full identity which is ultimately unobtainable (Solomon, 2015). This Lacanian theory shares many of the more general poststructuralist ideas that are used by other critical constructivist researchers in international relations. The poststructuralists all share an understanding that meaning is constructed through interconnected signifiers in text and therefore is fluid and prone to change. However, Lacanian theory adds to these more general poststructuralist ideas an understanding of how emotions interact with identity discourses. Subjects are understood to continuously desire a full identity which, because of the nature of language and the lack of fixed meanings, they ultimately can never achieve. Pursuing this full identity, people invest in different identity discourses which they believe might offer it to them. Identity discourses produce fantasies which channel this desire for a full identity. It is argued that those identity discourses which best produce these fantasies will resonate more.

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3 Here, I am distinguishing between poststructuralism, which is a linguistic and sociological school (in which some of the main practitioners are Laclau, Mouffé, Derrida, and Lacan), and critical constructivism, which is a theory within international relations which draws heavily on these ideas from the former. This distinction is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.
I argue that Lacanian theory is extremely useful for understanding the identity construction processes taking place in China and the way in which emotions play into these. This is in part because China is a nation where the public are engaged in a very intense search for a fuller sense of who they are and what the Chinese nation is, with emotions closely bound up in this process. Many of the identity discourses that are produced in China appear to fit with this theory in offering the promise of regaining a more complete identity which is presented as if it has been lost (the aforementioned discourse about the “Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation” being a particularly prominent example). As such, there is much to be gained from the application of Lacanian theory to understand the underlying psychological dynamics at work in the construction of Chinese identity discourses.

1.5.2 Case selection

In order to use critical constructivist IR theory to contribute to debates about China’s rise, I chose two case studies, China and North Korea and China and the South China Sea. I analyse China’s short-term foreign policy changes regarding these two issues between 2014 and 2018. I chose to conduct two case studies, rather than just one, because this allows for comparisons and also means that findings can be cross-referenced to determine whether they are generally applicable.

These two issues can be seen as important ones in the context of China’s overall rise as they concern its relations to the international community and United Nations, its relations with the US, as well as its relations to regional states. In both, China’s foreign policy has shown a large amount of short-term change in recent years, that has been puzzling for mainstream IR theories to explain. They are also appropriate issues for examining the potential for the Chinese public to have a “bottom up” influence on foreign policy. This is because they are both important security issues for the Chinese government, making them least-likely cases for the Chinese public to be able to influence foreign policy. If the public is found to have a “bottom up” influence on foreign policy in even these “least-likely” security issues, then this offers compelling evidence that it may also have an influence in other areas. A more detailed justification for the choice of these two issues is provided in the methods chapter of this thesis (Chapter 4).

Although it is necessary to select specific issues for close analysis, I believe that by accounting for the short-term foreign policy changes in relation to these issues, and drawing comparisons between them, something can also
be said about short-term change as China rises more generally. While the specific identity discourses are distinct to the two issues, they contain a number of overlapping themes and ideas, offering insights into the way in which identity makes possible China’s evolving foreign policy more broadly. In addition, studying differences between what accounts for short-term foreign policy changes in the two case studies can also be considered important for developing our understanding of China’s rise.

1.5.3 Material and methods of analysis

To analyse the discursive construction and contestation of China’s identity on the Internet, I use two kinds of material. The first is a collection of approximately 10,000 articles from the online version of the Chinese state newspaper, and “mouthpiece” of the Chinese Communist Party, People’s Daily, published between 2014 and 2018. The second is a unique dataset of almost half a million posts made on the Chinese social media platform Weibo between 2014 and 2018 (K. W. Fu et al., 2013). This micro-blogging platform functions in a way that is similar to Twitter, which is currently not accessible in mainland China.

In order to analyse the large amount of textual data and the contestation of identity within it, I adopt a mixed-methods approach and make use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of text analysis. In each case study, I begin by carrying out discourse analysis of smaller samples of texts from the two types of material to recover the way in which these texts are using language to construct China’s identity. Next, the keywords found to be associated with particular identity discourses in this initial analysis are used to guide computer assisted text analysis that is applied to the entire corpora of each type of material. Through this combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, the research can remain true to a poststructuralist ontology (or critical constructivist ontology) which sees meaning as being constructed through chains of association and difference, whilst also analysing the kind of large textual datasets produced online.
1.6 Contributions

This thesis makes three main contributions: it contributes to the ongoing debates amongst Chinese international relations; it makes a theoretical contribution to the international relations field by helping to develop use of critical constructivist IR theory to understand foreign policy change; it makes a methodological contribution by developing new methods for the analysis of online discourse.

First, this thesis engages with the ongoing debates about how to understand China’s rise. These debates about whether China’s rise will be peaceful, how its foreign policy is changing, and what determines this foreign policy, are questions of great significance to people around the world as they work out how to relate to China and respond to its phenomenal ascent. My research contributes to these debates primarily by examining the role played by identity in China’s foreign policy. It does this by studying puzzling short-term changes in two key issues of China’s international relations. For each, it analyses changes in identity discourses produced by Chinese society in connection with the issue and how these make possible the changes in China’s foreign policy seen. This advances understanding of the way identity discourses make possible China’s foreign policies not only regarding these two important issues, but also more broadly as it continues to rise. Through a close examination of how the Chinese public contribute to producing these identity discourses, I also contribute to our understanding of whether and how the public has a “bottom up” influence on China’s foreign policy, both regarding these two issues and more generally.

The research also makes a broader empirical contribution to the study of China’s changing foreign policy. China’s size, and its ongoing rise, mean that it is an increasingly important actor in the world, impacting on other nations in a range of different ways. From its infrastructure investments in Africa and other regions, to its role in tackling global challenges such as climate change, what China does really matters to all of us. It is therefore important across the world for politicians and societies to understand China’s foreign policy. I provide a close analysis of China’s foreign policy regarding two key international issues, North Korea and the South China Sea. This helps to shed light on the ways in which identity discourses, being produced in China by both the state and the public, make possible significant changes in foreign policy regarding North Korea and the South China Sea. This improves understanding of the underlying dynamics that shape China’s foreign policy in connection with these two issues, which are of considerable international concern.
My research also contributes to our understanding of Chinese identity formation. It provides close analysis of the way in which the identity discourses that underpin foreign policy are being produced in China. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, I analyse in detail the discourses that are being produced in relation to international issues by both Chinese state media and members of the Chinese public. In my analysis, I particularly focus on how the Internet and different forms of online media are being used to discuss and debate these topics. In doing so, my research provides extensive evidence of how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Chinese public employ digital technology in order to discuss international issues and how they interact with each other to co-produce identity discourses. My research provides detailed empirical evidence about both China’s changing foreign policy and also its changing identity, both in relation to different important international issues and also more generally.

Secondly, this thesis makes a theoretical contribution to the international relations field by developing ways to understand foreign policy change. My study of how to make sense of short-term changes seen in China’s foreign policy can help provide ways of analysing foreign policy change in other states. In cases such as the United States’ changing policies regarding intervention in the Middle East, and the United Kingdom’s shifting attitudes to European cooperation, states display extensive change in foreign policy where short-term changes often appear to contribute to longer-term evolution in behaviour. This kind of foreign policy change is not particularly well explained by the main international relations theories. In the research carried out within this thesis, I demonstrate that analysing changes in identity discourses being produced within society offers an effective way of making sense of these short-term changes and how they form the context for subsequent shifts in policy.

My research contributes to the development of critical constructivist IR theory by applying this to a new kind of case and by focusing on the Internet. Many previous critical constructivist studies have tended to focus on explaining the foreign policies of Western states. The use of critical constructivist approaches to study the foreign policies of non-Western and non-democratic states remains limited. In this thesis, I use critical constructivist theory to analyse China’s foreign policy. I therefore indicate how critical constructivist theory can also be used to study the foreign policy of a non-Western and authoritarian state. The research shows that study of the underlying identity discourses produced within Chinese society can account for the changes in its policies towards North Korea and in the South China Sea. I demonstrate that
even in a state where the ruling party’s legitimacy is not based on elections, identity discourses dominant in society still make possible and constrain foreign policies taken, as suggested by a critical constructivist understanding. Most critical constructivist studies have also tended to look at the production of identity discourses in offline material. I therefore help to further develop the theory by examining Internet-based material. My research shows that the type of social production of identity discourses described by critical constructivist scholars as behind foreign policy takes place extensively online.

Thirdly, the thesis makes a methodological contribution. I develop methods for analysing the discussions taking place on the Internet and the large amount of data that this produces. With the increasing digitalisation of society, there is expanding need amongst researchers of politics and international relations for methods to analyse large amounts of textual data being produced online. My research makes use of computer assisted text analysis techniques to analyse approximately half a million social media posts and ten thousand online news articles. In doing so, it explores ways that qualitative discourse analysis based on a poststructuralist ontology can be combined with quantitative text analysis that allows for the analysis of much larger quantities of data, such as that which we see produced online. In the analysis of material for the two case studies, I develop methods of computer assisted quantitative text analysis that can be used to study the changing dominance of different identity discourses within society.

A further methodological contribution is in developing the use of Lacanian theory to explain why certain discourses dominate over others. This might be seen as both a theoretical and a methodological contribution. Existing critical constructivist international relations theory has rarely attempted to account for the varying dominance of identity discourses. While researchers have explored the use of Lacanian theory to do this (Solomon, 2015), they have not done so for Chinese identity discourses. In this thesis, I apply Lacanian theory to explain why different identity discourses produced in relation to North Korea and the South China Sea become dominant within Chinese society at particular times. In doing so, I further develop ways to operationalise the ideas about identity discourses expressed by Lacan as a method for analysing texts to account for their resonance within society. This provides a new method of discourse analysis that is based on a Lacanian understanding of specific textual features. The combination of Lacanian theory and quantitative text analysis methods provides a highly effective way of analysing the changing dominance of identity discourses in large bodies of texts such as those present online.
1.7 A roadmap of the thesis

Chapter 2 provides a review of the existing literature about China’s changing foreign policy as it rises. It discusses in more detail the debates about what determines China’s foreign policy as it rises and whether this rise will ultimately be peaceful. The chapter first describes how few existing studies of China’s rise have paid attention to short-term changes in China’s foreign policy in relation to specific issues, instead focusing on the longer-term trajectory of China’s rise overall. It then surveys the studies that have used realism, liberalism and constructivism to account for China’s short-term foreign policy changes, describing the limitations of these studies. Then the chapter examines domestic approaches to explaining China’s foreign policy and describes the ongoing debate about the potential for the Chinese public to have a “bottom up” influence on foreign policy.

Chapter 3 describes the theoretical approach taken in this thesis to make sense of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy – a critical constructivist approach which focuses on China’s identity as constructed in discourse and the way this makes possible foreign policy. The chapter describes the specific way this critical constructivist approach is adopted in this thesis, with a focus on the construction of China’s identity on the Internet and the use of Lacanian theory to account for the emotional resonance of different discourses.

Chapter 4 documents in detail the method used in this thesis to take a critical constructivist approach to making sense of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy in relation to two issues – China and North Korea, and China and the South China Sea. It discusses why these two issues were chosen as case studies for examining short-term changes in China’s foreign policy. It describes the material used in the two case studies. It also discusses the innovative combination of qualitative and quantitative methods used in this thesis to analyse the construction of identity in texts.

The empirical analysis begins in Chapter 5, which presents the analysis for the case study about China and North Korea. This is followed by Chapter 6, which presents the analysis for the case study of China and the South China Sea. Each of these chapters is broken into four sub-sections:

- A first section sets up the case study, giving a review of relevant literature related to the issue and describing the analytical questions addressed.
- A second section presents the qualitative analysis.
• A third section presents the quantitative analysis; and a fourth section
  presents the Lacanian analysis.

Each case study ends with a conclusion describing how the analysis conducted
has made sense of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy.

Chapter 7 gives the conclusions of the thesis. It summarises the main
findings from the two case studies and describes how the thesis has answered
the main research questions and how it has made sense of short-term changes
in China’s foreign policy. It discusses how the findings of the analysis speak
to the broader debates about understanding China’s rise that have been intro-
duced in this chapter.
2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Ever since China’s economy and material power first started to grow forty years ago, this rise has been an increasingly popular topic of research and conversation. China’s ascent has produced several interconnected debates about how we should understand this rise.

The three main interlinked debates are about whether or not this rise will ultimately be peaceful, what the evidence so far shows about how China’s foreign policy is changing, and the underlying debate about what determines China’s foreign policy as it rises. My research engages with these debates by asking how we can make sense of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy in relation to different issues as it rises. It studies this question because I argue that accounting for these short-term changes is important to understanding the longer-term evolution of China’s behaviour.

This chapter reviews the way existing literature has understood China’s changing foreign policy as it rises and in doing so discusses in more detail the debates described above. First, the chapter describes how a significant proportion of existing research has concentrated on debating whether China’s rise will ultimately be peaceful. This research has typically focused on the long-term trajectory of China’s foreign policy in broad terms, while paying little attention to short-term changes in relation to different issues.

The chapter then reviews research that has attempted to explain short-term changes in China’s foreign policy. It describes how this research has explained these changes by drawing on realist, liberal, mainstream constructivist, and domestic approaches which all have different stances on what determines foreign policy.

This review concludes that the use of each of these different approaches only partly explains short-term foreign policy changes. Realist approaches generally assume that China’s foreign policy will only change in a more conflictual direction as it gains material power and therefore struggle to explain why it has also changed to show considerable cooperation regarding some issues at certain times. Liberal and mainstream constructivist approaches are better able to explain these cooperative changes, but have difficulty explaining why China still makes short-term changes towards more conflictual actions that appear contrary to its economic interests.
2.2 The focus on the long-term trajectory of China’s rise

Much of the literature studying China’s rise has focused on the long-term trajectory of this foreign policy change. It seeks to answer the question of whether this rise will be peaceful or result in conflict. While this is an important question, the overriding focus on the endpoint of China’s rise in these accounts means they can neglect short-term changes which may themselves be consequential as a part of longer-term evolution in China’s behaviour.

Many of the attempts to understand China’s rise focus on the changes in the balance of power in the international system. One group of studies understand China’s rise using Power Transition Theory (PTT). Based on historical observation, this argues that as dissatisfied, rising states reach power parity with the dominant state they will use force to try to change the status quo (Lemke & Tammen, 2003; Levy, 2008; Lim, 2015; Tammen & Kugler, 2006). These studies therefore expect that as China moves closer to power parity with the US, it will adopt increasingly aggressive foreign policy. They make some of the most pessimistic arguments in the debate about whether or not China’s rise will ultimately be peaceful, predicting large-scale conflict between China and a declining US akin to that seen between Germany and the allied powers in the Second World War.

While this approach provides a parsimonious account of China’s rise, it does not explain short-term changes in its foreign policy. These changes often appear to challenge the theory’s assumptions, because although China has steadily gained power it has not always engaged in conflictual behaviour. While proponents of PTT might argue short-term changes are noise that has no effect on China’s overall direction, this does not seem to be the case. Short-term changes appear to make a difference to the evolution of China’s behaviour. An example might be China’s policies regarding trade with the US, where after an escalating “trade war” during 2018 and early 2019, both states appeared to make short-term changes in policy that contributed to a period prior to Covid-19 where China’s approach was more mixed, moving between attempts at reconciliation and more aggressive reactions (K. Liu, 2020; Wei, 2019). Even proponents of PTT have suggested that a rising state’s satisfaction with the existing international order might matter (Tammen & Kugler, 2006). The short-term foreign policies adopted by China could be seen to play a role in shaping its attitudes or its level of satisfaction, so influencing the overall path it takes.

Another approach to understanding China’s rise draws on the assumptions of neorealist theory to argue that as power shifts in its favour, China will
seek survival in an anarchic world by trying to maximize its power, adopting increasingly aggressive foreign policies (Jung & Lee, 2017; Mearsheimer, 2001). The classic example of this is the account given by Mearsheimer (2001; Mearsheimer, 2010) who draws on neorealist assumptions to argue that China will aggressively seek to establish regional hegemony in Asia, as the US did in the Western Hemisphere. Again, this makes a pessimistic argument in the debate about the outcome of China’s rise, predicting a tragic show down between China and the US. Although Mearsheimer (2001) does examine short-term foreign policy as a part of this account, describing China’s actions in the South China Sea and incursions into disputed territory on the border with India, these are treated only as data points to reinforce arguments about the overall trajectory of China’s rise. The account does not consider the short-term foreign policy changes that contradict this argument, or more broadly consider the significance of these short-term shifts in China’s foreign policy.

A third approach to China’s rise makes predictions by drawing on neoliberal theory (Evans, 1996; Ikenberry, 2008; Johnston & Evans, 1999; Kirshner, 2015). This literature generally argues that, despite conditions of international anarchy, as China becomes more interconnected, its foreign policy will change in a steadily more cooperative direction because of the constraining effects of economic interdependence. This is the argument made by Ikenberry (2008) who suggests that the increasingly institutionalised US-led international order will work to shape a rising China’s foreign policy choices in a more cooperative direction. A more complex (and realist leaning) account is given by Kirshner (2015), who argues that China’s growing power will result in it adopting more competitive foreign policies, but that its interdependency will also move it towards cooperation and prevent military conflict. Again, these accounts of China’s rise treat actual changes in China’s foreign policy at particular times only as evidence of longer-term trends. They tend to disregard those short-term foreign policy changes where China has shown more aggressive, conflictual actions despite its economic interdependence and participation in institutions.

A final group understands China’s rise by also looking at ideational factors. One set here draw on constructivist theory and see the trajectory of China’s rise as shaped by its identity (Johnston, 2008). In particular, this approach understands China to be steadily adopting more cooperative foreign policies as it is increasingly “socialized” into international society and undergoes changes in its identity as a result of this (Johnston, 2008). These accounts again tend to look only at how China’s foreign policy is changing in the longer term because of gradual changes to its identity, rather than examining short-
term changes in foreign policy and the potential significance of these in altering this evolution. In part this is due to the limitations of mainstream constructivist theory, which takes identity as largely fixed and slow to change, making it poorly suited to analysing more dynamic shifts in foreign policy within a short space of time.

Another related approach which draws ideas into its account is that offered by those using English School theory (Buzan, 2010). This sees China’s foreign policy as it rises as explained by how it relates to international society and the “primary institutions” of this society, which might include ideational concepts such as ‘democracy’ and ‘sovereignty’ (Buzan, 2010, p.7). The focus is on China’s approach to international society and whether this is broadly revisionist, detached, or status quo. The answer this approach gives about whether China’s rise will be peaceful is that it depends on its evolving relationship with international society. However, short-term changes are still neglected. This approach also only pays limited attention to the particular foreign policies China adopts towards specific issues and does not consider how these might impact on its overall approach to international society. In an area such as China’s participation in UN peacekeeping, for example, a decision to support intervention at one time may condition China’s ongoing approach to the primary institution of sovereignty overall.

To sum up, these main approaches to China’s rise have remained focused on the long-term evolution of its foreign policy and predicting whether the rise will ultimately end in cooperation or conflict. They do not tend to examine more short-term changes to China’s foreign policy in relation to specific issues and ignore those changes in policy that do not fit with their overarching account. However, while much of the literature about China’s rise is focused on the long-term trajectory in this way, there have also been studies examining China’s foreign policy in relation to particular issues at different times. Amongst these researchers, there is also ongoing debate about what we should understand to be determining China’s rise. The next section of this chapter reviews this literature.

2.3 Approaches to explaining China’s short-term foreign policy change

This part of the chapter surveys the literature which has sought to account for China’s foreign policy regarding particular issues at different points in time, capturing the extensive debate about what factors are driving this policy. It begins with those approaches using realist theory to explain China’s foreign
policy, then moves on to discuss liberal, mainstream constructivist, and domestic approaches. The review highlights the limitations of these accounts, which because of their theoretical assumptions are only able to partly explain the range of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy seen in recent years.

2.3.1 Realist approaches

Much of the literature explaining aspects of China’s foreign policy uses different types of realist theory. Although they differ greatly, a common thread of realist accounts is that they see China’s foreign policy as determined by the balance of power within the international system and its pursuit of security or survival in a world defined by anarchy. They then explain what is determining China’s foreign policy differently based on these main assumptions.

**Offensive realism**

Many studies use offensive realism to explain China’s foreign policy (Jung & Lee, 2017; Noguchi, 2011). Offensive realism understands states, primarily concerned about survival under anarchy, to use their available power resources to maximize their power relative to others. If possible, they look to obtain the most secure position of regional or global hegemony. These studies therefore see China’s foreign policy to be about maximizing its power (Mearsheimer, 2001, 2010). This understanding is more effective in explaining China’s foreign policy during the Cold War (Goldstein, 2003). Even in the post-Cold War period, at least some of China’s foreign policies, as China has become more powerful, conform to the survival seeking and power-maximization described by offensive realism (Jung & Lee, 2017). However, the one-dimensional account of the factors that are determining China’s behaviour, and the overly deterministic predictions that are derived from these, limit the ability of offensive realism to explain China’s foreign policy.

First, offensive realist accounts do not always appear to accurately capture what it is that determines China’s foreign policies. The assumption that these are principally being determined by material power means these accounts can fail to recognise other factors and incorrectly attribute the causes of China’s behaviour at certain times. For example, offensive realist accounts argue that China’s policies including its military modernisation, naval build up, and aggressive posture towards Taiwan are driven by power-maximization (Noguchi, 2011). However, these policies sometimes do not seem to be the result of power-maximization and pursuit of security. It has been argued that China’s military modernization is caused by a desire for status, rather than
survival seeking power maximization (Johnston, 1999). Similarly, it seems clear China’s policies towards Taiwan are not just driven by changes in material power (D. P. Chen, 2014). With the US granting significant support to Taiwan and likely to defend it, China’s confrontational approach is also difficult to attribute to a pursuit of survival in the way that offensive realists claim.

Many other foreign policies taken by China, particularly in the post-Cold War period, also do not seem well explained by the offensive realist description of it seeking survival through maximization of its power (Johnston, 1999). China has not consistently allied with other states that challenge the US, such as North Korea, in a way that would be expected if it was maximizing its power relative to the US (Johnston, 1999). In addition, if China is seeking to use its growing resources to maximize its power relative to the US, then why has it continued to engage in such extensive cooperation with the US? The fact that China’s rise has been enabled by cooperation with the US complicates the idea that this rise will produce competitive power maximizing foreign policies. The Global Financial Crisis in 2008 is an example of this. Instead of adopting policies that inflicted damage on an ailing US and maximizing its own relative power, China instead cooperated with western states to resolve the crisis (Tooze, 2019).

The cooperative foreign policies shown by China in other areas further contradict the offensive realist account. In disputes over territory, for example, rather than using its growing power to occupy by force, China has instead settled disputes through bilateral agreements and compromised over sovereignty (Fravel, 2008). In its relations with Japan, rather than engage in competitive policies that seek to maximize its power relative to this main contender within Asia, China has instead engaged in a surprising amount of economic cooperation in a way that is difficult for offensive realists to explain (Yang Jiang, 2010; Yuechun Jiang, 2018).

**Defensive Realism**

A smaller number of studies have also sought to explain China’s recent foreign policy using defensive realism. This shares with offensive realism the understanding that international anarchy and balance of power determine state behaviour, with states equally preoccupied with survival. However, it differs in seeing states as prone to recognise the destabilising effects of the security dilemma (Lim, 2011). States therefore do not seek security through power maximization, which could be destabilizing, but by endeavouring to maintain a status quo in the international system and avoid provoking spiralling security competition, generally aiming to balance against the dominant power. Again,
this defensive realist understanding of what is determining China’s behaviour can explain some of the foreign policies it has adopted, but also remains limited in its ability to account for foreign policy overall.

Studies have argued that China’s policies during and after the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, such as its decisions to join international organisations and treaties and its pursuit of a “Good Neighbour Policy”, can be explained by the defensive realist idea that it was trying to signal peaceful intentions and avoid security competition (Glaser, 1994; Tang, 2010). However, it appears unclear whether China’s foreign policies regarding international organisations were motivated by security concerns in the ways which these accounts suggest or by other interests. The fact that it has also adopted foreign policies which challenge these organisations, such as establishing rival bodies and rejecting rulings, challenges this understanding that China is signalling peaceful intentions.

In addition, while some of China’s policies regarding relations with regional states might reflect a defensive realist logic, it has also taken a range of other actions that do not show a desire to maintain the status quo and avoid security competition. For example, it has given extensive support to Pakistan in a way that is almost certain to increase competition with India and has repeatedly clashed with India regarding border disputes (Lim, 2011). Regarding maritime disputes and its relations to Southeast Asian states and Japan, it has frequently taken actions likely to increase tensions. In 2020 for example, Chinese coastguard ships were observed patrolling near to the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands disputed with Japan (Patalano, 2020).

Many other Chinese short-term foreign policy changes do not appear to reflect attempts to avoid spiralling tensions or countervailing coalitions. China’s naval development and establishment of a naval base in Djibouti both appear examples of actions that show a willingness to risk increasing security competition with the US (Cabestan, 2005). Similarly, its aggressive postures towards US allies including Japan (over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands), the Philippines (the 2012 Scarborough Shoal Incident), and South Korea (over the deployment of THAAD) are all policies which are likely to encourage these states to strengthen ties with the US and engage in security competition with China, and therefore are policies that are not very well explained by defensive realism. In this way, the understanding of what is driving China’s foreign policy provided by defensive realism appears unable to account for many of the different foreign policies that China has adopted in recent years.
The limitations of the use of these two strands of neorealism for explaining China’s foreign policy has also led some researchers to propose instead using neoclassical realist theory. This continues to see the international system and balance of power as largely determining state behaviour, but also brings in domestic factors as an additional explanatory variable (Kirshner, 2012). While this does seem a potentially useful refinement of realist theory to explain Chinese foreign policy, there have been very few studies so far attempting to use neoclassical realism to explain China’s foreign policy changes at specific times and in relation to particular issues. For this reason, this strand of realism is not discussed here.

In summary, China displays short-term changes in foreign policy that continue to present a puzzle when explained by different types of realism. Why, despite the balance of power shifting in ways that offensive realists would expect to make China pursue power maximization, has it not acted consistently to increase its relative power but instead frequently adopted more cooperative policies? Why, contrary to the understanding offered by defensive realism, has China sometimes adopted aggressive policies which show it is willing to risk spiralling tensions of security competition? Examples of times when China has acted contrary to what might be expected by either kind of realist account are apparent in many areas of its international relations, not least in the two case studies examined in this thesis. This suggests that realist theory is limited in explaining China’s foreign policy as it rises.

2.3.2 Liberal approaches

Liberal approaches to understanding China’s foreign policy in relation to different issues as it rises see this behaviour as being driven not only by power and pursuit of survival under anarchy, but also by other material interests, particularly economic interests (Copeland, 2003; Ikenberry, 2008; Mastanduno, 2014). This literature understands China’s economic interests to drive it to engage in trade and cooperation with other states, leading to interdependency that then works to constrain China’s international behaviour by increasing the potential costs of any conflictual action. For these authors, China’s economic interests make it want to increasingly engage with and integrate into the existing US-led international order.

These approaches can explain some of China’s behaviour during the post-Cold War period. China’s actions in this period, such as its participation in international organisations, its cooperation with regional and global powers, and the limited number of times where it has initiated conflict, do appear
to be being driven primarily by its economic interests. For example, the extensive economic cooperation between China and Japan that occurs despite the fact that the two states are historically strategic rivals can be effectively explained by liberal theory (Jerdén & Hagström, 2012). In this way, when compared with realist theories, liberal approaches seem better able to explain China’s extensive economic cooperation as it has risen in the international system. They also capture the way in which this rise itself occurred largely as a result of such economic relations. However, as with the realist theories, these approaches have limitations.

Liberal approaches encounter problems explaining some of the short-term change in China’s behaviour as it rises. If China’s economic interests are taken as the principal factor driving its behaviour, then it is puzzling that at least some of China’s behaviour has been contrary to these interests. Its willingness to engage in conflict with the Philippines and Vietnam over the South China Sea, its confrontational approach to South Korea’s deployment of the THAAD missile system, and its recent retaliation in the “trade war” with the US, offer examples of behaviour that appears to be driven by factors other than economic interest.

These more confrontational actions can of course still be explained by neoliberal theory, which understands state behaviour as driven by underlying realist security interests as well as economic interests and interdependency. However, the problem here becomes explaining why in these cases security interests took precedence over economic interests and the pursuit of cooperation with other states. Copeland (2003) argues that, in weighing up the costs and benefits of cooperation and conflict, China bases this calculation in part on its expectations of future trade with the state involved. When these expectations of future trade are relatively pessimistic, China will be willing to tolerate the costs to trade of taking more conflictual, aggressive actions against others. This account therefore invokes ideas as an additional factor that is determining whether China acts on economic or security interests.

Other studies using liberal theory to explain China’s behaviour also present it as choosing between economic interests and realist security interests, and then draw on identity to explain why it makes these choices. Mastanduno (2014), for example, argues that changes in China’s behaviour after the 2009 financial crisis reflected the fact that it no longer saw the benefits of cooperating with and supporting the US-centred order in the way that it had previously. This seems to reflect a gradual change in China’s identity affecting its calculations regarding the benefits of cooperation and conflict. In this way, many liberal arguments that see material economic and security interests as
determining China’s behaviour also need to use ideas about identity to some degree to make sense of how China actually acts on these interests. This overlaps with the strand of liberal theory and democratic peace theory which hold that the type of regime present in a state impacts on its willingness to cooperate instead of engaging in conflict. The incorporation of identity into the explanation given by these accounts moves towards constructivist analysis, although they still only recognise the role of identity to a limited degree.

2.3.3 Constructivist approaches

Other approaches to explaining China’s foreign policy have focused on its identity and how this is changing. These constructivist approaches are arguably better able to account for a wider range of China’s foreign policies regarding different issues, but they remain unable to explain why policy often changes within short periods of time. Critiques of the realist and liberal understandings described above have highlighted the need to also consider how identity influences foreign policies (Johnston, 1999; Legro, 2007, 2008). These critiques typically suggest treating identity as an intervening variable, or a “third meshing gear” (Legro, 2007, p.516), affecting structural factors which still bear much of the underlying explanatory power.

Adopting this constructivist approach, studies have used identity as a factor that explains aspects of China’s foreign policy as it rises (Chan, 2014; Johnston, 1998; Johnston, 2008; Sinkkonen, 2014; Uemura, 2015). These studies look at deeply entrenched aspects of China’s cultural identity to explain its foreign policy. Uemura (2015), for example, argued that central to China’s identity is guan xi (reciprocal relations) and this determines how it views its interactions with other states. This is used to explain the way in which China’s relations with Japan deteriorated between 1960 and 1980. China’s policies towards Japan are argued to result from changes in the way Japan is understood by this guan xi identity.

Johnston (1998) argued that China’s longstanding understanding of security, dating back to classical strategic thought, contributes to determining contemporary policies. In a later study (Johnston, 2008), he argued that China’s behaviour towards international institutions has been caused by shifts in its identity occurring because of the way it is being “socialized” into these organisations. Another study has adopted a constructivist approach that looks beyond strategic factors and uses state identity to explain China’s changing foreign policies regarding Taiwan and cross-strait ties (D. P. Chen, 2014).
These accounts have successfully shown the way China’s identity shapes how it responds to those power and economic interests argued by realists and liberals to drive its foreign policy, producing behaviour that is more cooperative or conflictual. The constructivist studies of China’s foreign policy have been criticized, however, for the way they essentialise China’s identity and see it as the largely fixed properties of the state (Pan, 1999). This understanding of identity change is a problem for explaining more short-term foreign policy change. For example, while Uemura’s account explains longer term changes in China’s policy orientation towards Japan, it less effectively explains why Sino-Japanese relations were extremely tense between 2000 and 2005, but then warmed considerably in the years following this, before deteriorating again in 2012 (Reilly, 2014).

This constructivist research about China also tends to treat identity as being one factor alongside more material factors (Johnston, 1999; Noesselt, 2014). Identity is seen to intervene in shaping behaviour which still continues to be largely determined by underlying material factors (Johnston, 1999; Legro, 2008). In this way, it becomes unclear what lies behind changes in China’s foreign policies. Studies using constructivist approaches to explaining Japan’s foreign policies have similarly been criticised for using identity in order to explain continuity and then turning to material factors to explain changes (Hagström and Gustafsson, 2015).

This criticism of the way constructivist studies treat identity is part of a broader critique of mainstream constructivism. This focuses on the ontological assumptions made by Wendt that form the foundation of this theory (Guzzini & Leander, 2006). While Wendt argued that part of state identity was formed through interaction with others, he also proposed an “essential state” which exists prior to these interactions and outside of the processes of social construction (Wendt, 1999). This ontologically assumes what Wendt termed a “rump materialism”, or the idea that there are material things that exist separate from, and are not given meaning through, language. Such a division between material and ideational factors enables conventional constructivists to treat identity as one variable, constructed by language, alongside other material factors (such as power) that stand outside of this constructivist logic (Epstein, 2011). This treatment of identity as slow to change and just one intervening factor limits this theory’s ability to explain short-term changes in foreign policy.
2.3.4 Domestic approaches

Other approaches to explaining China’s foreign policy have instead looked to domestic processes taking place within the country. There have been studies arguing that changes in China’s policies can be explained by the characteristics of the leader in power (He & Feng, 2015; J. Zhang, 2014). In this way, He and Feng (2015) argue that foreign policy under Xi Jinping is determined by his “operational code” (p.217) and that because this is similar to that of his predecessor Hu Jintao, there is little change. This is challenged by the fact that, in some issues such as participation in international organisations and foreign diplomacy, there have arguably been big shifts under Xi Jinping. Emphasis on leaders’ personalities as the main determinant of foreign policy also suffers from several other problems. First, it struggles to explain those changes in foreign policy seen under the same leader. Second, it assumes Chinese leaders are extremely powerful and their personality traits translate directly to foreign policy that they make as unbounded individuals.

Other studies have instead proposed that it is not only the top leaders, but rather a wider bureaucracy that explains foreign policy towards different issues (Cabestan, 2017; B. S. Glaser & Medeiros, 2007; Jakobson, 2014; Jakobson & Manuel, 2016; Jones & Zeng, 2019; Lai & Kang, 2014; Qingmin, 2016). There have been studies which explain China’s foreign policies regarding maritime disputes (Jakobson, 2014) and the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative (Jones & Zeng, 2019) as being the product of multiple actors all competing for influence over foreign policy decisions within China. Whilst these accounts can quite effectively explain the emergence of some policies at particular times, they often do not show how the influence of these different competing actors translates into changes in foreign policy. They also tend to prioritise different kinds of state actors and sections of the Chinese foreign policy making bureaucracy, paying less attention to the Chinese public and their role in foreign policy making.

Another approach to examining domestic factors determining China’s foreign policy does so through a focus on domestic identity. A problem many constructivist approaches share with realist and liberal approaches is that they only look at the state and international levels. Studies drawing on ideas from the Area Studies field have argued for more attention to be paid to the domestic dynamics that form China’s identity (Callahan, 2009; Carlson, 2011; Shambaugh, 2011). Sharing constructivist ideas about identity’s role in states’ international behaviour, Shambaugh (2011) and Callahan (2009) see China’s identity as something that is debated and contested within the country. For
Callahan, the identity underpinning China’s international behaviour should be viewed as something “produced and consumed in a circular process” by both state and society (p.23-24). This points to a focus on domestic processes of identity formation in understanding China’s behaviour that has been taken up by a range of authors in different ways (Gustafsson, 2016; Shih & Yin, 2013).

The debate about the Chinese public’s “bottom up” influence

There is an ongoing debate about the extent to which “bottom up” forces can also play a role in shaping China’s foreign policy. In this debate, some take a more rationalist approach to foreign policy making and look for signs that the Chinese government is actively responding to public pressure. Others discuss how the “bottom up” forces from the public contribute to the formation of China’s national identity, seeing this identity as then either producing or making possible foreign policy. In the discussion that follows, I mostly engage with this second discussion. The broader debate is significant because if it is assumed the Chinese public has no “bottom up” impact on China’s foreign policy, or on its identity in relation to this, then the state can be understood as making foreign policy without constraints in response to structural factors, power and economic interests, or deep-set characteristics of its identity.

Even though an increasing number of studies have focused on the way in which China’s identity is domestically formed, many have still tended to assume that it is largely being formed in a more “top down” way or that China’s identity primarily represents the views of the government and elites. There is therefore a more specific debate about China’s identity and the extent to which this is being produced “top down” by the Chinese state and “bottom up” by the Chinese public. To discuss this debate here, identity is considered in very broad terms as encompassing both public opinion as well as the expression of that opinion in street protests and through written texts. While my research in this thesis is primarily concerned with the construction of identity in discourse in the form of online text, I also recognise that there are also many other kinds of identity practices that can impact on China’s foreign policies.

First, there have been numerous studies arguing that “bottom up” forces from the Chinese public can influence China’s foreign policy in different ways, with these arguments particularly emerging in the early 2000s (Fewsmith & Rosen, 2001; Gries, 2004; Hao & Su, 2005; T. Zhu, 2001). In that period incidents such as the US bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, a collision between US and Chinese planes, and anti-Japanese demonstrations offered evidence that expressions of public sentiment (particularly in large-scale street demonstrations) placed significant pressure on the Chinese
government to adopt particular policies. These events led to increasing focus on popular nationalism and its potential influence on China’s foreign policy (Cabestan, 2005; Shen & Breslin, 2010; Shirk, 2007; X. Wu, 2007; T. Zhu, 2001). Gries (2005), for example, challenged the understanding that Chinese nationalism is only produced by the state, to argue that a “bottom up” popular nationalism could also have a significant influence on China’s foreign policies. He argued that the idea there was “top down” state nationalism was not wrong, but only presented half of the picture, with a second kind of “bottom up” nationalism also being produced by the Chinese public.

Gries went on to argue for a more dynamic analysis of Chinese nationalism, viewing this as produced through an interaction between society and the state. He proposed looking at situations when state nationalism has been able to dominate and where more popular nationalism has been able to exert influence. Callahan has similarly argued that China’s identity is neither entirely formed “bottom up” by members of society nor dictated by the party-state, but instead is a combination of the two: it is neither the result of “the party-state instrumentally brainwashing the populous, nor the spontaneous actions of an authentic grassroots community [but is] produced and consumed in a circular process that knits together urban elites and rural peasants” (Callahan, 2009, pp.23-24). These arguments about the role which the wider Chinese public plays in forming the identities behind China’s international behaviour are significant. They point to how it is necessary for constructivist analysis to not only consider the domestic formation of identity but to consider this in the broadest possible terms, looking at the role that the entire Chinese nation plays in creating identities.

The focus on the potential for the public to influence foreign policy coincided with the emergence of the Internet in China, leading to recognition that the online space was potentially an important site for public expression that impacts on policy. A number of studies examined the use of the Internet to discuss and express opinions which influence China-US relations (Fewsmith & Rosen, 2001; Ho et al., 2003) and also Sino-Japanese relations (Hong, 2005). Studies presented evidence of the extensive and varied public discussion taking place online, including the way in which Chinese nationalism was being voiced in discussion forums and early social media platforms (Wu, 2007; Yang, 2009). These studies tend, either explicitly or implicitly, to recognise the role the Internet plays as an important site for identity formation in China. They show the way the Internet can contribute to the negotiation and formation of identities which then may affect China’s foreign policies in different areas.
Arguments about the potential for the public to influence Chinese foreign policy are typically based on understandings of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP)’s legitimacy. Many studies argue that because it came to power through revolution, the CCP lacks the kind of legitimacy bestowed upon other governments by the electoral process. Instead, it relies on the more direct consent of the citizens (for a detailed discussion of legitimacy see Reilly, 2011). In the era when China was led by Chairman Mao Zedong (1949-1976), the CCP gained legitimacy from its revolutionary role. But studies have argued that, in recent times, this ideological legitimacy has waned and the party has had to rely on other means to ensure that the public continues to consent to its rule (Hyun & Kim, 2015; Reilly, 2011). As a result, it has been argued that the CCP increasingly practices what has been called “responsive authoritarianism” (Qiaoan & Teets, 2020). To achieve consent, and prevent widespread discontent, the CCP adjusts its (foreign) policies in response to the Chinese public.

Based on this, many studies tend to look for the direct influence of public opinions on policy. They understand the state to make calculations based on its judgements about the public’s opinions and so seek signs that the CCP monitors public opinions and then makes changes to policy in response to these (Chubb, 2016; Fewsmith & Rosen, 2001). However, it can also be argued that this legitimacy works through identity discourses. This views the relationship between state and the public as discursive. Discourses employed by the public condition what discourses are legitimate or appropriate for the state to use (Hansen, 2006). The Chinese public perhaps has a more ‘indirect’ influence on China’s foreign policies by contributing to producing dominant identity discourses. This argument about the “bottom up” influence on identity is suggested in some studies, but often not made explicit (Callahan, 2008; Carlson, 2011; Gries et al., 2016; Scobell et al., 2019).

In recent years, researchers have increasingly questioned the idea that public expression affects Chinese foreign policy. These studies argue the Chinese state can control and manipulate public expression so that this does not exert any significant pressure on policy making (Friedberg, 2014; Nathan, 2017; Reilly, 2011; Weiss, 2013). A further set of studies have presented the ways in which the Chinese state controls discourses about different issues (Callahan, 2016; Carrico, 2020; Lams, 2018; Wang, 2012). There have also been studies showing the ways in which the CCP controls online discourses (Cairns & Carlson, 2016; Economy, 2018; Han, 2018; Roberts, 2018; Schneider, 2018).
However, even if it is true that the Chinese state exercises considerable control over discourses in China, many of these studies still imply a relationship between the state and the public. Even if the state is controlling public discourse, it is still necessary to study how this occurs. These studies also tend to present a dialectical struggle over public opinion and identity between the state and public. It may be more accurate to see the state and public interacting in various ways to produce and contest identity discourses. Research has shown such interaction occurring around discourse about the “China dream” (Callahan, 2015). Although the Chinese state first proposed this concept, the public took it up and filled it with their own meanings—working to “co-produce” an identity discourse that has been influential in recent foreign policy. I argue this potential for the public to interact with the state in forming China’s identity means they may still have a “bottom up” influence on foreign policy. I therefore do not follow the dominant understanding of identity and foreign policy as being the “top down” preserve of the Chinese leadership, but rather seek to re-examine this question.

2.4 Conclusion: Towards a critical constructivist approach

Much of the literature about China’s rise has paid only limited attention to short-term changes in foreign policy, even though these changes appear important for the longer-term trajectory of China’s behaviour. In the literature which has examined the more short-term developments in China’s foreign policy, there have been accounts which have sought to understand these using different kinds of realist, liberal, and constructivist international relations theories, as well as accounts which have focused on domestic factors such as leadership and bureaucracy. While all these approaches provide an understanding of aspects of China’s foreign policies, they share limitations in accounting for all the changes in China’s foreign policy.

Offensive realist and liberal approaches see power interests and economic interests respectively as determining China’s foreign policy, but they do not recognise how identity shapes the way these interests are understood and produces additional interests. Each approach is only able to explain some of the change in China’s foreign policy. A constructivist approach that takes into account the role of China’s identity appears better able to capture the contingency of its foreign policy and so more of its overall behaviour. However, because of its treatment of identity as largely fixed and as an intervening variable, this approach still does not explain why China’s foreign policy changes in short spaces of time. Because they either do not recognise the role
played by identity in shaping China’s interests, or recognise this but treat identity as largely fixed, these approaches are unable to explain all the observed short-term changes in China’s foreign policy.

This thesis therefore seeks to make sense of the short-term change in China’s foreign policy as it rises by using critical constructivist IR theory. This sees China’s identity as being constructed through discourses that are produced intersubjectively by members of the state and public in China (as well as other participants in the discourse community from outside of the country). This approach is similar to more mainstream constructivist approaches in that it recognises the role of China’s identity in shaping its interests. However, instead of seeing China as having one entrenched identity that is only changed very slowly through its interaction with other states in international society, this views China’s identity as being continuously constructed through discourse. This identity construction is therefore always shifting because of domestic dynamics, where a broad spectrum of different actors within the country interact to “co-produce” the dominant identity discourses that then make possible foreign policy.

In this thesis, I argue that this approach may more effectively account for the extensive short-term changes in China’s foreign policy that we see. The use of a critical constructivist approach can also provide a way to better account for the role which the wider Chinese public plays in foreign policy. The next chapter describes how critical constructivist IR theory understands foreign policy and how it can be used to make sense of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy.
3 Theory

3.1 Introduction

In this thesis, I aim to contribute to debates about how to understand China’s rise by making sense of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy. The literature review in the previous chapter described how many existing studies have only partly been able to account for these changes in China’s foreign policy, pointing to the need for a different approach. I argue that a critical constructivist approach, which focuses on how China’s foreign policy is made possible by identity discourses, provides a more effective way to make sense of many of the short-term changes seen. This approach also allows me to examine whether the Chinese public has a “bottom up” influence that contributes to these foreign policy changes.

This chapter describes the critical constructivist approach and how it has been applied in this thesis to make sense of China’s foreign policy. It begins by describing how this approach understands identity discourses as making possible the foreign policy of states at certain points in time and how, in doing so, it can show the role played by the public in producing particular foreign policies. It then describes how this approach can also be used to make sense of short-term foreign policy changes by understanding these to be the result of changes in the relative dominance of different identity discourses within society. The chapter goes on to outline how the dominance of particular identity discourses can be explained using Lacanian ideas about how psychological factors are connected to identity discourses. Finally, it discusses why I have chosen to focus on the way that identity discourses are produced and contested on the Chinese Internet.

3.2 A critical constructivist approach

This thesis makes use of critical constructivist IR theory. This theory shares with mainstream constructivism the idea that state identity shapes foreign policy, but importantly differs from this in seeing this identity as socially constructed through discourses shared by members of society (Epstein, 2011; Hansen, 2006; Zehfuss, 2010). Unlike mainstream constructivists, therefore, identity is understood by critical constructivists as very dynamic and fluid, in a way that allows it to be more effectively used to make sense of shorter-term changes in foreign policy. The critical constructivists also arguably have a
more developed theory of exactly how identity is linked with foreign policy. For critical constructivists, socially constructed identity discourses form the context in which foreign policy is made, making natural or possible certain policies, whilst making other policies unthinkable or impossible. The critical constructivists therefore do not see identity as “causing” foreign policy in the positivist sense, rejecting the notion of causation altogether. This understanding is one that I follow in my research here.

In international relations, critical constructivists are also sometimes referred to as poststructuralists. I would argue for making a distinction between the two labels. I consider critical constructivism to refer to a theory within international relations which is used primarily to understand the foreign policies adopted by states. Meanwhile, poststructuralism is a sociological and linguistic school of thought (where some of the main figures are the sociologists Laclau and Mouffe, the psychologist Lacan, and the philosophers Foucault and Derrida). Poststructuralism seeks to explain the way language functions to construct the identities of a range of entities including individuals, organisations, and also states. It has been used to explain the constructed identity of different subjects within society, groups like the “insane” and “criminal” for example (Foucault, 2001). Critical constructivist international relations theory draws on understandings from poststructuralism to make sense of the constructed identity and foreign policy of states. In the discussion that follows, I begin by describing the broader poststructuralist understanding of identity. Following this I then go on to discuss how this understanding is used by critical constructivist international relations scholars to make sense of foreign policy.

3.2.1 The poststructuralist theory of identity

Poststructuralists see identity as the meaning that is given to the Self (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). They view this identity as being constituted through use of language, with nothing standing outside of those meanings that are given to things by language (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). The material world “out there” can only be understood through the meanings it is given by language. However, language for poststructuralists does not have a structured set of fixed meanings (hence the prefix “post”). For example, the word “normal” does not mean one thing which everybody agrees upon, and which remains the same, but instead is given a range of meanings by people in different
circumstances. Rather than having a concrete meaning, words (or signifiers\(^4\)) gain meaning through use, and through their linking with, and differentiation from, other signifiers when they are used.

The use of language, or an articulation, partially fixes meaning because it deploys specific signifiers in a way that gives them meaning. Somebody might describe their child as being “very normal and well-behaved, unlike the neighbour’s daughter” in a way that gives a specific meaning to the word “normal” in use. An articulation therefore constructs identity by linking words together and differentiating these from other words (Hansen, 2006; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). For example, a nineteenth century text might construct the identity of “woman” by describing it using a number of linked signifiers (“emotional”, “motherly”, “reliant”), which are juxtaposed with signifiers used to describe men (“rational”, “intellectual”, independent”) in a way that partially fixes their meaning (this example is taken from Hansen, 2006, p.19).

In this way, an identity for the Self (the identity of “woman”) is constructed through differentiation from an Other (in the form of “man”). There are therefore no completely fixed structures of meaning. There are always other meanings that can be given to words. This means that a complete or full identity is ultimately impossible. When a person tries to articulate their identity, as a “normal” or “honest” person for example, these words can always be given different meanings by others in a way which shifts the identity they present. An example of this might be how specific social groups have different meanings for the word “teacher” and the identity it connotes (a secular society may see this as somebody who works in a school, while a religious group might instead see it as a spiritual leader in a place of worship). As a result, identity is fluid and prone to change. This means individuals are compelled to continuously re-articulate their identities in an attempt to achieve ontological security or a firm sense of self (Campbell, 1992; Solomon, 2015).

When a shared agreement develops between people in society about meaning, this then creates an identity discourse. Meaning becomes partially, or temporarily, fixed. For example, members of nineteenth century society had a shared set of meanings about the identity of “woman” which could be seen to be an identity discourse for women at the time. Such a discourse might be shared between wider members of society or between members of a sub-group within society (medical professionals, for example, share their own discourse regarding their profession). Crucially, this identity discourse then

\(^4\) In linguistics, the idea of the way in which words function as signs is split into two parts: there is the “signifier” or the word that is used to represent something and then the “signified” or the thing in the world that is being represented.
forms the pre-conditions for articulations about identity made by members of the group (Hansen & Wæver, 2002). It acts like a set of rules about what can be said. If somebody wanted to make a statement about women in nineteenth century society, for example, they would be compelled to do so within the terms of the identity discourse regarding women that was dominant at the time. To make a statement that really did not fit with this dominant identity discourse would be to open yourself up to social ridicule, shaming, or other forms of exclusion. For example, in China, because of the dominance of a nationalistic discourse and associated narrative about the country’s growing strength, to make statements about aspects of Chinese weakness would likely place you at odds with society.

When a particular discourse becomes very dominant or hegemonic, it is accepted as the “common sense” understanding by a large number of the social group such that other statements become difficult to make (Hansen, 2006; Krebs, 2015). The way that dominant identity discourses provide the structures or “rules” that constrain future articulations of identity is key to critical constructivist international relations theory and the way in which it explains foreign policy (Hansen & Wæver, 2002). This is because this theory views foreign policy as an articulation of identity and so sees this as being constrained by the dominant identity discourse present at the time. In this thesis, I share this view and therefore take dominant identity discourses within China as working to constrain or shape the foreign policy that is made at different times. In this way, I see identity discourses to make possible foreign policies.

3.2.2 Critical constructivism: identity discourses and foreign policy

Dominant identity discourses are understood in this thesis to form the underlying context for foreign policies. When making foreign policy, decision makers are also articulating an identity (Hansen, 2006). When they do so, they are therefore constrained in what they can say and the actions this entails by the dominant identity discourses present at the time. Because dominant identity discourses create structures or rules, or delimit what can and cannot be appropriately articulated, they make possible or natural certain foreign policies whilst making others impossible or unnatural (Hansen, 2006; Hansen & Wæver, 2002). When they make foreign policy, foreign policy decision makers cannot easily articulate an identity which differs too greatly from the dominant identity discourse without opening themselves up to a form of social opposition (or even shame or ridicule), and instead they are likely to produce
policies that fit with this dominant identity discourse (Hansen, 2006; Weldes, 1999). This means those who are making foreign policy in China must do so in ways that fit with the underlying dominant identity discourses present at any particular time.

These underlying identity discourses which form the context for foreign policy are also partly produced in wider Chinese society. Whilst many critical constructivist studies focus largely on those identity discourses present within the political sphere, it has been recognised that identity discourses can also be located elsewhere (Doty, 1996; Hansen, 2006; Weldes, 1999). Hansen, for instance, asserted that we should view “official foreign policy texts – statements, speeches, and interviews, not as entities standing separately from wider societal discourse, but as entities located within a larger textual web; a web that goes beyond other policy texts, into journalism, popular non-fiction, and, potentially, even fiction” (Hansen, 2006, p.62). Meanwhile, Weldes (1999) proposed that wider societal discourse forms a “security imaginary” that provides the linguistic raw materials and so the discursive context in which foreign policy is being produced. I follow this approach, studying the identity discourses being produced by wider Chinese society. I analyse how these public identity discourses form part of the context for the foreign policies produced by the Chinese government in relation to different issues.

This can be connected to an argument that the Chinese public has a “bottom up” influence on China’s foreign policy. If the wider Chinese public contributes to the dominant identity discourses constraining what foreign policies can be made at any particular time, then they are influencing these foreign policies. When there is a very dominant identity discourse present within wider Chinese society, then the Chinese party-state is arguably unable to produce a foreign policy contrary to this.

In 2001, for example, a United States Navy spy plane and Chinese fighter jet collided in mid-air when flying close to the coast of China. This incident was discussed extensively on Chinese Internet discussion forums. In the posts these users made, they discursively constructed a particularly nationalistic identity for China with the US as an Other (Li et al., 2003). When the Chinese leaders made foreign policy in response to the incident, they would have faced pressure to produce policy which articulated an identity fitting with this broader societal identity discourse dominant at the time. This might be the reason why the Chinese leaders decided to continue to detain the American crew and to demand an apology from the US, despite the fact that the incident occurred in the run up to China’s accession to the World Trade Organization.
(WTO) when the Chinese government might have been expected to be milder in its response.

The way in which dominant identity discourses, partly being produced “bottom up” by the Chinese public, constrain or make possible foreign policy can also be connected to understandings of legitimacy and how it functions in China. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is increasingly concerned about maintaining its legitimacy (or the recognition of its right to rule) amongst the Chinese public, as it lacks the legitimacy granted by democratic elections and also faces fading revolutionary legitimacy (Reilly, 2011). As I discussed in the literature review in the previous chapter (Chapter 2), research has argued that this concern for maintaining its legitimacy can drive the CCP to adopt foreign policies which will gain broad public approval (Fewsmith & Rosen, 2001). I argue that identity discourses provide a way to theorise how the CCP’s legitimacy concerns affect policy development.

Concern for legitimacy may add force to the way in which dominant identity discourses constrain foreign policy. The Chinese government might be seen as needing to make particular foreign policies that fit with underlying identity discourses not only to avoid social ridicule or shame, but also because failing to do so would lead to a significant loss of legitimacy. Studies have argued that the CCP constructs security issues to make these fit with underlying identity discourses in order to gain broader public legitimacy for the actions taken (Vuori, 2008). In the same way, it may construct its foreign policy to fit with wider identity discourse and ensure continued legitimacy from the Chinese public.

Looking at the identity discourses produced by the Chinese public therefore provides an effective way of examining the “bottom up” pressures being placed on those making China’s foreign policy. The pressures from those dominant identity discourses that are partly being produced by the Chinese public may account for the shape foreign policy takes at different times. To be clear, I am not arguing that the Chinese public on its own produces identity discourses which make possible particular foreign policies. Instead, I am suggesting that the public may help to decide which identity discourses become dominant in Chinese society overall, with these dominant discourses then making possible foreign policies at certain times.

In this way, it should be recognised that the identity discourses underpinning foreign policy are not only being produced by the Chinese public. They are also produced “top down” by different parts of the Chinese state including the state-controlled media. One main objection to the idea that the Chinese public has a “bottom up” influence through identity discourses would
be that the state can use propaganda and censorship to shape domestic identity discourses (Carrico, 2020; Lams, 2018).

But while the state does seek to shape identity discourses, it is not always entirely successful in doing so. An example might be the “China Dream” discourse which the CCP began to promulgate shortly after Xi Jinping became president in 2013. Although the state tried to steer the public in their interpretations of this discourse, the public were seen to take it up and fill the discourse with their own individual meanings (Callahan, 2015). There is interaction between those articulations of identity that are made “top down” by the state and those made “bottom up” by the public, so that the two can be seen as mutually constitutive.

A description of how China’s identity is “co-produced” by both the state and members of society is apt (Callahan, 2009, p. 25). Rather than seeing the state and society as being continuously in competition with each other over China’s identity, this instead sees them as being more intertwined, where at times they might reinforce the resonance of each other’s discourses and at other times they might act to challenge these discourses. New identity discourses can be produced in both spheres.

The Chinese state, for example, might seek to re-articulate China’s identity in a new way (as it has arguably tried to do with concepts such as the “China Dream” and “New Type of Major Power Relations”, see Lampton, 2013) but in order for these presentations of China’s identity to succeed, they need to be recognised and resonate with broader Chinese society. If they do not resonate in this way, then such identity constructions and the foreign policies associated with them will lack legitimacy. The CCP may then be pushed to adapt its policies, switching to those more favourably viewed by the Chinese public (Qiaoan & Teets, 2020).

It is necessary to analyse how dominant identity discourses are being produced in different spheres and the relationships between them. To do this, my research analyses the production of dominant identity discourses in both public online discussion (on the social media platform Weibo) and also in articles by Chinese state media (from the online edition of People’s Daily). This allows for analysis of how both the Chinese state’s “top down” and Chinese public’s “bottom up” production of identity leads to the dominant identity discourses which then constrain foreign policy.
3.2.3 Foreign policy change and identity change

So far, this chapter has described how critical constructivist theory can be used to analyse China’s foreign policy and the role the public may play in producing this. However, my research also aims to make sense of short-term changes in this policy. To do this, it focuses on changes in China’s identity, understanding these changes to make possible short-term foreign policy change. If a dominant identity discourse is seen to make possible the foreign policy China adopts at a particular time, it logically follows that changes in dominant identity discourse will also make possible changes in foreign policy (Epstein, 2011; Hansen, 2006; Hansen & Wæver, 2002). This leads to a question: how does discursively constructed identity change?

In this thesis, I understand changes in identity discourses as occurring through re-articulation and contestation. The poststructuralist understanding that identity must be continuously re-articulated creates the potential for identity change to occur. Each re-articulation of an identity potentially provides a variation of previous constructions (Rumelili & Todd, 2018). This might appear to contradict the idea that the structures of discourses delimit subsequent articulations of identity. If discourses constrain what can be said, how can new articulations break with what has gone before? Scholars theorising discursive identity change have tackled this by proposing a layered model of identity where deeper more sedimented layers remain more fixed and provide structure, while shallower layers are more fluid (Hagström & Gustafsson, 2015; Hansen & Wæver, 2002). In these shallower layers of discourse, the only ever partially fixed meanings in a discourse are altered through re-articulation.

When an identity is re-articulated, this may change the identity construction or the linking and differentiation through which meaning is constructed (Hansen, 2006). The example used earlier in this chapter discussed how nineteenth century texts constructed an identity for “woman” through linked signifiers (“emotional”, “motherly”, “reliant”) juxtaposed with signifiers describing men (“rational”, “intellectual”, independent”). In a contemporary text, the identity of “woman” might instead be articulated as “peaceful” and “heroic” in contrast with an Other presented as “warlike” and “shameful”. This new discourse was arguably seen to some extent after the Second World War, when the role of women in the war effort appears to have contributed to a discursive shift in construction of their identity.

Identity might therefore be seen as changing all the time, because each individual articulation of identity changes it slightly from before. However,
for more substantial identity change it is necessary for other people to recognise and share in the new articulation of identity so that it becomes an identity discourse. For example, a person could try to re-articulate the identity of “teachers” to describe them as the most valuable contributors to society and therefore deserving of the highest salaries, but unless others shared in this presentation of identity then it would not become an identity discourse that had an impact within society. If the newly articulated identity was shared with others, then this new identity discourse for “teachers” would then compete for dominance with existing discourses.

To demonstrate how changes in identity discourse can explain China’s foreign policy change, it is useful to look at the case of China’s changing foreign policies regarding international climate cooperation. Here, this case is discussed only as an illustration of the way a change in identity discourse can be used as an explanation. The ideas presented are therefore not fully substantiated. In this case, China adopted a radically different approach at the 2009 and 2015 UN climate conferences (Cui, 2018). It could be argued that a change in dominant identity discourses occurred that made possible this foreign policy change. If this were the case, then the change in identity discourse may have proceeded in the following way:

First, members of Chinese society began to articulate a new identity for China that presented the Chinese Self as a “developed” state and a major “polluter”, in contrast with Others that were “developing” and “low polluting”. This new articulation was accepted by others within Chinese society to become a new identity discourse. The new discourse competed for dominance with an existing discourse that, while also describing China as a major “polluter”, presented it as “developing” in differentiation from “developed” Others. As the new discourse became more widely shared within Chinese society, it took over as the dominant identity discourse that formed the context of foreign policy. The Chinese leadership was then compelled to make foreign policy to fit with this new underlying identity discourse, pursuing a more cooperative approach to climate cooperation.

This somewhat simplified account illustrates how looking at changes in dominant identity discourses might make sense of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy regarding the issue of climate change cooperation. In the research conducted in this thesis, I adopt the same approach to make sense of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy regarding other issues, namely North Korea and the South China Sea. For these issues, I examine how changes in dominant identity discourses may be making possible changes in foreign policy that occur at the same time as these changes.
To summarise, I aim to make sense of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy by using critical constructivist IR theory that (drawing on the ideas of poststructuralists) understands state identity to be constructed through discourses produced intersubjectively by members of society, including both the state and the wider public. Foreign policy is understood to be made possible by dominant identity discourses within society, so changes in these dominant identity discourses then also make possible changes in policy. Because identity discourses are constructed by the whole of society, the public may also play a role in producing those dominant discourses which make possible different foreign policies, so the public potentially has a “bottom up” influence on foreign policy. This leads to a further question, namely why do some discourses become dominant within society to make possible foreign policies? Why do certain identity discourses resonate?

3.3 Lacanian theory to explain the dominance of identity discourses

Accounting for why certain identity discourses become dominant is important as part of an attempt to make sense of short-term foreign policy changes. This is because, as was discussed in the introduction to this thesis, short-term changes at particular times may set the context for subsequent changes and therefore shape the longer-term evolution of China’s foreign policy. If short-term changes are made possible by the dominance of particular identity discourses, then knowing the reasons why these discourses become dominant can show how these changes shape the context for subsequent foreign policies. For example, if we understand why a particular identity discourse became dominant in the United Kingdom to make possible the decision to leave the European Union, then we have a better grasp of the identity dynamics underlying future foreign policy choices made after this.

So why do particular identity discourses dominate or resonate in society? In the discussion that follows, I use “resonate” rather than dominate because this is the term adopted by Solomon (2015), whose ideas I draw upon. However, both terms can basically be taken to mean the same thing: that the identity discourse is being articulated frequently by a significant portion of the social group(s) being studied. As has been discussed earlier in this chapter, critical constructivist IR theory describes how state identities are constructed in discourses, where these discourses make possible particular foreign policies. However, a question remains about why certain identity discourses be-
come resonant within societies at particular times while other identity discourses do not. Why, as research has shown (Hansen, 2006), did a “genocide discourse” resonate in Western states to make possible particular foreign policies regarding the Bosnian War? Or why, to return to the example given above, did a pro-Brexit identity discourse gain such resonance in the UK prior to the referendum on membership of the European Union?

To answer the question of why particular discourses resonate, I make use of ideas developed by Solomon (2015), who is himself drawing on the theory about subjectivity and discourse of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. This theory is principally about our psychology and how this connects to identity discourses. For the purposes of this thesis, rather than drawing ideas from Lacan myself, I have considered it sufficient to use Lacanian theory as mediated through Solomon, who has produced an accurate reading of these ideas about subjectivity and has adapted them in a way that makes them more applicable to the study of IR. I shall first discuss Solomon’s ideas about how Lacanian theory can be applied to the study of US identity discourses, before going on to discuss the suitability of using the same theory to explain the resonance of different Chinese identity discourses.

3.3.1 Lacanian Theory to explain resonance

Solomon seeks to explain the resonance (or the dominance) of different US identity discourses by using Lacan’s account of how we as individuals emotionally relate to / invest in different identity discourses being produced in society. To describe how he does this, it is necessary to outline a number of key concepts that are part of Lacan’s theory: *master signifiers, desire, enjoyment,* and *fantasy.*

The first of these concepts, *master signifiers,* is closely connected to the notion of interpellation. This is the understanding, which Lacan shared with other poststructuralists, that discourses ascribe or *interpellate* a particular identity onto the subject. When a man is addressed as a “father” or a “teacher”, for example, this is an instance of a discourse interpellating an identity onto them. Master signifiers are the words that function to ascribe identity in this way. Solomon (2015) describes master signifiers as “temporary anchors” for meaning, and also therefore focal points for our investment in a discourse. They are “those words that we turn to when asked who we are: student, father, mother, son, daughter, Democrat, American, and so on” (Solomon, 2015, p.28).
The master signifiers make an individual into a *subject* in a particular set of social relations. Solomon describes how a subject is pinned to a signifier that works to represent him for others – they are given a label such as “student” or “lecturer”. When they are ascribed such a master signifier, this is a call to them to accept the master signifier as their own and to adopt the values and practices expected of somebody with this identity – to behave as a “student” or “lecturer” for example. In the same way, a master signifier might interpellate somebody as being the subject of a particular kind of state. Solomon gives the example of an American identity discourse that uses the master signifier “freedom” to label the identity of the US and its citizens.

Lacanian theory then connects this understanding of how master signifiers interpellate to ideas about *desire* and identification. Simply put, this understands individuals to be continuously desiring a more solid or fixed sense of identity that always remains elusive. While the other famous psychoanalyst of the twentieth century, Sigmund Freud, placed sexual desire at the heart of his theories about human behaviour, Lacan instead made this desire for fullness of identity a central part of his theories. For Lacan, the subject is always a desiring subject.

As Solomon describes it, when a discourse uses a master signifier to ascribe a label (or interpellate) to a subject, the subject’s response is always a desire to know what the master signifier ultimately means:

> When an American, for example, is hailed by a discourse structured around the master signifier of “freedom,” the subject, in a sense responds with a question – “Yes, of course, I am a subject of ‘freedom’, but what is expected of me? What am I to do, and how am I to relate to others, in accepting ‘freedom’ as my master”? (2015, p.29)

The subject desires to know the meaning of the master signifier – in this case “freedom” – that has been ascribed to them. However, society does not offer any objective answer to this. There is not an essential meaning of the master signifier that is agreed upon by everybody. For example, Solomon describes how “there is no natural or primordial identity of ‘one who supports freedom’ that is fixed and incontestable” (p.29). In Lacanian theory, this absence of complete or essential meaning is referred to as *lack*. We feel as a sense of *lack* the inability of ever achieving a full and complete identity for

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5 Throughout this thesis, I have chosen to use a different font for quotations from secondary literature and material that I analyse to more clearly show that this text has been written by other people.
the Self. The full identity which we desire is always unachievable, it always runs up against this lack. In this way:

The subject desires a signifier that it can assume as its own, yet none fully represents the subject. Desire, then, remains unsatisfied, a fully stable identity always remains out of reach, and the search for identity stability continues […] Consequently, the construction of an (ultimately unstable) identity is possible only through a continual process of identification with culturally available social constructs such as political ideologies, narratives, and values. (Solomon, 2015, p.29)

Driven by a desire for a full identity, the subject repeatedly invests in the different identity discourses that are being offered by society and the master signifiers that these discourses propose.

A third concept from Lacanian theory that is introduced by Solomon, and one closely connected with the idea of desire, is that of enjoyment. In this theory, in order for an individual to become a subject, it is necessary for them to enter into the symbolic order and to accept certain master signifiers from the discourse that ascribe to them a particular identity. In doing so, they essentially lose the complete identity which they had before entering into this world, a world where master signifiers are working to define who they are. For Lacan, this is part of our initial development. When infants begin to use language to express their identities, they step into the “Symbolic Order” where meaning is outside of their control and they must contest words with others (Solomon, 2015). Solomon describes how in Lacanian theory, this loss is understood using the concept of enjoyment, or jouissance. When we invest in a particular identity discourse, when we adopt its master signifiers as our own and ask what these truly mean, we are doing so because these master signifiers offer the promise of enjoyment, or of regaining a full identity which has been lost. However, because of the fluidity of language or the fact that words have no fixed meanings, this full identity is ultimately unachievable. The discourse can offer us a glimpse of it, but nothing more.

This points to the final and most important Lacanian concept that Solomon introduces, the Lacanian notion of fantasy. He argues that this notion of fantasy provides the reason why we continue to invest in discourses and try to achieve a wholeness of identity, even when this process is essentially futile. For Lacan, Solomon states, fantasy is something different from the common understanding of the concept. Instead, it is “the frame through which the subject pursues the promise of capturing the perceived-to-be-lost (though never achieved) sense of wholeness” (Solomon, 2015, p.37). The subject engages in
this kind of *fantasy* when s/he invests in a particular identity discourse. To quote the key passages from Solomon:

The subject constructs a fantasy narrative that allows it to continue desiring, a kind of "promise" that it might still reach enjoyment through continued identification practices [...] Through fantasy, the subject's desire is orientated towards an object that it believes will repair lack and that holds out the promise of a full identity and the realisation of wholeness if attained. This is what Lacan terms object a [...] To continue to exist as a subject within the symbolic order – to continue as a desiring subject – fantasy holds out the possibility of wholeness by offering objects that would seem to cover over loss. Rather than confronting the frustrating realisation of the impossibility of satisfying one's desire, the subject instead posits that something must be the cause of its desire. The subject therefore retroactively presumes that some object must have caused its desire [...] This, then, is the trick of object a. The object does not empirically exist but is that which the subject believes will bring it the fullness it feels it can reach [...] Through this trick, subjects often believe that prominent master signifiers are instantiations of object a. (Solomon, 2015, p.37)

In the fantasy, a discourse presents master signifiers which offer the promise of regaining an identity that has been lost. The discourse might, for example, promise that a nation can recover lost "greatness" (in the "Make America Great Again" discourse, or the Brexit discourse), can regain true “democracy”, or can recover a “purity” taken away (perhaps for example in Swedish identity discourses). Solomon describes how:

Reinstating “justice” that has been denied, building a more perfect “democracy”, returning the power of the “people”, or recovering the true meaning of “revolution” – each of these formulations of a resolution of lack involves a master signifier that is itself empty and without fixed meaning. Yet such signifiers are often the core anchors around which political promises are expressly constructed. (p.48)

In his own analysis, Solomon studies in detail how this worked in the “war on terror” identity discourse that was presented after the September 11th terrorist attacks in the US. This discourse offered the master signifier of “freedom” as a fundamental part of American identity. In their identification with this discourse, Solomon argues, American citizens engaged in a Lacanian *fantasy* where they took this master signifier “freedom” as an instantiation of object *a* or a part of a full American identity which (as a result of the terror attacks) had been lost, but which the discourse promised could be regained again if certain actions were taken. Solomon argues the way in which the discourse deployed certain master signifiers (“freedom”, “justice”) to evoke such
a fantasy and channel people’s desire for a full identity was responsible for the great resonance which it had.

To give my own example, the “Make America Great Again” or MAGA discourse of the former US President Donald Trump might make reference to US “supremacy”. The subject, a hypothetical American citizen who invests in this discourse and adopts its identity, would create a fantasy where they see US “supremacy” as part of a promised full identity which has been lost (or as the missing object a). This sense of the promise of a full identity evoked by the master signifier works to channel the subject’s desire and make them engage with the MAGA discourse of which it is a part. Within the discourse, this master signifier was also accompanied by other master signifiers – “inventiveness”, “hardworking” – that were used to conjure up a promise of an identity to be regained. Frequently, the discourse gave these signifiers meaning through differentiation from a range of Others which were contrastingly presented as “uninventive” or “lazy” as a way to delineate the meaning of the American Self.

However, in Solomon’s account, Others play a role in identity discourses that goes beyond only difference. He argues that Others form an important part of the fantasy which the subject constructs when s/he is engaging with a particular identity discourse. Complementing the aspect of the fantasy which deploys master signifiers to promise a missing object a or a full identity that is to be regained, the Other serves to explain why this promise is never actually fulfilled. Solomon describes how “fantasy explains this frustration to the subject by attributing it to an Other” (p.48), as well as telling the subject what the fulfilled desire would have been (or what identity they are promised) had this not been frustrated by this Other.

Fantasy is doing a lot of work in channelling the subject’s desire for a full identity here. In the case of the “war on terror” discourse focused on by Solomon, and already discussed earlier, the fantasy which extends the promise of “freedom” regained also proffers an Other, in the form of terrorists, as the reason why this full identity has not been obtained. In the discourse, terrorists are depicted as stealing US citizens’ enjoyment, preventing them from enjoying the full identity with the US as a place of “freedom” which is promised to them. The logical foreign policy solution which derives from this discourse is a “war on terror” – wipe out the terrorists.

Solomon differentiates this Lacanian treatment of the Other from that of most critical constructivist IR researchers, who view the Other as only functioning in discourse as a counterpoint that, through its difference, defines the Self. Instead, this Lacanian approach also sees the way in which the Other
functions in relation to the subject’s desire for enjoyment. In Lacanian theory, the Other is considered to act as a scapegoat onto which are projected the frustrations of identity construction. This is an important difference between the understanding of the Other offered by Lacan and that of most of the post-structuralists, meaning that for Lacan the Others which appear in identity discourses – for example “terrorists” – play a much more powerful role. They are presented as blocking the Self from achieving a full identity, functioning as a way to deflect the subject’s sense of frustration at the ultimate impossibility of gaining a complete identity. Therefore, in Lacanian theory Others are a key part of the psychological force of particular identity discourses. Solomon stresses these particular differences in the Lacanian view of discourse and identity: “The construction of difference is merely one aspect of fantasy, which also must produce an imagined endpoint of attained enjoyment, a promise of full subjectivity that sustains desire” (p.43).

To summarise, Solomon’s use of Lacanian theory to explain the resonance of identity discourses that I have given so far: Lacan viewed individuals as subjects that desire full identities or enjoyment, even though this is ultimately impossible. Those identity discourses which resonate most effectively are the ones which effectively channel this desire through the construction of fantasies. Individuals continually pursue their desire for enjoyment of a full identity by investing in different identity discourses and narratives that are being offered by society and the masters signifiers which these identity discourses proffer. When these identity discourses effectively generate a fantasy – or when they offer a range of master signifiers that seem to promise a full identity to be regained, as well as Others that explain why this promise has not yet been fulfilled – then individuals will identify with them and they will resonate to a much greater extent.

Following this, Solomon then takes his theoretical framework based on Lacan a stage further. He describes how Lacan conceived of a model of four ideal types of discourses that each arrange discursive elements in different ways (Figure 3.1). This categorisation of ideal-typical discourses forms the first step in his analysis of different discourses, and I employ this in my analysis. In this model, discourses are presented as being a structure which is made up of four different discursive positions (Agent, Other, Product, Truth). In the discourse, an Agent sends a message which is received by the Other. The effect produced in the Other when it receives this is the Product. Then underpinning the Agent is a Truth, which whilst supporting the possibility of agency
is ignored or repressed by the Agent. In this structure, those elements positioned above the bars are the manifest parts of the discourse, while those below are latent.

![Diagram of four discourses]

These “positions” within the discourse are then seen as being occupied by different discursive elements (master signifiers $S_1$; the system of signification, or “knowledge” of the discourse $S_2$; the split subject $\$; and the “missing object” or object $a$). In the Lacanian model, there are four basic types of discourses, where these elements are seen to occupy different positions, or to function differently within the discourse, being more prominent or manifest, or being repressed and latent.

In the first of these discourse types, the **Master’s Discourse**, the master signifiers $S_1$ that promise a full identity take the primary position as Agent. They repress the truth about the subject, that it is a split subject $\$ (or cannot have full identity) below the line and try to present a full identity for the Self. These master signifiers are received by the system of signification, but they produce a latent sense that something is “missing” in the object $a$.

In the second of these discourse types, the **Hysteric’s Discourse**, the split subject $\$ (or the idea that there are not objective meanings and the sense of lack) instead takes the central place. This idea of no fixed meanings challenges, or questions, the meaning of master signifiers. As a result, Solomon
suggests that such a discourse will be defined by criticism and questioning, a search for true meaning.

The third discourse type, the *Analyst’s Discourse*, makes the fact that there is something “missing”, or the object $a$, is central. In this way, it is equivalent to a psychoanalyst that recognises the impossibility of a full identity and challenges the patient with this fact, sending the sense of something missing to the split subject $\$. 

The fourth type of discourse, the *University Discourse*, places the system of signification, or “knowledge”, in the most dominant position. This essentially means that it is foregrounding the commonly accepted understandings about the truth of things, or how things are. These understandings are built upon master signifiers, whose meaning is ambiguous, but this Truth is repressed by the discourse. For example, a statement like “it is generally recognised that democracy allows for efficient markets” presents an established fact, using a master signifier at its core.

### 3.3.2 Applying Lacanian theory in a Chinese context

Although Solomon uses this Lacanian theory to explain the resonance of American identity discourses, there appears no reason why it should not be used to analyse the way in which subjects form their identity as part of a nation in other contexts, including in China. In fact, I would argue that the theoretical ideas presented by Solomon are particularly relevant to a Chinese context for several different reasons. At the heart of Solomon’s analysis is the idea that, as the audience to discourses by politicians and other figures, US citizens are engaged in an identification process where they are essentially asking “who they are?” and “what does it mean to be an American?” as well as other similar questions. The speeches and proclamations made by different politicians and others, such as the speeches by George W. Bush outlining a “war on terror” discourse, which Solomon analyses extensively, are aimed at providing answers to these questions, or defining what America is at a certain time.

In this way, it might be observed that the Chinese public similarly seek answers to these kinds of questions (as perhaps do people from all nations to differing extents). They similarly want to know who they are and what it means to be a Chinese person living in contemporary China. Not only this, but they also arguably seek answers to these questions to a particularly heightened degree. This may perhaps be due to the fact that China has undergone such rapid and immense change, both before, and then particularly over the past four decades, which produces in the public an intense desire to make
sense of the shifting terrain and to work out where they, and their country, currently stands. In looking for answers to these questions, one of the places that the public will routinely turn is the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which readily assumes the role of leader in mapping out where China is and where it is going. The CCP continually produces a shifting identity discourse that functions to tell the people what China’s identity currently is at any particular time, whilst also carefully tying this identity for China to the identity of the Party itself.

A noticeable feature of these Chinese identity discourses is how much they seem to reflect the Lacanian concepts discussed above. Many of these discourses connect with the broader narrative of a “Century of Humiliation” which describes how the once great Chinese nation has fallen victim to repeated invasions from overseas, imperialist powers and is now rising again to regain its place in the world (Callahan, 2006; Z. Wang, 2012). In this way, these identity discourses frequently evoke something that has been lost and offers a promise that this will be regained again. Exactly what has been lost and is to be regained typically remains ambiguous, presented through master signifiers that refer to China’s “strength”, its “honour”, or the restoration of “justice”. Within these discourses, there is also a frequent use of the idea of Chinese “rejuvenation” ( 复兴) which again gestures towards this missing thing that is being regained, but only does so in very vague and ambiguous terms (Stevens, 2021). As such, these identity discourses seem to be presenting exactly the kind of fantasies which Solomon argues are used to cover over the ultimate lack of full identity.

Chinese identity discourses also frequently exhibit the other part of the fantasy as presented by Solomon, namely the production of Others which are used as a scapegoat for covering over the failure to realise the full identity promised. In different discourses, a range of Others appear to be deployed in this way. It will be argued, for example, that China has not yet achieved “justice” for the crimes committed against it in WW2 because of Japan’s continual distortion of historical facts, or because of the ultimately biased nature of the international community. Or it will be argued that China has not been able to fully realise economic “prosperity” because of the destabilising effects of the US on the global economy. In each case, the Other is presented as “stealing” China’s enjoyment of the full identity it would otherwise have achieved. In this way, it is possible to see many of the features highlighted by Lacanian theory within Chinese identity discourses, and to use this theory to analyse exactly why these discourses stir such strong emotions among the public and resonate in the way they do.
This points to the issue of nationalism. Nationalism as an ideology and a concept has been much discussed in relation to China and Chinese identity. It has frequently been observed that many of the most resonant Chinese identity discourses are strongly nationalist in nature, seeking to secure an identity for the Chinese Self through differentiation from Others. The Lacanian ideas about how emotions are connected to discourse can arguably be of considerable use in helping to analyse why these kinds of nationalist discourses particularly stir the passions of members of the public in China, gaining and then maintaining resonance over long periods of time. In this way, Solomon comments on how Lacanian theory might be used to analyse the emotional drive of nationalism in different states:

This can be important, for example, as part of an explanation of nationalism as not only a product of socially constructed differences, but one that incorporates the inexpressible dimension of enjoyment as crucial to explaining the processes of othering. If identity is ultimately ambiguous and insecure, then the appearance of a “true” identity or “essence” depends on the production of Others as scapegoats on which to project the frustrations of identity. (p.40)

Here, the driving force behind nationalism is attributed to the desire for a full or “true” identity as described by Lacan. Because people continually seek to establish a sense of wholeness and a full identity, or in other terms seek ontological security, and because they are frustrated in this, they will turn to Others to provide a reason for why they are not achieving their desires. In the Chinese case, we perhaps also see this manifested in the repeated statements about how particular countries have “hurt the feelings of the Chinese people” (Gustafsson & Hall, 2021).

In summary, the way in which the Chinese public intensely engages in identification processes as their country rapidly changes, and the way in which Chinese identity discourse often explicitly present lost identities to be regained or display strong nationalist sentiments, makes China a very suitable case for the use of Lacanian theory to analyse discursive identity formation. The analysis presented in this thesis represents an attempt to apply the ideas developed by Solomon from Lacan to analyse why the public engages so strongly with just some of the multitudinous identity discourses that are being produced in China as it rises.
3.4 Identity discourses on the Internet

My research focuses primarily on analysing the formation and contestation of identity on the Chinese Internet as part of its aim to make sense of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy in relation to different issues.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the dominant identity discourses that form the constraining context in which China’s foreign policy is made should not only be understood as located within political texts such as foreign policy briefs or government memoranda, but might also be being produced by wider Chinese society in all kinds of different texts (Hansen, 2006). Particularly if we want to recognise the “bottom up” influence that the public within a state has on foreign policy making, it is necessary to examine the ways in which identity is being produced and contested by these different kinds of texts present within wider Chinese society. While this does not necessarily mean a focus on the Internet over other kinds of texts within society, the online space is arguably a key site for social identity formation and contestation in different states.

The Internet’s significance as a site for discursive identity formation has not been studied extensively by critical constructivist scholars. This is in spite of the fact that the Internet abounds in the type of discursive identity formation and contestation on which these scholars focus. The Internet offers a vibrant site for public discussion. There has been considerable research pointing to the role the Internet plays in developing a “public sphere” or a realm that is separate from the state where individuals might discuss social and political issues (Breese, 2011; Dahlgren, 2005). Whilst this might be dismissed as simply “meaningless talk”, it has also been shown that the Internet acts as a site for the social formation and negotiation of identity discourses (see for example: Coretti & Pica, 2015; Ruelle & Peverelli, 2017). In fact, there is another ongoing debate about the diversity of different opinions being expressed online in China, and particularly about the range of views about different international issues. By providing new evidence of the Chinese public’s online discussions, my research can contribute to this debate that occurs at the intersection between international relations and Area Studies field.

Identity can be seen to be being constructed online through the social production, sharing, and reproduction of different texts. The Internet is in many ways defined by the *intertextuality*, or the reproduction of parts of one text and its construction of meaning in another text (Moi, 1996), that post-structuralists place at the centre of their theories of discursive identity construction. On the Internet, written text (as well as images, videos, sound files)
that construct identity is continuously being produced, shared, reproduced, and revised by a range of social networks (Juha Antero Vuori & Paltemaa, 2015). The size of the social groups engaging in this discourse are often large, numbering in their thousands or even millions. Yet still within international relations, only limited attention has been paid to the way in which the Internet might function as a site for identity production and contestation.

The potential for the Internet to play a significant role in identity formation processes is arguably even greater in China where, at the start of 2020 over 900 million people were regularly online (Lin, 2020). While the Internet offers a key site for identity formation in all states, this is arguably particularly the case in China for several reasons. First, as already noted, the uptake of digital forms of communication has been particularly strong in China. Second, the size of China and the nature of its society means there are limited opportunities for offline forms of exchange between different members of society from different parts of the country. A recent study of the way in which users of the Chinese social media platform Weibo discuss North Korea found that there are users from all across China participating in conversations on this platform (Scobell et al., 2019). Third, there are few other spaces in China where members of society can discuss topics and exchange ideas. Research has identified the emergence of nascent online public spheres in China (Rauchfleisch & Schäfer, 2015; Sullivan & Xie, 2009; Yang, 2009), where members of the public discuss a wider range of different kinds of issues, including those indirectly and directly related to foreign policy. With these discussions, the online public may contribute to forming or maintaining different identity discourses. As well as helping to develop a public sphere for the discussion of ideas, the Internet has also increased the ability of members of Chinese society to interact directly with other kinds of discourse, including media and official government discourse (Li et al., 2003). The online space therefore arguably provides members of Chinese society with new ways to interact with official constructions of identity, both supporting these constructions as well as challenging them. In this way, the Internet can be seen to contribute to the way the state and society together “co-produce” China’s identity referred to earlier in this chapter.

The Internet has often been discussed in relation to the debate about “bottom up” influences on foreign policy, but generally without a focus on identity production (Fewsmith & Rosen, 2001; Y. Yang, 2016). In this broader debate, some have argued that the online public in China can have an influence on foreign policy making, contributing to pressure on the government to
take particular actions (Gries et al., 2016; Scobell et al., 2019). However, others suggest that the government is able to control use of the Internet and the opinions being expressed there through a combination of censorship and propaganda (Han, 2018; Schneider, 2018). While the Chinese state does exercise increasing control over the use of the Internet, I nevertheless view this as a space where the Chinese public may be able to express identities that differ from those produced by the state. Rather than seeing this as a dialectical battle between the “top down” of the state and “bottom up” of society, however, I instead understand these as interacting with each other to produced identity in a range of ways, sometimes reinforcing each other’s identity discourses and sometimes challenging them.

My research argues that China’s foreign policies, and short-term changes in these policies, may be being made possible by changes in dominant identity discourses that occur because of contestation. While in democratic states such contestation between different identity discourses may take place partly within the political system (in parliamentary debates, for example), in China, because of the opaque nature of the political system, it is unclear to what extent this kind of discursive contestation exists. We do not really know what kind of discussion takes place in the Politburo, the main decision making body of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Instead, this kind of contestation of China’s identity can be seen to take place extensively online (Chan & Bridges, 2018; Gustafsson, 2020; Scobell et al., 2019). The Chinese Internet should therefore be seen as a key site for discursive contestation and the articulation of new identities which challenge previously dominant identity discourses, including those articulated by the state.

Analysis that only looks at the construction of identity within other materials, such as media articles, would arguably miss the competing identities that can emerge from the extensive online discussion in China – a discussion in which both the state and the public participate. In addition to analysing the Chinese state’s construction of identity in articles published on the online edition of People’s Daily, I therefore also seek to examine the public’s role in the construction of China’s identity by looking at their discourse on the Internet. My use of online material for the study of China’s foreign policy adds to the growing number of studies which have also adopted this approach (Feng & Yuan, 2014; Gries et al., 2016; Gustafsson, 2020; Scobell et al., 2019; Shen, 2012). However, while these studies have all looked at online textual material from the Chinese Internet, they have rarely done so with an explicitly identity
and discourse-based approach. By combining use of critical constructivist theory with study of online material, my research therefore takes a novel approach to looking at the Internet to make sense of China’s foreign policy.

3.5 Conclusion

My research aims to make sense of the short-term foreign policy changes China displays in different areas. In this chapter, I have explained how it does this by using critical constructivist IR theory. This theory understands underlying dominant identity discourses to make possible China’s foreign policy at different times. These discourses form the context in which foreign policy is made and make some courses of action natural whilst ruling out others. I argue that these dominant identity discourses which constrain policy are being partly produced by wider Chinese society, in interaction with the Chinese state, creating potential for the Chinese public to have a “bottom up” influence on foreign policy.

I understand short-term changes in China’s foreign policy to be made possible by changes in these dominant identity discourses. Change in the dominant identity discourses that are produced by wider Chinese society (including both the state and the public) occurs through processes of re-articulation and contestation, where identity becomes articulated in new ways. These new identity discourses then compete with existing ones for overall dominance. I use Lacanian theory to explain why certain identity discourses “win” in these competitions for dominance. This Lacanian theory understands identity discourses to become dominant, or resonate with members of society, because they create compelling fantasies that channel a desire for a full identity as well as the frustration at the ultimate impossibility of achieving this. When a new identity discourse becomes dominant over an existing one in this way, this change makes possible related change in China’s foreign policy.

This Lacanian analysis of why different identity discourses become dominant is also useful because it can help us to understand how short-term changes which occur at a particular time might shape the context for subsequent changes. The analysis might show that a particular short-term change in foreign policy occurred because an identity discourse became dominant. Lacanian analysis would then explain the reasons why members of Chinese society invested in this discourse. In doing so, it would also provide an understanding of the psychological factors making the discourse dominant that may continue to be significant in the future and to shape subsequent policy.
For example, analysis of Chinese policies regarding relations with Japan during the period of the heightened tensions in the early 2000s (Bush, 2009) may show that these were made possible by the dominance of a particular discourse that constructed an identity for the Chinese Self through differentiation from a Japanese Other (Reilly, 2011; Suzuki, 2007). The addition of Lacanian analysis would then reveal the psychological factors why this discourse became so dominant, or why members of Chinese society invested in it to such an extent, indicating that this discourse produced a compelling fantasy. This understanding of why the discourse dominated could also indicate how it might continue to make possible subsequent policies, as occurred when tensions returned to relations between China and Japan in the 2010s after a brief spell of warmer ties.

In this way, my addition of Lacanian analysis to a critical constructivist approach can help to not only make sense of short-term changes in policy, but also begin to understand how these changes contribute to longer-term evolution in China’s behaviour by setting the context in which future foreign policy regarding an issue is made.

My analysis focuses on the construction of identity in online discourse. This is because I argue that the Internet can be seen as a key site for the reproduction and contestation of the identity discourses that form the context for China’s foreign policies. On the Internet, different identity discourses compete for dominance and new identity discourses may emerge which challenge existing dominant identities, contributing to foreign policy change. This thesis therefore focuses on the Internet as part of its analysis of China’s foreign policy. It analyses the ways in which the Chinese public uses the Internet to produce and contest different identity discourses and the varying dominance of these identity discourses over time. Alongside this, recognising that the public production of identity discourse is in interaction with that of the state, the thesis also analyses the way in which state media is constructing China’s identity online at different times. The next chapter describes in detail the methods employed to do this.
4 Methods

4.1 Introduction

My research contributes to debates about China’s rise by asking how we can make sense of short-term changes in its foreign policy. Existing research using different international relations theories has been limited in its ability to account for these changes. I therefore adopt a critical constructivist approach that examines how changes in identity discourses, produced by both the Chinese state and members of the public, make possible these short-term changes in foreign policy. The research is guided by the question:

- How can an examination of identity discourses make sense of the short-term foreign policy changes China displays in relation to specific issues?

With secondary questions:

- Does the Chinese public have a “bottom up” influence that contributes to producing these short-term changes in foreign policy, and if so in what ways?

- Why do certain identity discourses, that make possible Chinese foreign policy, at times become more dominant/resonant within Chinese society at different times?

This chapter describes how this research had been designed to answer these questions. It first discusses the underlying assumptions behind the methodological choices I have made. It then gives reasons why the research focuses in two case studies on China and North Korea and China and the South China Sea. The chapter then discusses the material chosen to examine constructions of China’s identity by the state and the public in connection with these issues.

This section describes how I chose to use only online material, specifically articles from the online edition of the state media outlet People’s Daily and

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6 In my analysis, I treat the articles from the online edition of People’s Daily as an example of the “top down” construction of China’s identity by the state. I treat the posts from the social media platform Weibo as examples of the “bottom up” construction of this identity by the Chinese public. However, it should be noted that the state media also makes posts on social media.
posts from the social media platform Weibo, giving the reasons why this material was used. Following this, I discuss the combination of qualitative discourse analysis and quantitative text analysis methods that I use to analyse the way in which China’s identity is being discursively constructed within these two types of material. Next, I give details of the three steps in the analysis (Qualitative analysis, Quantitative analysis, and Lacanian Analysis).

4.2 Research design

This initial section outlines the overall approach taken in this research project and the different choices made in its design. It begins by discussing the ontological and epistemological assumptions made and what these entail. After this, it accounts for the choices made in the design of this study, in particular the issues focused on and the type of material that was analysed.

4.2.1 Ontology and epistemology

The ontological and epistemological assumptions made in this thesis are closely connected with each other. I take an ontological stance of mind-world monism (Jackson, 2016) that sees the world as being inseparable from our minds. While there is a reality out there, it is only through our minds that this reality is made meaningful. The focus of this thesis on identity discourses, where it sees these discourses as giving meaning to the material world, assumes this underlying ontological standpoint about the world and the way in which humans connect to it. The study is grounded in a poststructuralist (critical constructivist) ontology that holds that the meaning of material things in the world, such as economic gains and material power, is produced through use of language (Hansen, 2006). In terms of individual identity, there is no essential self that exists in material form outside of language, but our entire identity is given meaning through the language we use in connection with other people.

As I have discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis, the labels “poststructuralist” and “critical constructivist” are sometimes used interchangeably. I take them to share the same ontological understanding about the world, seeing the meaning of things in the world as being produced through language and rejecting the idea that there are fixed meanings outside of language. However, for me, poststructuralism is a sociological and linguistic school of thought while critical constructivism is an international relations (IR) theory which draws on poststructuralist understandings. I therefore refer to a post-structuralist, rather than a critical constructivist, ontology here. Meanwhile, elsewhere in the thesis I refer to my approach as one of critical constructivism.
This understanding of the mind and world as inseparable is linked with an epistemology of *constructionism* (Crotty, 1998) where we come to know things about the world by constructing meaning in a relationship with others within society. I use the term constructionism here, rather than the more widely adopted constructivism, because although the two terms are similar, the former emphasises the social aspect of knowledge construction and is therefore closer to my approach (Grandy, 2018). Constructionism as an epistemological stance holds that humans construct our knowledge about the world intersubjectively. Rather than an objective truth that can be identified about the world, there are “humanly fashioned ways of seeing things whose processes we need to explore and which we can only come to understand through a similar process of meaning making” (Crotty, 1998, p.9).

This understanding of knowledge has implications for both how the research subject of this study, China’s identity, is approached and also for how the thesis contributes to knowledge. In this thesis, those constructing identity discourses within China are understood to be producing social knowledge about the world or “humanly fashioned” understandings of Chinese identity in relation to different issues. In studying Chinese identity, this research project therefore does not aim to find out about something material and objective existing outside of social construction. Instead, it investigates the processes through which members of Chinese society make meaningful the world through their use of language.

The research does not seek to pin down a fixed and essential “identity” for China that stands outside of social construction, but instead aims to examine the multitude of different ways that individuals within China construct the nation’s identity at different times in their shared discourses. Instead of seeking to establish knowledge of objective causal processes, this thesis therefore seeks to explore these meaning making processes and the impacts that they have within specific contexts. It looks at how discourses make possible specific foreign policies. In this way, the critical constructivist approach adopted in this thesis does not view knowledge as the ability to uncover causal truths (as done by positivist scholars and some more mainstream constructivists), instead treating knowledge of processes as something that is situated within a historical and political context (Hansen, 2006).

The production of knowledge involves the researcher engaging in the same meaning making processes that are attributed to others (Crotty, 1998). In this way, the researcher cannot be considered to be detached from the social world which they seek to understand (Grandy, 2018). They bring to the research their own values, opinions, and pre-established meanings and can only
make a “reading” of the social processes which are being studied based on these preconceptions. This indicates that I am taking an interpretivist rather than positivist theoretical perspective, where rather than trying to establish an objective truth, the study seeks to understand the meanings being constructed in social processes (Crotty, 1998). This thesis adopts an approach to understanding society which sees individuals as forming meaning intersubjectively through discourses and seeks to uncover these meaning making processes through the study and interpretation of the use of language. It does this primarily through the use of a discourse analysis methodology. This aims to uncover the ways in which members of society are using language to collectively produce meaning. The findings represent my interpretation of the way meaning is being constructed by the texts studied and this may be different from a reading of these texts by other people. In my analysis, I have endeavoured to ensure that my methods and the ways in which I have made interpretations are transparent and intersubjectively intelligible.

4.2.2 Case selection

My research engages with debates about China’s rise by analysing identity discourses to make sense of the short-term foreign policy changes China displays in relation to two different issues. The case studies focus on: China and North Korea, and China and the South China Sea. Each case study features analysis of the short-term foreign policy changes China displayed between 2014 and the end of 2018. In the following section, I give the reasons why I have chosen to focus on these two issues and this five-year time period.

It is first necessary to explain why I have chosen to analyse two issues rather than focusing on only one area of China’s foreign policy. This was principally because, as discussed in the introductory chapter, China’s foreign policy has been observed to be “contradictory” and to move in a cooperative direction in relation to some issues at the same time that it is moving in a conflictual direction in others. Analysing short-term foreign policy change in relation to more than one issue provides a way to engage with this phenomenon, where it may be found that distinct changes in identity discourses make possible foreign policy shifts in different directions.

However, this comparative case study approach of looking at more than one issue also arguably has a number of other benefits. Even if the foreign policy changes in the two case studies are not found to be completely contradictory (i.e., they do not show change in contrasting cooperative and conflictual directions) this study of two issues still allows for comparison between
their findings. It may be that the identity discourses in one case study are different in a significant way from those in the other case study, whilst still producing changes in foreign policy that are similar. The study of two issues also allows for findings made in one case study to be cross referenced against findings made in the other. If the analysis produces similar findings in both case studies, then this would suggest that these findings in relation to a particular issue are not an anomaly, but are representative of a broader phenomenon. Although it is not possibly to make any absolute generalisations from the study of identity discourses and foreign policy in relation to specific issues, I hope my research can provide insights which contribute to a broader understanding of the short-term foreign policy change China displays as it rises.

This points to further questions: Why focus on short-term change in relation to these two specific issues? Why North Korea and the South China Sea? As it rises, China has displayed foreign policy change in relation to a wide range of different issues, meaning there is a large “universe” of potential cases that I might have studied. For example, it has changed policies regarding participation in the United Nations, for issues such as climate change cooperation (Cui, 2018) and intervention in conflict (Garwood-Gowers, 2012). It has also shown change in its approach to the international economic order and the institutions that are part of this (Mastanduno, 2014). There has also been short-term foreign policy change in its relations with many Asian states, as well as change in its approach to border disputes with nations such as India (Fravel, 2008).

These two issues were chosen from this large number of potential case studies primarily because I consider them to be important issues for China as it rises, concerning questions of hard security that are a focus for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The issue of North Korea and the wider Korean Peninsula has been described as an issue of great importance to the CCP (Shambaugh, 2003) and was something it was previously willing to engage in war over, participating in the Korean War between 1950 and 1953. China’s relationship with North Korea is a key aspect of its role in the East Asian region and has important implications for other regional states, particularly South Korea and Japan. It is also entangled with China’s relationship with the United States, with the two states involved in their only major conflict because of this issue (in the Korean War). Because of North Korea’s continued development of nuclear weapons, China’s relations with it are also connected to the role it plays within the United Nations and the international community. China’s policies towards
North Korea can therefore be seen as a central part of its regional and global role as it is rising.

The South China Sea has been described as “one of the most important bodies of water in the world in economic and strategic terms” (Nathan and Scobell, 2012, p.141) and is also clearly an issue of great importance to China, in both security and also more symbolic terms. This case involves China’s relations with a number of regional states, and also with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Similar to relations with North Korea, it is an important aspect of China’s relations with the US and several studies have pointed to it being the focal point of US-China competition for regional hegemony (Mearsheimer, 2010). While less so than its relations with North Korea, China’s behaviour in the South China Sea is also connected to its relationship with the international community and its approach to international laws and norms, particularly its involvement with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS). In this way, China’s foreign policy towards the South China Sea can also be seen as important as a part of its global role.

That North Korea and the South China Sea are such important security issues for the Chinese government arguably adds to the significance of my findings. Although findings about short-term changes in China’s approach to trade or climate cooperation are relevant, these insights are perhaps less significant than those about what makes possible particular changes in key security issues for the CCP. This is particularly true if these findings prove to be counterintuitive. For example, it may be more significant to find signs of change towards cooperative foreign policies regarding a hard security issue like the South China Sea than it would be to find similar changes towards cooperation in relation to an issue such as trade policy.

My research also aims to examine to what extent the Chinese public has a “bottom up” influence which contributes to producing short-term changes in China’s foreign policy. The fact that these two issues are such key issues for Beijing and are related to hard security concerns makes them “least likely” cases of the public having a “bottom up” influence (George & Bennett, 2005). Because these issues are ones that are so important to the CCP, they are ones where it is more likely to try to exert rigid control over identity discourses and less likely to allow the “bottom up” production of identity to affect foreign policy. Other issues, such as climate cooperation or foreign aid, could perhaps be considered ones that are less critically important to the CCP where it considers it less important to maintain rigid “top down” control over foreign policy making. If it is found that the Chinese public does have a “bottom up”
influence in the two least-likely issues, then this would offer more convincing evidence that the Chinese public might be having an influence on foreign policy overall. It would give stronger support to arguments that public discourse affects Chinese foreign policy more generally.

It might be asked why I did not choose to look at short-term foreign policy change in other security issues that are also very important to the CCP, particularly issues such as Taiwan, relations with Japan, and relations with the US. Whilst these are all also important security issues, and ones for which China’s foreign policy has shown short-term change, these were considered less appropriate to study for a number of reasons. For Taiwan, although this is an important issue as part of China’s rise, it is one that is very bound up with the history of the region and might be seen as a slightly anomalous case as part of the rise more generally. It is a specific issue, that although important is arguably less broadly relevant to China’s rise than the two issues which I have chosen. In addition, while China’s foreign policies towards Taiwan have shown some short-term change (D. P. Chen, 2014), this is less puzzling as it tends to correspond to changes in leadership on the two sides as well as shifts occurring on the Taiwanese side. Because of the historical importance of the issue for China, its broader approach has tended to remain more consistent over time.

Another potential issue for study would be China’s relationship with Japan, which has also been seen to show short-term change (Reilly, 2011). However, although relations warmed after 2005, they then returned to increased tensions in 2010. After this, there was fairly consistent friction throughout much of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s second period in office. This arguably makes relations with Japan a less suitable case for the study of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy during the period my research focused on. It might still have been interesting to examine the evolving relationship in recent years, especially because of how it connects with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which is an important part of China’s rise (Yuechun Jiang, 2018). However, the changes in the relationship connected to this also appear to be largely driven by shifts on the Japanese side, which therefore makes this less suitable for study of changes in China’s foreign policy. For all of these reasons, the issue of relations with Japan was dismissed in favour of those chosen. In addition, while both relations with Taiwan and Japan are about bilateral relations with neighbouring states, the issues I have chosen have the additional advantage of being broader security issues which involve relations with multiple states from within and outside the region.
My analysis could also have focused more directly on China’s relations with the US, which is another key issue as part of its rise. Many studies of China’s foreign policy as it rises do focus on its relations with the US (Ikenberry, 2008; Mastanduno, 2014; Mearsheimer, 2001) and there are arguably some advantages to this approach which gets at what some consider to be the crux of China’s rise. However, it might be argued that there is more to China’s rise than relations with the US, and the extensive focus on this issue means a relative neglect of other important issues. In addition, the two issues I have chosen to focus on, foreign policy regarding North Korea and the South China Sea, do also involve China’s approach to the US. The US can be seen to be a key actor in both of these issues and is very present in my analysis.

However, these two issues have the additional advantage of not only concerning China’s relations with the US, but also being about other aspects of its rise including its approach to the international order and institutions such as the United Nations, its relationship with US allies, as well as its relations with other Asian states. In this way, a study of China’s changing foreign policies regarding these two issues allows me to examine more aspects of its rise than a study only focused on US-China relations would. By studying these two issues, I can therefore contribute more comprehensively to those broader debates about China’s rise described in the introduction to this thesis.

The two issues chosen are ones where China has shown an extensive amount of short-term change in its foreign policies over the past two decades (for the South China Sea, see Chubb, 2021; For North Korea, see Kim, 2017). These two issues are also ones where China’s foreign policy in general has not been particularly well explained by accounts drawing on realist, liberal, and mainstream constructivist international relations theories (as I will discuss further in a brief literature review at the start of each case study chapter). For both issues, the short-term changes in China’s foreign policies, and moves between more cooperative and more conflictual actions, present a range of puzzles. To summarise, I argue that the fact that these are highly significant security issues, and also that short-term foreign policy changes related to them have not been well accounted for, makes them appropriate issues to study in seeking to contribute to understandings of China’s rise.

The time period chosen for the study of these two issues is between 2014 and the end of 2018. This period was chosen for a number of reasons. My research aims to examine short-term foreign policy changes, or those taking place within the space of between one and five years. Therefore, a five-year time period between 2014 and 2018 seemed suitable for capturing at least one, or potentially more, of the short-term changes seen in relation to the two
issues. I was particularly interested in more recent short-term foreign policy changes because, as China continues to rise, such changes are arguably more relevant to its ongoing evolution in behaviour than previous changes. In the introduction to this thesis, I argue that short-term foreign policy changes at a particular time may create the context for subsequent changes. If this is the case, then those short-term changes which took place during this period may be forming the context for China’s current foreign policy. This period is also important to study because it covers the initial years of China under the leadership of Xi Jinping, who became president in 2013, during which China’s foreign policy has been observed to undergo extensive change (Ross & Bekkevold, 2016).

It may have been beneficial to also extend the period analysed to look at those short-term foreign policy changes which occurred at the start of the 2010s, therefore examining all the changes within a decade. However, it was difficult to obtain extensive online data from this earlier period. The website for the online edition of the state-owned People’s Daily does have articles dating back to the early years of the decade, but the number of articles from these years is small which may be because less articles were published, not all of these were archived, or because they have since been removed as either a routine weeding of the archive or a form of censorship. Meanwhile, although the collection of Weibo data I have used began in 2012, changes to the way Weibo functioned meant that this was interrupted during 2013 and early 2014, so there is only incomplete data for these years. Because a main aim of my research is to study the way in which the state and Chinese public are producing identity discourses on the Chinese Internet, I decided to only focus on a period in which more comprehensive data was available to me. A shorter time period also allows for more detailed analysis. Future studies might build on my analysis by looking at Chinese society’s construction of identity in relation to these two issues in other kinds of material from this earlier period.

4.3 Data and data collection procedures

4.3.1 Choice of data

My research aims to make sense of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy by looking at changes in the identity discourses constructed intersubjectively by Chinese society. It therefore analyses the way in which identity is being constructed in texts produced by both the Chinese state and members of the public. There is a range of different types of texts that I could have chosen
for analysis of how identity is being constructed in this way. In the following section, I will discuss my reasons for selecting the types of texts used in this analysis. A main underlying reason for the type of material chosen was my desire to focus on the Chinese Internet and the way in which the public are constructing identity in discourse online. I first discuss the different options that I could have used to analyse state construction of identity, explaining why the online edition of the state-owned newspaper *People’s Daily* was chosen. Then I discuss the different options that might have been used to analyse the Chinese public’s construction of identity, explaining why the social media platform *Weibo* was chosen.

*State constructions of identity online*

There was a range of material I might have looked at to analyse how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chinese government construct China’s identity in relation to the two issues this thesis focuses on. This includes: official policy documents, speeches by leaders, and foreign ministry press briefings. All of these types of texts, while produced offline, also tend to be published online and could therefore fit with my focus on material on the Chinese Internet. However, these types of material were not used for a number of reasons. First, there is a relatively small amount of policy documents or speeches specifically about relations with North Korea and the South China Sea. Secondly, the policy documents that do exist on these two issues tend to be quite formal in tone and do not contain language constructing China’s identity. Foreign ministry briefings also tend to be quite short and to reproduce set phrases in response to questions.

Because the other types of material were limited in quantity in this way, I decided instead to look at the way the state constructed China’s identity in media articles published by state-owned media. These articles also tended to report on leaders’ speeches and foreign ministry briefings. This meant that they could be seen to also encompass the identity constructions being presented in some of these other types of official material that were discussed above. They also fit with the online focus of my research. The choice of state media was appropriate given the focus in this thesis on examining the role of the public and the way in which state and societal constructions of identity interact. State media articles are the means through which the CCP constructs China’s identity *for* a wider public audience, therefore fitting with this aim.

The state-run media in China includes many different publications at the regional and national level, as well as two news agencies (Xinhua News
Agency and China News Agency) that produce content used in other publications. I chose to use articles from the state-owned newspaper *People’s Daily* (人民日报 Renmin Ribao), which can be considered the most official of the national state newspapers. Since the CCP came to power in 1949, *People’s Daily* has been its main mouthpiece and is controlled by the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee (Wu, 1994). The close control over the newspaper’s content exercised by the Propaganda Department means that the views expressed in its articles can be taken, to a considerable degree, to represent the views of the Chinese leadership (Wu, 1994). In this way, it can be seen as a good source of the official identity discourse about different foreign policy and domestic issues. The newspaper also reproduces content from other state-owned media organisations such as *Xinhua* and also newspapers like *Global Times*.

As already noted, this thesis aims to analyse both the use of the Internet by the Chinese state and its use by the public to construct identity. I therefore chose to only look at online articles from *People’s Daily*, rather than also looking at printed offline articles. This ensured that I would be using online material for the analysis of identity construction by both the Chinese state (“top down”) and the public (“bottom up”). The online version of *People’s Daily* (人民网 Renmin Wang) was launched in 1997 and shares content with the print edition as well as containing many more articles. The content of articles published by the online edition of *People’s Daily* is often reproduced and commented on in public posts on social media.

**Public constructions of identity online**

The identity discourses forming the context for foreign policy are not only those produced in political texts but also those that are produced by the Chinese public. This opens up the analysis to look for constructions of identity in a wide variety of different kinds of texts including, amongst others, magazine articles, travel writing, essays, fiction, and films. However, this thesis has a main aim of analysing the production of identity by the Chinese public online, arguing that the Internet offers a key site for the formation of identity.

On the Chinese Internet, there are many different platforms which might be studied to uncover the public construction of China’s identity. These include: the Facebook-like RenRen, which seems to have fairly limited use; the Twitter-like microblogging platforms of Weibo and WeChat; the many different discussion forums such as the Strong Nation forum affiliated with *People’s Daily*, the Tiexue and Tianya forums, and the more recently launched Baidu Tieba; the different online encyclopaedia Zhihu and Baidu Baike; and
also the comment sections of video sharing sites such as Youku. Alongside these, many of the state and private newspapers also have incorporated various Web 2.0 features into their online versions, which are used by the Chinese public to interact with and comment on news articles and can also be seen as a site for online identity formation.

For this thesis, analysis of the Chinese public’s online identity construction used material from Weibo, a microblogging platform that is similar to Twitter, which is currently unavailable in mainland China. Weibo was launched by Sina Corporation in 2009. Users can write blog posts which were previously limited to 140 characters, but now can be longer than this. They can also read, comment on, and share posts made by others. Since 2011, the Chinese government has required users of the platform to register with their own names. The choice to use Weibo was partly made because of the difficulty of acquiring data from the Chinese Internet and the availability of suitable data from this particular platform.

However, I also chose to look at Weibo data because it is one of the most widely used platforms in China and even after a series of government crackdowns it has seen its number of monthly users grow to reach, according to some reports\(^8\), over 500 million users in 2020 (S. Hu, 2020). Therefore it might be considered a good place to look for the constructions of identity being made online by the Chinese public. Existing international relations research using Weibo to look at public opinion in China has argued that, while the platform does not represent the opinions of the entire public, the number of people using it mean it can be seen to represent the views of a particularly important group within Chinese society (Guan et al., 2020).

This points to the question of what exactly the discourse on Weibo should be taken to represent. In this respect, the posts on Weibo should not be considered to reflect the opinions or discourse of the entire Chinese public, or even those of all of the users of the Chinese Internet. Instead, they are posts made by a particular group of users. Research looking at the demographics of Weibo has found that its general users tend to be young (aged between 18 and 30), highly educated (with at least a bachelor’s degree), and to overwhelmingly reside in China’s larger cities (Lingyu et al., 2013). A recent study which collected a sample of over fifty thousand Weibo posts about relations with North Korea found that these posts were being made nationwide, but more

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\(^8\) The number of total users Weibo is reported to have tends to vary between different sources. In their study which used data from the platform, Scobell et al. (2019) instead reference the 36\(^{th}\) Statistical Report on Internet Development in China, China Internet Network Information Centre, to state that in 2015 the platform had 204 million users, a decline from 309 million in 2012.
tended to originate from China’s east coastal provinces (Scobell et al., 2019). Studies have also increasingly found that there is considerable ideological diversity on *Weibo* (Huang et al., 2019; Tong & Lei, 2013). Studies that have looked at *Weibo* discussions of different international relations issues have found that there is much debate on the platform regarding issues such as the dispute over the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands (Feng & Yuan, 2014; Obern, 2013), as well as relations with North Korea as studied in this thesis (Scobell et al., 2019).

The question of what the data on *Weibo* represents also raises the issues of censorship and state manipulation. It is difficult to establish exactly how much the data on *Weibo* is being censored. This is an issue also faced by other international relations researchers making use of data from Chinese social media. A study of nationalism on the Chinese Internet (Gries et al., 2016) argues that the ability of online posters to use language which evades censors, together which the legitimacy costs faced by the Chinese government if they were seen to be too heavily supressing discussions, means that censorship is likely to be minimal.

Research has provided some evidence regarding censorship that supports this argument. One study found that only those posts that had the potential to lead to mass action from the public tended to be censored, while censorship of other kinds of posts was less common (King et al., 2013). Other studies have also helped to define more clearly what kinds of posts are censored or allowed to remain online (K. W. Fu et al., 2013; Qin et al., 2017).

One recent study examined the amount of space for debate on the Chinese Internet more broadly, focusing on discussion of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the South China Sea, and North Korea (Shi-Kupfer & Ohlberg, 2018). This found that although space has been narrowing there is still considerable discussion present. The study used data about *Weibo* collected as part of a project at Hong Kong University that tracked the posts being censored on the platform over time. It found that very few of the posts made by members of the Chinese public about the BRI, the South China Sea, and North Korea crossed government “red lines” in a way that resulted in them being removed from the platform. This may indicate that discussion of issues connected to China’s foreign policy by the Chinese public on *Weibo* continues to be permitted by the CCP.

A related issue faced by researchers when using data from social media is how many of the posts on *Weibo* are being produced by members of the Chinese government or people employed by them. Research has indicated that at least some of the posts on Chinese social media are being produced by the
CCP (King et al., 2017), but has not yet clarified exactly how many. My research therefore follows other studies making use of Weibo data in assuming that while some of the posts in the dataset may have been created by the Chinese government rather than members of the public, this is likely to be only a relatively small proportion. A study of the discussion of corruption cases on Weibo found that the “initiators” of most conversations (or those making a first post about a topic) tended to be ordinary members of the public, rather than users connected to the Chinese government or state-media outlets (Nip & Fu, 2016). Because my research begins with discourse analysis of samples of the Weibo posts from each year, I am also able to assess whether most of these posts are being produced by genuine public users.

4.3.2 Data collection

My analysis uses People’s Daily articles and Weibo posts that contained the keywords “North Korea” (朝鲜 chaoxian), for the first case study, and “South China Sea” (南海 nanhai), for the second case study. While both North Korea and the South China Sea are also sometimes referred to by other names, and there may be some articles and posts that do not contain these words but engage with the topics, these keywords were seen as sufficient to capture the bulk of the material about these two topics.

To collect articles from People’s Daily, I wrote web scraping code in the programming language Python9 that could automatically search and collect the contents of articles stored on the newspaper’s website. The online edition of People’s Daily (people.com.cn) separates the articles into different sections. I chose to focus on collecting the articles in the “world” and “opinion” categories, which I deemed more likely to be relevant to the subject of analysis. Using the search function on the People’s Daily website, I searched for the articles in each of these categories successively that contained the keywords described above. The scraping code then automatically collected the links to the articles produced by these search results, going backwards in time from the present. It then went to each link to collect the article’s headline, date of publication, and body text. This gave me a dataset of articles from People’s Daily related to the two issues published between 2013 and 2018. Because of the scraping method used, I cannot be certain that I collected all of the articles published online by People’s Daily about these two topics. Articles at certain

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9 For this I also made use of the Python package Scrapy, an open-source framework for collecting data from websites. See: https://scrapy.org
times may have been removed from the People’s Daily website, so they no longer come up when a search is made. However, I am confident there was no bias giving me only a certain kind of article from the publication.

The data from Weibo was collected by researchers at the Journalism and Media Studies Centre (JMSC) at Hong Kong University as a part of their Weiboscope project to document censorship on the Chinese Internet. They describe how the Weiboscope data collection works by retrieving the posts made by 66,126 high-profile users and 52,268 randomly selected accounts on the platform every 15 to 20 minutes (K. wa Fu & Zhu, 2020). The censorship or disappearance of these posts after they have been published is also recorded. The data collected cannot be considered the entirety of data produced on Weibo, but the researchers behind the Weiboscope make the argument that “since the high-profile users generate the vast majority of social media contents [...] and the randomly sampled accounts represent the voice of general users, a combination of these two constitutes a fairly representative sample of the whole user population of Weibo” (K. wa Fu & Zhu, 2020). I also considered this to be an appropriate representative sample of the complete data for my study.

From the JMSC, I obtained a dataset of Weibo posts which contained the same two keywords “North Korea” and “South China Sea” for the period from October 2014 through to June 2018. While there were also some posts from the earlier part of 2014, a change in the way Weibo functioned led to an interruption in the data collection at this time, so the number of posts from this period is small in number and sporadic. These posts were therefore not used as part of this study. The data from Weibo was in csv format, and the posts had been anonymized with each poster given an identification number. Alongside the body text of the post, there was also the date and time that the post had been made, and information on whether it was a reposting of another post. The dataset did not include information on how many times a post had been reposted, or other data such as how many times posts have been “liked” or the location of the person posting.

All of the data was used in the form it was gathered, without any cleaning or other alterations. I translated texts from Chinese to English myself where appropriate for the analysis. For the references to full articles and posts that are included in the subsequent chapters, the original text in Chinese is included in the Appendix.
This provided the following material (Table 4.1):

Table 4.1: Summary of data used in the two studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Case Study 1</strong></th>
<th><strong>Case Study 2</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China and North Korea</td>
<td>China and the South China Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Daily</td>
<td>6743 articles (01/01/14 to 31/12/18)</td>
<td>3302 articles (01/01/14 to 31/12/18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weibo</td>
<td>258,083 posts (01/01/14 to 12/31/18)</td>
<td>158,899 posts (07/01/14 to 12/31/18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ethics of data handling*

The amount of data being produced online and particularly on social media, whilst potentially of benefit to those engaged in social scientific research, also creates a number of issues. Perhaps particularly in China, texts written or posted on the Internet can have negative consequences for those who have produced them or shared them. For this reason, all the data used in this project was handled sensitively with attention to these issues. First, all of the data from *Weibo* was anonymised. It was stripped by the researchers at the JMSC of all identifying metadata linking it to individuals, with each post given a unique identifying number, and then was given to me to use in this format. Second, when using this data in my analysis, I took care not to include any information which might identify particular individuals in relation to the posts. I also did not share this data with anybody else. For the *People’s Daily* articles, I similarly did not refer to the specific authors of the articles, apart from in those cases (in the Lacanian Analysis) where this was considered important for contextualising the analysis. The authors of these state media articles and commentaries were in any case considered to have published the articles with the intention that they were made public.

4.4 Data Analysis

My research aims to uncover how discourses construct China’s identity in relation to the issues selected and to measure the changing dominance of these identity constructions in order to make sense of foreign policy change.
To do this it was necessary to employ a combination of qualitative discourse analysis and quantitative text analysis. Because of their different underlying assumptions, combining discourse analysis with quantitative text analysis is not particularly straightforward (Hansen, 2006; Hopf & Allan, 2016). The poststructuralist understanding that words gain their meaning through use in a specific context means that we cannot simply count the number of times a word is used to measure the dominance of an identity. These words may change their meaning over time or have different meanings in different contexts. For example, counting the numbers of times political documents in China and the US mention the word “democracy” would be a poor measure of how democratic these states were.

Instead, it is necessary to use discourse analysis to establish how particular words are being used in a specific context and also to confirm that the meaning of these words has not changed significantly within the period. For this reason, research should always begin with manual discourse analysis of a sample of texts, based on a poststructuralist understanding of how these construct meaning. This analysis can provide information about how identity is being constructed in a particular context, including the particular keywords that are used and their meaning in this context. Only then can we proceed to count the use of these words within the same context. Although the words might still be being used in different ways, grounding the quantitative analysis in discourse analysis can help to avoid this. Overall, the counting of words should be seen as indicative.

When measuring the dominance of identity constructions, it is necessary to be clear about the object that is being counted. This object should be a discourse or a part of a discourse, and therefore a socially constructed meaning about the world rather than something material in the world. In this respect, we might use discourse analysis to delineate basic discourses within a particular kind of material (Hansen, 2006). Basic discourses are a concept used by Hansen (2006) in discussion of the relationship between identity discourses and foreign policy. These are essentially “ideal types” or analytical constructs that are used to draw together the different expressions of identity in texts made by individuals and group these under one umbrella. They are a construct used by the analyst to group together different individuals’ constructions of identity that may vary, where there is unlikely to be one particular “text” that completely mirrors the form of the basic discourse or group of which it is a part. This concept of basic discourses provides one way to establish “objects” that represent different identity discourses and can be measured quantitatively. In my analysis, for clarity, rather than referring to basic discourses and
making use of the term adopted by Hansen, I shall instead refer to these as the “main identity discourses” found within the material being analysed. This is arguably a more descriptive label for what these discourses are taken to be.

My research therefore employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods for analysing the construction of identity within texts, whilst still retaining a poststructuralist understanding of how language creates meaning. Here, I briefly introduce the two main methods of text analysis used, before providing more detailed descriptions of how these methods are employed in the description of the three main steps of my analysis.

**Discourse analysis method**

One method of discourse analysis for uncovering the construction of meaning in texts is derived from the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Discourse analysis involves looking at the way in which “texts” construct an identity for the Self through differentiation from one or more Others (Hansen, 2006). Texts do this through processes of *linking* and *differentiation* (Hansen, 2006). Particular words are used to describe the identity of the Self and these are linked with each other in chains of equivalence. These words gain their specific meaning in use through differentiation, with the presentation of an Other that is described through another set of words which are also linked with each other. In discourse analysis, a close reading of texts uncovers how they use words to construct an identity for the Self through differentiation from Others in this way. Although every text constructs the identity of the Self slightly differently, reading a large number of texts establishes patterns that form identity discourses. In finding identity discourses, it is necessary to read new texts until I have fully mapped out the structure of meanings in the discourse. This is a point where any new text can be placed within the discursive structure that has already been established by the analysis (Hansen & Wæver, 2002).

**Computer assisted text analysis**

Computer assisted text analysis is performed using the text analysis package *Quanteda* in R (Benoit et al., 2018). This package works well with Chinese, Japanese, and Korean (CJK) languages because of its ability to separate (or “tokenize”) characters normally written in texts without spaces. One limitation of *Quanteda* and other text analysis packages is that some unusual or new character combinations are not recognised as words. These may therefore be missed in frequency counts or other calculations the package is used to produce.
I used two main functions of Quanteda. The first was a version of the “document-feature matrix” (dfm) function which counts the frequency with which words appear within documents or groups of documents. I used this to count the frequency that particular keywords co-occurred in a n-word window either side of specified nouns, such as “China” and the names of other states relevant to each study. This analytical tool was useful to analyse how often certain words were being associated with China and other states such as North Korea, the US, and different Southeast Asian nations. The second function employed was the “tokens_lookup” function. Here, dictionaries containing groups of words can be created (in sentiment analysis, for example, these word groups are “positive” and “negative” words) and then texts in a corpus are classified by the computer based on whether they contain more words from one or other group.

4.4.1 Three main steps of analysis

As has been discussed above, my research aims to analyse changes in the identity discourses being produced online by the Chinese state and public. It works on the understanding that short-term changes in China’s foreign policy are made possible by changes in the dominance of different main identity discourses within Chinese society.

To operationalise this theoretical approach, I translated the research questions described at the start of this chapter into more specific analytical questions and then made use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to answer these questions. My analysis consists of three main steps: 1) Qualitative analysis; 2) Quantitative analysis; and 3) Lacanian analysis. The table below (Table 4.2) describes these different steps of the analysis, the analytical question being answered in each step, and the analysis carried out to answer this question.

Table 4.2: An overview of the three main steps of the analysis, the analytical questions asked in each step and the analysis carried out to answer them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Analytical Questions</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STEP 1:</strong> Qualitative discourse analysis to recover main identities</td>
<td>How are the state and the Chinese public constructing China’s identity online in relation to the issue through juxtaposition of the Self / Other?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 2a:</td>
<td>Quantitative text analysis / Co-occurrence analysis to measure changes to identity discourses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 2b:</td>
<td>Quantitative text analysis / Dictionary based analysis to measure the changing dominance of the main identity discourses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 3:</td>
<td>Lacanian Analysis to explain the dominance of the main identity discourses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following section, I describe in more detail these three main analytical steps.

**STEP 1: Discourse analysis to recover identity constructions**

This first step of the analysis aimed to answer the question: How are the state and the Chinese public constructing China’s identity online in relation to the issue? To answer this, I carried out discourse analysis of samples of People’s Daily articles and Weibo posts produced between 2014 and 2018. This discourse analysis uncovered how these texts were constructing an identity for
the Chinese Self, through differentiation from various Others. It aimed to examine the variety of articulations of China’s identity within the material. More significantly, it sought to find the main identity discourses around which these articulations clustered. While there is a great range of different kinds of articulations in the material, with all the texts presenting things slightly differently, these converge around themes or main identity discourses. Because the discourse analysis of the two types of material was conducted side by side, this part of the analysis could also provide indications about how constructions of identity by the state and the public interact with each other.

This first step of the analysis [STEP 1] involved: a) sampling of the material, b) discourse analysis to recover identity constructions, c) establishing a framework of main identity discourses, where these final two parts b and c were repeated abductively until a clear framework had been established.

a) Sampling of the material

For this part of the analysis, I took random samples of People’s Daily articles and Weibo posts from the period 2014 to 2018. I chose to use random samples, rather than selecting articles at certain points or around key events, because this would keep the analysis open to discovering a wider range of identity constructions. Articles and posts from a particular point in time or around key events might only contain certain types of identity construction.

To get a random sample of the People’s Daily articles, I assigned all the articles in each month a random number and then sorted these articles into a list based on the random number that they each had. I then chose the first article in each list, giving a random sample of twelve articles (one from each month) for each of the five years. After this, I chose the second article in each monthly list, to get a second random sample. In total, I had two random samples containing one article from each month (or 60 articles) through the period from 2014 to 2018. I also took yearly samples of 12 articles from those articles collected from the “opinion” section of the newspaper’s website.

For the Weibo posts, I used the random sampling function in the statistics package R to retrieve two samples of 100 posts from each year between 2014 and 2018. Because the Weibo data only begins in the autumn of 2014, for this first year I took a sample of 100 posts from a shorter period between October and December. In the other years, two randomized samples were drawn from each year.

For the second case study concerning China and the South China Sea, I found that the keyword “South China Sea” (南海 nanhai) included posts unrelated to the topic, because this word was also the name for a district in
China’s southern city of Guangzhou (南海区) and part of the name of the presidential building “Zhongnanhai” (中南海). This was a problem for this first step of the analysis because these posts made it harder to carry out discourse analysis that established the main identity discourses in relation to the topic. To deal with this, the second randomized sample taken from each year was drawn from a selection of posts containing the more specific keyword “South China Sea Issue” (南海问题 nanhaiwenti). For the subsequent quantitative analysis, this was judged to be less of a problem, as the frequency counts of relevant words were unlikely to be influenced by these posts about a different topic area.

b) Discourse analysis to recover identity constructions:
Having taken samples, I then analysed the texts looking for words and phrases used to describe the identity of the Self as well as those being used to describe other states in a way that presented these states as Others which gave meaning to China’s identity. Using the software MaxQDA, these words and phrases were coded inductively as I read through the texts. For example, the following Weibo post was taken to construct an identity for China through descriptions of various Others as being different from China:

The Japanese pirates are eyeing things up, and the Taiwan independence elements have won the throne of Taiwan. Russia has always wanted to take advantage of the fire. The Koreans are untrustworthy, and THAAD has clamped down on the north... It seems difficult to handle it.

I coded the phrase in bold as being a presentation of “South Korea as an Other” with the sub-code of “dishonest”. The post is presenting South Korea as different from China, with the implied connection between South Korea and the US, to construct an identity for China. I also coded the phrase highlighted in grey as being a presentation of “Japan as an Other” – which was a code that I had already used for other posts as this presentation is quite common. I added the sub-code of “illegality”. Here, Japan is being presented as an Other and described as a “pirate” or someone who acts illegally, to implicitly construct the Chinese Self as legal.

Coding the articles and posts in this way as I read through them allowed me to establish patterns within them, where the same states were being used as Others to construct China’s identity in many different posts, with groups of similar words being used to describe them. For example, other posts might also contain presentations of Japan as an Other, describing it as a “villain” or
“bandit” or “rogue” and using terms suggesting illegality similar to that in the post above.

This way, it was possible to identify chains of linking and differentiation that structure the discourse. Looking at texts from the first case study of China’s relations with North Korea, it could be seen that China was being described in multiple texts using terms such as “socialist” and “continental”, indicating that these terms were linked together as ways to express a similar kind of Chinese Self. These particular signifiers for describing the Chinese Self were then given meaning through their differentiation from other terms used to describe the US as an Other, with “socialist” given meaning through contrast with “capitalist”, and “continental” given meaning through contrast with “overseas”. In this way, the words used to describe the US, as one important Other against which China’s identity was being constructed, were also linked together in chains of equivalence, with the same sets of words being used to describe the US in a number of different texts (Figure 4.1).

*Figure 4.1: The chains of linking and differentiation in what I have labelled the "Revolutionary discourse" that was found within the first case study.*

c) Establishing a framework of main identity discourses

This coding therefore helped to show patterns, or groups of words used in many texts to describe a particular kind of Chinese Self and other groups of words used to describe the Other(s) against which this Self was being juxtaposed. From these patterns, I could begin to discern the different identity discourses being shared. Then I could move from this to establish the “main identity discourses” that structured the debates. As discussed earlier in this chapter, these main identity discourses (or what Hansen calls “basic discourses” (2006)) are essentially analytical constructs, or a framework of underlying
ideal typical identities which are in competition with each other in the material throughout the period.

The analysis took an abductive approach to establishing the framework of main identity discourses in the material. Abductive methods have been described as an effective way of forming theoretical concepts for understanding the world (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Using an abductive approach here means beginning to look at the texts without any pre-established ideas about the main identity discourses within them, conducting discourse analysis and coding of these texts to inductively form an initial framework of main identity discourses. Other texts are then read with the use of this emergent framework, allowing it to be further refined to accommodate new data. For this reason, multiple samples of texts from each type of material need to be drawn and subjected to discourse analysis.

For my analysis, this abductive approach can be seen as the best way to accurately recover the main identity discourses present in the material. For example, initial analysis in my first case study looking at China’s relations with North Korea appeared to show that there were three main identity discourses with a new identity discourse emerging in 2016. However, further reading of the material indicated that the articulations of this discourse in different texts overlapped considerably with articulations of what was labelled as the “Revolutionary” identity discourse mostly seen at an early point, and that these articulations could therefore be seen as different variations of the same main identity discourse. The broader framework established was similar to the one shown in the table below (Table 4.3):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse 1</th>
<th>Discourse 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary Discourse</td>
<td>Stakeholder Discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>North Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar</td>
<td>Different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US and allies</td>
<td>US and allies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different</td>
<td>Similar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Example of the framework of main identity discourses in the first case study.

The different articles and posts from across the period articulated variations of China’s identity that could be fit into one of these two main discourses. Alongside the framework, for each discourse I compiled lists of the words used to describe the Self and Others in different texts that contained articulations of each main identity discourse.
STEP 2a: Co-occurrence analysis

This stage of the analysis aimed to find how identity was being constructed across all the texts in each type of material and also how these constructions were changing. The discourse analysis conducted in the previous step only allowed me to look at a small number of texts from each type of material, so here instead I employed computer assisted text analysis to analyse all the texts in each dataset. Because this step of the analysis looked at the People’s Daily articles and Weibo posts side by side, it allowed me to compare changes in the dominance of parts of the main identity discourses seen in the two types of material.

In selecting the methods of quantitative text analysis used, I initially considered using more standard word frequency counts to measure the changing use of particular words within each type of material. However, I decided that because constructions of identity involve use of words to describe the Self and Other, a more suitable approach would be to count words associated with “China” and the names of states that acted as Others. I therefore used computer assisted “co-occurrence” analysis to count the words being used in association with the Chinese Self and particular Others, as well as how the frequency of use of these words was changing over the period. I saw this change in frequency as a measure of the change in the dominance of identity constructions.

I produced counts of the number of times each quarter that different words were used within a window of five words either side of the name of a state (such as China, North Korea, and the US). A window of five words was used because this was expected to produce the most meaningful data about the texts. Often those words that appear directly alongside a country name are not the ones that convey the meaning. In a phrase like “I think China is the greatest country” (我觉得中国是很厉害的国家 wo juede zhongguo shi hen lihai de guojia) those words in italics that are within a two-word window of the country name are not the ones that convey the meaning. In a phrase like “I think China is the greatest country” those words in italics that are within a two-word window of the country name are not the most meaningful in terms of identity, therefore a window of less than three would not capture significant words in this instance. However, a very large window would risk capturing words not really being associated with the country name. For this reason, a five-word window was deemed most suitable. Choosing the size of the window therefore requires a good understanding of the syntax of the language of the material that is being analysed. It is possible that the association with the country name might be changed by intervening words within the window. My use of this method therefore assumes that if a word is used alongside the name of the state in the window, it is being used in association with it most of the time.
The chart below (Figure 4.2), for example, shows the number of times in Weibo posts that the word evil was found to be used alongside the state name “North Korea” in each quarter between autumn 2014 and spring 2016:

![Figure 4.2: Example of co-occurrence analysis for words occurring alongside North Korea.](image)

This chart shows that the word “evil” was increasingly being used alongside North Korea as 2015 proceeded. This can be seen to indicate the way in which in the Weibo posts North Korea was increasingly being presented in moral terms as an Other to different articulations of the Chinese Self.

I then then compared these results with measures of co-occurrence for the People’s Daily articles. However, I found that these articles sometimes used different language to express similar concepts. The official state media articles would rarely use the kind of emotionally loaded language found in the public posts, describing North Korea as ‘evil’ or ‘barbaric’ for example, but instead it tended to express similar ideas in more moderate language.

**STEP 2b: Measuring the changing dominance of main identity discourses**

In this step, I measured the changing dominance in both the People’s Daily articles and Weibo posts of the main identity discourses that had been found in the discourse analysis carried out in the first step (STEP 1). These main identity discourses, and the keywords connected to them, were converted into measurable objects (or groups of 35 keywords). This allowed me to measure the changing dominance of these main identity discourse over time, by categorising articles and posts as expressing either the first or second of the two main identity discourses that had been found.

To do this, I again used the Quanteda package in R and adopted a technique similar to that used for sentiment analysis of texts. In sentiment analysis, a group or dictionary of “positive” words and another of “negative” words are
created. Texts are analysed to count how many of each of these sets of words they contain, with the text then categorized as either positive in sentiment or negative in sentiment. I took the same approach, but rather than dictionaries of positive/negative words, I instead created dictionaries based on keywords found to be associated with the main identity discourses in STEP 1 of the analysis. I created two dictionaries including 35 words each from the lists of words I had found to be connected to the two main identity discourses (these word lists are included in the Appendix at the end of this thesis).

I then used the text analysis package Quanteda to count the number of words from these two dictionaries that appeared in each of the People’s Daily articles and Weibo posts in the datasets. After counting the number of words of each discourse type in each post/article, then the number of words from dictionary 1 (“Discourse 1”) were subtracted from the number of words from dictionary 2 (“Discourse 2”). If the result was less than zero, then the post/article was classified as being an articulation of “Discourse 1” and if more than zero it was instead classified as being an articulation of “Discourse 2”. Those posts/articles with equal number of words from both discourses received no classification.

The number of posts/articles classified as being articulations of each basic discourse were summed for each month of the period between the end of 2014 and the middle of 2018 to give an indication of how dominant the two competing main identity discourses were over time. I did not make any attempt to adjust for changes in the total number of posts being made during each month, because the focus was on the changing proportion of these posts of each discourse type. The keywords specified as being part of each main identity discourse need to be specified with some level of precision, based on the discourse analysis in the first step. This is similar to sentiment analysis, where if certain words are incorrectly associated with negative sentiment this can affect the results (for example, if the words “sick” or “bad” are included in a list of negative words used to analyse teenage slang). I therefore made sure that the words used as representative of each main identity discourse were derived from close study of texts in the first step of the analysis.

**STEP 3: Lacanian analysis to explain the dominance of the main identity discourses**

Having analysed the changing dominance or resonance of different main identity discourses using quantitative methods, I then sought to explain why particular discourses resonated in the way in which they did at particular points in time. If for example a “Great Power” discourse was found to be particularly
resonant in the two types of material (as was true in Case Study 2), then I used Lacanian theory to explain why this discourse was able to resonate in Chinese society and particularly to grip members of the Chinese public to such an extent. To do this, I make use of Lacanian theory as developed by Solomon in the way discussed at length in the previous chapter.

To repeat the main arguments made by Lacanian theory: Lacan echoed other poststructuralists in describing the split subject. There is no essential Self, but instead our identity is formed through discourse where the words themselves have no fixed meanings. Because the words we use do not have fixed or essential meanings, there is always a sense of lack of a full identity. However, individuals remain gripped by a desire for a full identity, even if such complete identity is always ultimately unachievable. Despite being continually frustrated, the desiring subject continues to pursue a complete identity by investing in different identity discourses that are offered to them by society. To sustain desire in this way, the subject uses a kind of fantasy where they believe that the master signifiers offered by a particular identity discourse offer the promise of regaining the “missing” object a that is seen to have been lost and therefore of obtaining a full identity for the Self. To cover over the fact that this promised fullness is never realised, and the ultimate lack, Others are presented as scapegoats, described as stealing the subject’s enjoyment of the full identity which it would otherwise have achieved.

These different concepts – master signifiers, the split subject (or lack), and the object a – all appear in different ways within discourses. Lacan also then proposed a framework of four different basic types of discourses (the Master’s Discourse, the Hysteric’s Discourse, the Analyst’s Discourse, the University Discourse) which arrange these elements in different ways to make them more or less prominent.

To make use of these Lacanian concepts to analyse the discourses that appear in texts, they need to be turned into a more concrete method. In his discussion of Lacanian theory, Solomon (2015) states the following:

Bracher (1993:52) argues, the value of this framework of desire lies in its “demonstration of the multifariousness and complexity of desire and in its function as a kind of checklist prompting us to search a given text or discourse for interpellative forces that might not be immediately evident.”

However, he is then quite vague about what this checklist is, or about the particular work-steps which might be followed when carrying out a discourse analysis of text based on this kind of theory.
Following Solomon’s analysis, I take the first stage to be a categorization of which of the “four discourses” the structure of a particular text resembles (these being ideal types that are not found in pure form within particular texts). This would mean asking whether a text deploys an array of master signifiers as being the indisputable truth (Master’s Discourse) or seems to be criticising and questioning master signifiers of another discourse (Hysteric’s Discourse), or is deliberately presenting the lack of a fixed identity (Analyst’s Discourse), or presents an identity as the commonly accepted knowledge through many signifiers supported by master signifiers (University Discourse). Identifying which type of Lacanian ideal-typical discourse a particular text presents can show us how the discourse is structured, or how it is working to channel feelings of desire and lack. It can also offer some explanation of why the discourse is resonating more or less. As Solomon argues, discourses with the structure of a Master’s Discourse or University Discourse, which repress the sense of lack of a full identity to something latent beneath manifest signifiers, generally tend to resonate more effectively because of how they channel our desire for full identities.

However, it is also necessary to go beyond this categorization of a text and its discourse into one of Lacan’s four type framework. This is because, as Solomon (2015) notes, two discourses of the same type as each other may resonate more or less and it is not necessarily always the case that a discourse of type “Master’s Discourse” will resonate more, and a discourse of type “Hysteric’s Discourse” will resonate less. It therefore becomes necessary to look in more detail at the specific textual features of a particular discourse within this overarching structure. In my examination of Chinese identity discourses produced in large part by the state, I found that those that resonated often tended to be examples of the “Master’s Discourse” or the “University Discourse” but that amongst these discourses some still appeared to resonate more or less than others as a result of their particular textual features.

For this, I take from Solomon that a first stage of analysis should focus on the way the discourse (or text as representation of this) works to produce a fantasy, in the Lacanian sense of the term, for the subject who engages with it. The text produces this fantasy in two main ways: 1) by deploying certain master signifiers that describe the identity of the Self, offering a promise of something that is to be regained; and 2) by presenting particular Others who serve as a reason why this promised identity has not been achieved. As an addition to the first way, we might also see texts using other signifiers alongside these master signifiers to present certain identities as being commonly accepted knowledge (particularly in the University Discourse). Then a second
stage of the Lacanian textual analysis should be to look at how effectively a text produces a fantasy to cover over the sense of lack through the deployment of these two features. This might involve asking to what extent the text offers compelling master signifiers that strongly promise a full identity to be achieved, as well as how forcefully it creates the sense of an Other that is “stealing” this enjoyment.

An example of Lacanian theory used to explain dominance

In order to make clear what I will do in STEP 3, here I give an example that uses Lacanian analysis to explain why a particular identity discourse dominates. This demonstrates how this analysis might be carried out on Chinese newspaper articles of the kind examined in this thesis. Below is a sample article, published in People’s Daily on 27 January 2017 and taken from the second case study, with these different features identified and marked in the text (for the Chinese original, see the Appendix C1). I see the discourse in this text as being an example of the Lacanian “Master’s Discourse” in that it presents an identity for China as the concrete “truth” about the world, with the sense of lack of a full identity effectively covered over by a compelling fantasy narrative.

In this text, I have highlighted (in grey) the words taken as master signifiers being deployed to promise a particular identity for China. This promised identity generally revolves around the theme of strength and grandeur, presenting China repeatedly as a “major power” and associating it with being “great” and “magnificent” and “special”. Related to this is the presentation of China as “rising” and “developing” that similarly suggests the ever-increasing strength of the nation. The identity presents a China that has “self-confidence” which is particularly interesting when this discourse is seen in the light of the broader narrative about China’s century of humiliation. China is presented as being influential and important in the world, described as a “leader” and a “chairperson” and also as exhibiting “all-under heavens spirit”, a reference to the traditional Chinese understanding of the world extending outwards from a central pole of China, and more specifically the government in Beijing or previously the imperial court, which oversees everything around it.

10 海外版望海楼：中国正在重返世界舞台中央, China is returning to the centre of the world stage, People’s Daily, 27/01/27 (Appendix C1)
China is returning to the centre of the world stage

Chinese people have a “Major Power Complex” because this country was once leader of the world for a thousand years, then afterwards because of internal and external troubles it fell into a trough. But through over a hundred years of struggle, China is once again gradually coming up, returning to the centre of the world stage. The day of realising the Chinese people’s dream of a great revival has never seemed as close to us as it is today.

Since the 18th national congress of the Communist Party of China, Xi Jinping has several times emphasised [we] “must prepare for a great struggle with many new historical characteristics”. He pointed out, we need to have strategic determination to “pass through chaotic clouds and remain calm”, and also need to have a spirit of keeping forging ahead where “if you’ve not been to the great wall, you’re not a hero”; We need to “grasp the general trend of the world, coordinate the overall domestic and international situations, and take the initiative in the advancing trend of the times, winning development”; We need to realize “Chinese people’s dream of a great revival”

In 2016 two big things happened, demonstrating Xi Jinping’s far sightedness, courage and responsibility. They were exactly “a great struggle with many new historical characteristics” and were also a far-reaching milestone in China’s return to the centre of the world stage. The first big thing, was China and the US’s unfolding contest surrounding the South China Sea issues. This contest based on will and strength proves that the United States’ attempt to deter China’s rise through the South China Sea issue has gone bankrupt.

The other big thing, was that at the start of September 2016, China acted as the chairperson of the G20 Summit in Huangzhou. Leaders of member countries representing 85% of the world economy, 80% of world trade, and 60% of the world’s population, and related international organizations gathered in Hangzhou to discuss and finally pass the solution proposed by Xi Jinping on behalf of China to solve the world’s economic problems. The G20 Hangzhou Summit may be a watershed in the rise of China’s soft power, and is a benchmark in China’s return to the centre of the world stage, realising the dream of revival. China’s voice, especially China’s voice in the field of global governance, after this will become increasingly distinct, gaining increasing attention.

While the world is reflecting on national development paths and global governance concepts, China’s development and China’s role are constantly attracting the attention of the world. Xi Jinping’s New Year trip to Switzerland, especially two important speeches delivered at the annual meeting of the Davos Forum and the Palais des Nations in Geneva, exhibited all under heavens spirit and major power responsibility, and exhibited, in the changing historical course of international relations, China’s special major power diplomacy’s deep imprint.
China with big steps is returning to the centre of the world stage. The world is watching the Chinese people’s dream of a great revival, and watching the self-confidence in its path, and the cultural self-confidence and the way China’s soft and hard power are comprehensively rising. It has seen the vision, courage and responsibility shown by Chinese leaders at the critical moment of historical development.

Altogether, changing China, shaking the world, will profoundly affect the evolution of the future international order. Rising China will continue to fight the waves in the process of economic globalization, lead the new wave of economic globalization, and make greater contributions to human beings. The great process of China’s return to the centre of the world stage will also become more magnificent.

Alongside these master signifiers, there are also those which ascribe characteristics to the Chinese people – who are presented as showing “will” and “determination” and “spirit”. The use of the quotation in the second paragraph is particularly interesting, where Xi Jinping is quoted as telling the Chinese people that “until you reach the great wall, you’re not a hero” (不到长城非好汉). This is a quote from a poem written by Mao Zedong, used to express a person’s struggle for achievement and to accomplish a heroic identity. Here we see a promised identity offered to the Chinese people, that they will become heroes again as part of China’s continual development. Also interesting is the way in which the article ascribes certain characteristics to Xi Jinping himself, describing him as showing “far sightedness” and “courage” in a way that seems to make him a symbol of the identity being promised to the entire Chinese nation.

It is made quite explicit at the start of this article that this identity which the master signifiers are promising for China is one which has been “lost” and is to be regained. The first sentence foregrounds this idea, describing how “this country was once leader of the world for a thousand years, then afterwards…” – expressing the Lacanian idea of an identity that is being recovered. The article then deploys the host of master signifiers discussed above to produce a fantasy which promises that this “lost” identity is close to being regained. As Solomon suggests is often the case, this promise is expressed in terms of “if only we do..., then this identity, as ‘leader’ and as a ‘major power’, can once again be regained” (my paraphrasing). Here, rather than a foreign policy, the action that the article presents as necessary appears to be continual support of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In this way, the discourse produced by state media for the CCP seems to leverage the public’s desire for a complete identity in order to gain legitimacy. However, the phrase
“[we] ‘must prepare for a great struggle’ might also be seen to carry foreign policy implications, suggesting that if only the Chinese people are willing to continue to fight China’s Others then the promised identity can be achieved. This is particularly relevant in regard to the article’s presentation of an Other, as shall be discussed below.

As Solomon suggests, the actual meaning of all of these master signifiers offered to present China’s identity is very ambiguous – What does the fact that China is “rising” or is a “major power” really mean? What does it mean that China is “special” or a “leader”? So in promising a particular identity for China, these words will also to some extent summon a sense of lack. This kind of lack of a full identity, which is always there beneath the ideas being presented in the text, needs to be effectively repressed by the fantasy in the discourse if it is going to resonate. The article needs to provide reasons why the identity which is being promised, which ultimately can never be realised, has not yet been achieved. To do this, the discourse presents Others that are seen to steal enjoyment and prevent realisation of a full identity.

In the article, there is only a brief section presenting an Other in this way, which has been underlined. The Other here is the US, which is described as making an “attempt to deter China’s rise” and so seeking to stop it from achieving the identity which is being promised. I would suggest that although the reference to the US in this article is very brief in this way, because it connects with the depiction of the US in many other articles, it functions effectively in the discourse to provide a compelling Other that covers over the lack of full identity. The language in this section is interesting in several ways. First, the sentence states that a “contest based on will and strength proves” that China is close to gaining the upper hand and achieving its identity as dominant. In this way, the article makes a sort of truth claim about the identity it presents for China which might also be seen as an attempt to cover over the lack of fullness to this identity. It seems to function alongside the master signifiers to reinforce the idea that this identity is the way things are. Also interesting is the use of the word “bankrupt” to describe the US, a financial term that emphasises the difference between it and China’s prosperity and further works to fill out the meaning of the master signifiers that are used to evoke China’s economic success.

Analysed in this way, it is possible to see why this kind of article, or the discourse being expressed within it, would resonate with the Chinese public to a great extent. The discourse in the article produces a particularly compelling fantasy to channel the public’s desires for a full identity. It deploys a large number of master signifiers to promise an attractive identity that China
once lost, but is now on the brink of regaining again if only it takes certain actions. To cover over the sense of lack that lies behind these master signifiers and the fact that this promised identity still is not being achieved, the discourse deploys an Other in the shape of the US which is working to thwart this identity and is effectively “stealing” China’s enjoyment of it. While the article suggests that this Other has essentially been defeated, it still nevertheless uses it to deflect away from the fact that China is not yet at the centre of the world stage in the way that it strives to be. The article offers the compelling promise to the people of China that it is close to once again being the “leader” of the world that is full of “self-confidence” in its position.

4.5 Conclusion

Through the methods described in this chapter, I analyse the changing ways in which the Chinese state, in People’s Daily, and the Chinese public, on Weibo, construct China’s identity in connection to the two issues of China and North Korea and China and the South China Sea.

The analysis conducted in each case study has three main steps that seek to investigate different things. In the first step, I find out the main ways in which online material produced by the Chinese state and public are constructing China’s identity in connection with the issue being studied. In the second step, quantitative analysis reinforces these findings and also measures the changing societal dominance of these main identity discourses. Finally, in the third step, analysis based on Lacanian theory helps to explain why certain identity discourses dominated (or were resonant) in Chinese society at particular times.

- **STEP 1** - Discourse analysis to recover the main identity discourses
- **STEP 2a** - Co-occurrence analysis
- **STEP 2b** - Measuring the changing dominance of the main identity discourses
- **STEP 3** – Lacanian analysis to explain the dominance of main identity discourses

In the following two chapters which present this analysis, these same titles will be used to demarcate the different steps. In each chapter, I first present an introduction to the issue focused on in the case study, then describe the results of the analysis conducted in each of these steps in turn.
5 Case Study 1: China and North Korea, 2014-2018

5.1 Introduction

The relationship between China and North Korea is an important aspect of East Asian international relations and a test case for China’s integration into the international community. It has often been argued that China plays a significant role in the US and wider international community’s efforts to limit North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons and related aggressive behaviour (Beauchamp-Mustafaga & Jun, 2013). This arguably makes it vital to understand China’s approach towards North Korea and what shapes this.

China’s relations with North Korea are also a good example of the short-term change in foreign policy in different areas that it has shown as it rises. During the past two decades, China’s foreign policy regarding North Korea has displayed extensive short-term change, moving from support of North Korea during the 2000s, to much greater cooperation with the international community against it in the 2010s, and then seemingly back to support of North Korea in 2018. The increased cooperation with the US and international community on North Korea is particularly puzzling because it occurred as the US was stepping up its military presence in the region.

This chapter takes a critical constructivist approach to understanding China’s recent foreign policies regarding North Korea, explaining these by analysing the underlying identity discourses that form their context. The chapter begins by describing short-term changes in China’s foreign policies regarding North Korea over the past two decades and those in the period focused on for this thesis (2014-2018). Then it reviews the literature which has used different theoretical approaches to understand China’s foreign policies towards North Korea. Following this, it lists the specific questions related to these foreign policy changes analysed in this case study. The chapter then summarises the methods and materials used to analyse identity discourses regarding China’s relations to North Korea, describing the three steps of analysis conducted. After this, the next three sub-sections of the chapter detail the analysis in each step and the findings.
The chapter ends with overall conclusions, drawing together the main findings from each step of the analysis.

5.2 Background

This initial section of the chapter provides the background for my analysis of China’s foreign policy regarding North Korea. It first describes the different short-term changes in this policy that have been seen during the past two decades. Then it briefly reviews the literature that has sought to explain this foreign policy and points to some of the limitations of these accounts. In doing so, it establishes the main questions that my analysis in this case study seeks to answer.

5.2.1 Short-term changes in China’s foreign policy towards North Korea

There has been a considerable amount of short-term change in China’s foreign policies regarding North Korea over the past two decades. During the 2000s, China initially showed some support for the international community as a leader of the Six Party Talks. However, it primarily supported North Korea and only unenthusiastically cooperated with the attempts made by the international community to challenge it and stop its nuclear programme (Song, 2011). China did not take actions to help punish North Korea when it withdrew from the non-proliferation treaty in 2003, or when it shelled South Korea’s Yeonpyeong Island and sunk the South Korean warship Cheonan in 2010 (Song, 2011). Although China did vote in support of United Nations sanctions against North Korea after its first and second nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009, this was only after it had insisted these sanctions were considerably weakened to limit their impact on North Korea (Beauchamp-Mustafaga & Jun, 2013). In the 2010s, however, China’s approach towards North Korea changed to show much greater cooperation with the international community. Then at the end of the decade, China’s policies towards North Korea appeared to change again and the Chinese President Xi Jinping met with the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un several times during 2018 and 2019.

My case study focused on the period from 2014 to the end of 2018 and particular short-term changes that occurred in this time. The main purpose of my research is not to provide a full catalogue of the specific policies adopted during this period, but to point to short-term changes in policy and make sense of these. I therefore rely partly on the literature for my
understanding of specific foreign policies adopted as evidence for policy change.

In the period between 2014 and 2018, China was seen to shift in its approach, no longer supporting North Korea and instead showing greater cooperation with the international community’s attempts to punish North Korea’s actions and stop its nuclear development. In March 2016, after North Korea’s fourth nuclear test, China supported the UN Security Council in the unanimous adoption of Resolution 2270 which contained the strongest sanctions seen up to that point, after working with the US to draft this resolution (Lou, 2016). Then at the end of the year, responding to North Korea’s fifth nuclear test in September, China agreed to the UN Security Council’s adoption of Resolution 2321 which built on the previous resolution to further strengthen sanctions, including limits on imports and exports between North Korea and China (Snyder, 2016).

At the start of 2017, shortly after the assassination of the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un’s half-brother Kim Jong-nam, China took another step by suspending coal imports from North Korea for the rest of the year, and in the middle of the year China’s state-owned banks also restricted financial activities of North Korean entities (Yang Jiang, 2019; Mason, 2017). After the sixth nuclear test at the start of September, China again supported UN Security Council sanctions and moved to limit supplies of oil to North Korea (Yang Jiang, 2019).

The foreign policy adopted by China during the period is puzzling because it came when the US was increasing its presence in the Asian region as part of its “Pivot to Asia” and through the planned deployment of a Terminal High Altitude Defence (THAAD) missile system in South Korea. Understandings of China’s North Korea policies based on realist theory (Chung & Choi, 2013; Twomey, 2008; Z. Zhu, 2016) generally expect China to increase its support for North Korea in response to increases in the US power presence in the region. China’s foreign policy in this period therefore appears contrary to these expectations.

### 5.2.2 Existing literature about China’s North Korea Policy

The existing literature has taken a range of different theoretical approaches to understanding China’s foreign policies towards North Korea. There is some debate about the extent to which these policies are changing. There has been research which contends that China’s policies towards North Korea have remained largely consistent during the past two decades (J. U.
Kim, 2017; Scobell & Cozad, 2014). However, this research generally tends to disregard short-term changes in policy or to unconvincingly argue that certain actions (such as votes for UN Security Council resolutions) do not reflect a change in behaviour. Many other studies present evidence to suggest that China’s North Korea policy is evolving, and that the short-term changes in foreign policy seen are significant as part of this ongoing shift (C. P. Chan & Bridges, 2018; W. Li & Kim, 2020; Scobell et al., 2019).

The literature has drawn on different theoretical approaches to explain China’s North Korea policies. There are a number of studies that seek to explain its policies towards North Korea using realist approaches (Chung & Choi, 2013; J. U. Kim, 2017; Twomey, 2008). However, in a similar way to the more general realist accounts, these often do not effectively explain why we see change in China’s foreign policies towards North Korea. There are not many studies taking an explicitly offensive realist approach to explaining China’s North Korea policy. This would understand actions that China takes on this issue to be a part of its broader power-maximization strategy and therefore expect it to offer wholehearted support for North Korea’s attempts to challenge the US, as a form of “blood-letting” or “buck passing” (Twomey, 2008, p.405).

Instead, most broadly realist approaches argue that China’s pursuit of survival under international anarchy causes it to give enduring support to North Korea, so that North Korea can act as a geostrategic “buffer zone” in defence against rival great powers and particularly the US (F. Zhu & Beauchamp-Mustafaga, 2015). However, these approaches do not explain why China sometimes cooperates with the UN Security Council. If China has an overriding, and unchanging, security interest in keeping close relations with North Korea, then why would it risk jeopardizing this with actions against North Korea? Beyond simply dismissing those cases which do not fit with the general account, many realist explanations cannot explain why China appears to act very differently towards North Korea at different times.

There are also studies that draw more specifically on the theory of defensive realism and understand China as seeking security by trying to maintain a status quo on the peninsula and avoiding spirals of tension (Song, 2011; Twomey, 2008). These studies argue this pursuit of a secure status quo explains why China sometimes takes punitive actions against North Korea but then also offers it support (Twomey, 2008). For Song (2011), China calculates its response to situations on the Peninsula to
avoid either increased US military presence or North Korean collapse. His analysis does answer the question of why China’s policy towards North Korea fluctuates so much, arguing that this depends on calculations about both the danger of US intervention and collapse of the North Korean regime. However, this account, and others taking a defensive realist approach, present China as calculating and making decisions about how to act based on its understanding. These may be seen as a deviation from the general tenets of structural realism.

Other research, which draws more on liberal international relations theory, sees a wider range of factors, beyond power and security interests, as determining China’s policies towards North Korea. This attributes shifts in China’s approaches to changes in a number of these factors over time (Hoshino & Hiraiwa, 2020; M. H. Kim, 2017; Z. Zhu, 2016). These studies point to factors such as Chinese increased interest in relations with South Korea and its changing approach to denuclearization as driving its changing policies regarding North Korea. However, alongside these shifting interests, the studies also hold that China still has fairly fixed security interests (similar to those described by the realist approaches) and that these interests therefore limit change in China’s policies. These studies do not tend to closely examine what is bringing about the evolution in China’s interests that they use to explain its changing foreign policies. They therefore only partly account for the short-term changes in China’s foreign policies seen.

There have also been studies which have used identity to explain China’s policies towards North Korea (Easley & Park, 2016; Lee & Kim, 2017; Noesselt, 2014). Many of these studies tend to treat China’s identity as one factor alongside others, or as being fixed, in a way which means they have difficulties explaining the shorter-term changes in China’s foreign policies seen (Easley & Park, 2016; Lee & Kim, 2017). The account given by Noesselt treats identity as an intervening variable shaping different interests (Noesselt, 2014), and still tends to rely heavily on a material power-based explanation that expects China’s ongoing support of North Korea.

As such, it still does not explain the recent changes in foreign policy. Easley and Park (2016) take a norm constructivist approach, identifying four main norms that underpin and shape China’s interests regarding the Korean Peninsula and arguing that the dominance of different norms results in changes to China’s approach. While their study indicates how slow shifts in which norms are more dominant produces different foreign
policies over the longer term, the way they straitjacket identity into fixed, unchanging norms limits the potential for this explanation to also account for short-term changes.

Short-term change in China’s North Korea policies is somewhat better explained by Lee (2013). This study argues that changes in China’s understanding of its security interests led to it displaying more cooperative behaviour in the second nuclear crisis than it had in the first. However, although this study understands identity as being more dynamic, it does not provide much evidence for how or why China’s identity is changing. This might arguably be achieved by treating China’s identity as constructed through discourse and focusing, as I do in my analysis, on the domestic production of this identity within China.

There have also been a number of studies looking at discussions of North Korea by the Chinese public, including public discussions taking place online (C. P. Chan & Bridges, 2018; Gries, 2012; W. Li & Kim, 2020; Scobell & Cozad, 2014; Shen, 2012; C. Zhang, 2016). One recent study in this area looked at reporting on North Korea in state media, academic articles, and online public opinions between 2003 and 2017 (W. Li & Kim, 2020). It found that both elites and the public in China have gradually become more negative in their attitudes towards North Korea and more positive about the UN Security Council sanctions against it.

Another recent study looked in detail at the discussions of North Korea on the Chinese social media platform Weibo during the months of June and July of 2015 (Scobell et al., 2019). This study found that there was extensive criticism of North Korea being expressed on the platform which clashed with the official government narrative, arguing that this likely complicated the context in which Beijing made policy regarding North Korea. However, the period analysed was too short to allow for broader conclusions about how this discourse corresponded to overall changes in policy. While both studies produced useful findings about the discursive context for China’s North Korea policy, neither looked at the discourses with a focus on how they constructed China’s identity in relation to the issue. They also lacked theorizing of how the discourses relate to policy. My research aims to build on the findings of these studies.

In sum, studies which use mainstream IR theories or look to domestic discourses have proven limited in their ability to explain short-term changes in China’s North Korea policy, such as those seen during 2016 and 2017. Approaches that see China having fixed interests and use shifts in the balance of power do not appear able to explain many of the changes
in policy and particularly the moves towards greater cooperation with the international community. While mainstream constructivist approaches that see interests being shaped by identity appear somewhat better able to explain these policies, because they treat identity as largely fixed they are still unable to account for short-term shifts in policy being made possible by greater changes in identity. This leads me to an approach which can recognise the dynamic nature of identity. My analysis in this chapter therefore adopts a critical constructivist approach that treats Chinese identity as being produced in discourses. It looks in detail at the underlying identity discourses being produced by the Chinese state and members of the public, examining how these make possible the policies which China adopts towards North Korea during the period from 2014 to 2018.
5.3 Method

5.3.1 Research questions

The general research questions guiding this thesis can be rephrased for this case study:

How can we use critical constructivist theory to make sense of the short-term changes in China’s foreign policy during 2016 and 2017, when it displayed greater willingness to cooperate with the international community against North Korea?

1. What changes occurred in Chinese identity discourses relating to North Korea that may have enabled these short-term changes in China’s foreign policy?

2. What role did the Chinese public play in producing these changes in identity discourses that made possible changes in China’s foreign policy?

3. Why did specific identity discourses, making possible particular foreign policies, become dominant or resonant in Chinese society at this time?

5.3.2 Method of analysis

This case study adopted a critical constructivist approach and aimed to explain short-term changes in China’s foreign policies regarding North Korea between 2014 and 2018 by looking at changes in the underlying identity discourses which form the context for these policies. The analysis used a subset of the overall material, selected because it contained the keyword “North Korea” (朝鲜 chaoxian). This was 6742 articles from People’s Daily (between 01/01/14 and 31/12/18) and 258,083 posts from Weibo (between 01/10/14/ and 31/12/18). The analysis followed the three analytical steps described in detail in the methods chapter (Chapter 4). A summary of these analytical steps is given again here:
STEP 1 – Qualitative: Discourse analysis to recover the main identity discourses. I carried out discourse analysis on People’s Daily articles randomly sampled from each year between 2014 and 2018 (approximately three sets of one article randomly chosen for each month of the year). I then carried out discourse analysis of random samples of 100 Weibo posts from each year between 2015 and 2018, and for the final quarter of 2014. The discourse analysis focused on how the Chinese Self was constructed through difference from Others, identifying keywords doing this. Discourse analysis was continued abductively on more samples until a framework of main identity discourses was established.

STEP 2a – Quantitative: Co-occurrence analysis. I used the computer-assisted text analysis package Quanteda to count the frequency with which certain keywords, found during the discourse analysis of Step 1, co-occurred in the two complete datasets of the People’s Daily and Weibo material alongside the terms “China”, “the United States”, “International Society”, and “North Korea”. This was a way of analysing the changing way in which the Chinese Self and important Others were being constructed in the two types of material, as well as the changing dominance of the main identity discourses.

STEP 2b – Quantitative: Measuring the changing dominance of the main identity discourses. For this step, 35 keywords found to be associated with each main identity discourses were taken as a group. The computer text analysis package Quanteda was used to count the number of each of these groups of words that appeared in the articles and posts, then to classify the articles as being one the main identity discourses. The number of articles or posts of each main identity discourse in each month between October 2014 and December 2018 was then summed.

STEP 3 - Lacanian analysis to explain the dominance of the main identity discourses. In this final step, Lacanian theory about the psychological reasons people invest in particular identity discourses was used to analyse why the main identity discourses dominated/resonated at particular times. This involved close ex-
amination of texts taken to be representative of these identity discourses. In looking at the texts, I analysed the way in which they produced fantasies which promised a recovery of a full identity for China, through the presentation of “master signifiers”, and deployed particular Others as the reasons why this full identity had not yet been achieved.
5.4 Analysis

5.4.1 STEP 1: Discourse analysis to recover the main identity discourses

The first step of the analysis involved carrying out discourse analysis on samples of *People’s Daily* articles and *Weibo* posts to find the main identity discourses being expressed in this material. This step sought to answer the following analytical question:

- How are the state and the Chinese public constructing China’s identity online in relation to the issue of relations with North Korea through juxtaposition of the Self / Other?

I first took samples from the two subsets of *People’s Daily* articles and *Weibo* posts with the keyword “North Korea” (朝鮮):

From the *People’s Daily* news articles, I took two samples of 12 articles from each year between 2014 and 2018, using the random sampling method described in the methods chapter (Chapter 4). From the opinion articles, I took one sample of approximately 12 articles from each year, where for some months there were no opinion articles produced.

From the *Weibo* posts, I took random samples of 100 *Weibo* posts from each year 2015 through to 2018, with a sample of 100 posts from the fourth quarter of 2014 where the *Weibo* dataset began. As an additional part of this analysis, I also selected a sample of 100 *Weibo* posts from the first two months of 2016 for close analysis because this appeared to be a period where China’s relations with North Korea were being particularly intensely discussed online.

The discourse analysis of these samples from the two types of material was carried out as specified in full in the methods chapter (Chapter 4). I looked for ways in which an identity for the Chinese Self was being constructed through difference from Others. This meant, reading the texts closely and marking within them words or phrases used to ascribe an identity to the Self, as well as words that were used to present states in ways which were different (e.g., China is *growing in power* and *dominance* in the Asian region, while the US is in *decline* and seeks to cling onto its *hegemony*). In addition to this, I noted places where China was described as being similar to other nations (e.g., China and North Korea are both *socialist* countries). Coding of the articles used the *MaxQDA* software.
which meant I could look at how the groups of words were being used to refer to the Chinese Self as well as specific Others.

This discourse analysis found there were essentially two main identity discourses within the two types of material. I labelled these as the “Revolutionary” discourse and the “Stakeholder” discourse based on their main features. In the description that follows, I begin by presenting the ways in which the first main identity discourse (the “Revolutionary” discourse) appeared in the two types of material. For this discourse, I first describe how it was expressed in the People’s Daily articles, and then describe how it appeared in the Weibo posts. I start with detailed discussion of a small selection of example articles and posts and then give tables with more examples. After presenting this first main identity discourse, I then go on to present the second main identity discourse (the “Stakeholder” discourse) in the same way, again beginning with the People’s Daily articles before moving on to the Weibo posts.

**Discourse 1: “Revolutionary” discourse**

The first main identity found in the material presented China as a communist and revolutionary state, seeking to secure its position in the world. This identity for the Chinese Self is constructed through difference from various Others, in particular the US and Japan. In this discourse, North Korea is presented as being very similar in identity to the Chinese Self and sharing common interests with it.

*The “Revolutionary” discourse in People’s Daily*

The People’s Daily articles from the earlier years of the sample presented examples of the “Revolutionary” discourse more often than articles from the later years. Articles constructed an identity for the Chinese Self through differentiation from Others, particularly the US and its allies. They presented China as a communist state trying to grow in power and establish its rightful, dominant place in the world while being challenged by Others (particularly the US and Japan), which are described as holding different political values and seeking a different vision of international order. A good example of how an identity for the Chinese Self is constructed through differentiation from presentation of the US as an Other is found in an article from 6 November 2014. This article is about how China and

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the US have different interpretations of the “new type of major power relations” concept. The article contains the following passages (*my italics emphasising key statements*):

However, in the China-US establishment of a new type of major power relations, there exist a number of known differences:

1) Connotations: The Chinese side emphasises “No conflict, no antagonism”, *but the US side has no way to promise no conflict*, at most it can say no unnecessary conflict or antagonism, and it hasn’t even made this promise, afraid of being tied up and losing the trust of its allies. If the US accepted this, its allies would worry that the US would sacrifice its own interests for the new type of major power relations, and the integrity of the US hegemon would be in doubt. In fact, what the Chinese side emphasises is strategic confrontation, but what the US side is worried about is tactical conflict.

2) Aims: The kind of China-US relations that are built will decide the direction of the 21st Century. The US places emphasis on the need for a “new type of relationship” but is thinking more about continuing its engagement policy with China in a new way while *maintaining its leadership*. It worries that China’s emphasis on *mutual respect* prevents the United States *from interfering in* China’s internal affairs, which is contrary to American values of diplomacy. The Chinese side wants “respect”, hoping that the US side will respect its core interests, and gradually recognise China’s status as a “major power”.

In these passages, China’s identity and approach to international relations are directly contrasted with those of the US. China’s peaceful nature is set against the US which is presented as acting in antagonistic and conflictual ways. Rather than cooperative relations, the US is associated with hegemony and alliances. The US is presented as being different from China in that it does not emphasise “mutual respect” and is not willing to respect China’s position as a sovereign state. Instead, the US is presented as seeking to interfere with China’s internal affairs. These differences ascribed to the US as an Other therefore make it threatening to China and its position in the world.

An article from 16 September 2015\(^{12}\), though ostensibly about fostering cooperation between China and the US, similarly constructs an identity for the Chinese Self through presentation of the US as different. The US is depicted as a very different Other that continues to be threatening to China’s identity. The article contains the following passages:

\(\text{Appendix A1.2}\)

China and the United States are different, historically and culturally, their social and political systems and development stages are not the same. So it is difficult to avoid the existence of divisions between the two countries. For decades since the normalization of Sino-US relations, the relationship has been developing through a process of facing contradictions and solving problems. Since entering the 21st century, globalization and multi-polarization have deepened, and the relative strength of China and the United States has undergone major changes.

In the period where US strategic anxiety regarding China is increasing, naturally there will appear new problems. The US's global strategic focus has shifted eastward, and the “rebalancing” strategy has been stepped up, with the focus shifting from counter-terrorism to preventing the challenges of the rise of other major powers. The external environment of China-US relations has become more complex, more changeable, with some “third party factors” disturbing the relationship. Things like the election and domestic factors have also increased their disturbance of the relationship. In US discussions about China policy there have been increasingly intense murmurs about prevention and balancing.

Here the US is presented as being politically very different from China and also as a result to be threatening towards it. With its “pivot to Asia” strategy, the US is presented as seeking to block China from realising its identity as a rising power. The passages describe how domestically, the identity of the US is shifting to make it even more of a threatening Other, with growing discussions about a policy change to seek to prevent China from growing stronger.

These articles are about China’s broader identity and relations with the US, and only mention North Korea as part of this picture. However, there are also articles which more specifically pin this identity discourse to the issue of the Korean Peninsula. These articles present a Chinese Self that, both historically and in the present, seeks to resist intervention from very different Others in the form of the US and Japan which try to prevent its rise and establish a different kind of political system within the region. An example is an article from 21 August 2014\(^3\), which includes the following passages:

History proves, when the mainland and the Peninsula are united and strong these are the times when the order on the Peninsula and in the Northeast Asian region is most stable. In the 120 years between the Sino-Japanese war and today, because the oceanic powers intervened, this directly led to the Korean peninsula being unstable and turbulent, with frequent wars. Nowadays, these wars are still not completely concluded and there is still turbulence. […]

\(^3\)环球时报：重新认识朝鲜半岛的地缘价值 (Global Times: Once again recognise the North Korean Peninsula’s Geostrategic Value), People’s Daily, 21/08/14 (Appendix A1.3)
In recent years, people have been continuously doubting or even denying North Korea’s geostrategic value for China. They believe that the traditional geostrategic perspective has already expired. These people still have no way to explain why the US on the contrary is strengthening its alliance with South Korea and also its alliance with Japan. Clear eyed people all know, once control over the North Korean situation has been lost, enemy countries will stick in their hands, and be able to use Dongbei [the Northeast region of China bordering North Korea] as a shortcut “straight to Beijing”. […]

Today’s Japan no longer has a strategic position for deciding China’s future and destiny. Today’s US is playing the role that Japan played at that time. The US is carrying out its so-called “rebalancing” strategy, the target of which is precisely to preserve a US dominant East Asian international order.

In these passages, the Chinese Self is constructed as a continental power that has a right to dominance in Northeast Asia, in contrast to the “oceanic” powers of the US and Japan which have “intervened” and try to “stick in their hands”, phrases that suggest these states have a lack of legitimacy in the region. In contrast to China’s rise to its rightful place of dominance, the US and Japan seek another kind of international order in the region. This article describes how Japan, in the past, and the US, currently, represent an alternative to China’s growing dominance in Asia.

The passages particularly focus on the presentation of the US as an Other that, by “strengthening its alliance with South Korea and its alliance with Japan”, challenges China’s position in the region. The US is described as “carrying out its so-called ‘rebalancing’ strategy” which seeks to “preserve a US dominant East Asian international order”. This description makes the US contrast with a Chinese Self that is increasingly dominant within the region. Japan and the US are merged into one within the text to create an ahistorical Other against which an identity for China is constructed.

In the article, the construction of a Chinese Self that is under threat from the US and Japan entails certain policy options regarding the Korean Peninsula. The article states that “once control over the North Korean situation has been lost” these threatening Others will be able to intervene in China, something they are presented to be continuously seeking to do. This identity construction therefore implies that it is necessary for China to continue supporting North Korea and maintaining its geostrategic defence against these threatening outsiders.
A similar discourse is expressed in an opinion article from 27 November 2014\textsuperscript{14}, which argues that China should not abandon its support for North Korea. The article contains the following passage:

To go back a step, if China really “abandons North Korea”, there could emerge three kinds of results: The first kind is that North Korea enters into the embrace of a third country; The second is that North Korea collapses as a result of enemy political, economic, and military encirclement and pressure; The third is that North Korea, isolated and cut off from help, decides upon a life and death battle, and the Korean Peninsula again bursts into war.

Whichever of these outcomes occurs, they are all not to China’s benefit and they could once again lead to an overseas power taking control of the whole Korean Peninsula, which would be the negative repeat of the dreaded events from history.

The Sino Japanese War occurred because of Japan and Qing China fighting over the Korean Peninsula, and the waves of that survive. Presently, the US has taken over from Japan to be the maritime power to regulate the order on the Korean Peninsula. If China “abandons North Korea”, then the US can once again obtain the strategic interests that it didn’t achieve during the Korean War. Never give the United States big gifts due to strategic misjudgements. Those who advocate “abandoning the dynasty” really forget the pain before the scar is healed.

The central section of this passage is the key part. Here the author warns that breaking off support for North Korea “could once again lead to an overseas power taking control of the whole Korean peninsula” and uses language very similar to the article discussed previously. The Chinese Self is presented as a continental power striving for dominance over the region, in contrast with “overseas” powers which threaten it from outside. As the passage continues, it becomes clear that these “overseas” Others are Japan and the US. The US is presented as a different, threatening Other which is continuously trying to intervene in the region and prevent China from exercising the kind of dominance that it seeks and is described to be achieving.

In both of these articles, North Korea is presented as almost a part of the Chinese Self. This collective Self for China and North Korea is constructed in differentiation from these Others. The first article refers to times when “the mainland and the peninsula are united and strong” and incorporates North Korea into the Self which is threatened by the Others.

\textsuperscript{14} 环球时报: 不能“放弃”朝鲜这65年的伙伴，Global Times: Cannot “Abandon” North Korea this 65-Year Partnership, People’s Daily, 27/11/14 (Appendix A1.4)
There is the suggestion that both China and North Korea share a common interest in defending themselves against interference from outside powers, particularly from the US. This presentation of China and North Korea as being similar, because they share common Others in the US and its allies, is found in many articles from the early years of the period analysed. An example is an article from 8 October 2014\textsuperscript{15}, which while acknowledging that relations between China and North Korea have cooled, argues that the differences between them are overshadowed by the shared identity that they have as opposed to more important Others:

There is also a fact that needs to be pointed out here, that is, under its existing state system, it is more difficult for North Korea to improve relations with South Korea, Japan and the United States than it is to develop relations with China. Its differences with China are mainly concentrated on the nuclear issue, while its contradictions with South Korea, Japan and the United States are multiple. South Korea wants the unification of the Korean Peninsula, and the United States wants to reform Pyongyang institutionally. This is unacceptable to the entire ruling group of North Korea.

North Korea has long demonstrated the strength and initiative of its diplomacy, but its economic and military forces are weak or not strong enough after all, and it is difficult for it to become the true leader of the situation on the peninsula. What happened in North Korea recently and what happened around it is likely to be tactical and probably not of strategic significance. The United States is still very hostile to it, South Korea is defensive and hesitant to it. Japan wants to gain diplomatic benefits from it, but it dares not to go too far away from the United States and South Korea.

The complicated nature of China – North Korea relations is generally self-evident, but China is still North Korea’s most important and active neighbour. China’s strategic significance to North Korea is irreplaceable.

In this passage, North Korea is presented as being similar to China in that it has a political system that is very different from those of the US and its allies, and it is threatened by these countries. As is the case with China, the US and its allies are presented as seeking to interfere with North Korea’s internal politics and represent a threat to its identity.

These different articles all therefore appear to be expressing variants on the same “Revolutionary” identity discourse that constructs an identity for the Chinese Self through presentation of the US and Japan as different and threatening Others. This construction of its identity presents similarity between China and North Korea, conveying how they both share the same

\textsuperscript{15} 环球社评:透过零乱传闻看朝鲜的逻辑, Global Times Editorial: Seeing North Korea’s Logic through the Rumours, People’s Daily, 08/10/14 (Appendix A1.5)
differences from the US and its allies. The tables below give examples of how the “Revolutionary” identity discourse is presented in other articles from the sample analysed. The terms that are marked in bold are words or phrases which I take to be keywords associated with this identity discourse.
Table 5.1: Statements of difference between China and the US in People's Daily articles. The words marked in bold represent terms that I take to be keywords associated with the identity discourse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>article_170110_1176</td>
<td>我们坚定维护自 身正当利益和战略安全环境，反对以核问题为借口在半 岛部署“萨德”反导系统。</td>
<td>We firmly safeguard our legitimate interests and strategic security environment and oppose the deployment of the “THAAD” anti-missile system on the peninsula based on the nuclear issue.</td>
<td>The US is presented as pursuing interests in conflict with China through THAAD, as a threat to China’s security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opinion_artele_170315_13</td>
<td>中国并不想威胁任何别国，从来不想称霸，对“修昔底德陷阱”的戒心甚至远超西方国家，当但“萨德”这样的东西被架设在 家门又的时候</td>
<td>China does not want to threaten any other country, never wants to be hegemonic, and its warning against the &quot;Thucydides trap&quot; far exceeds that of Western countries, but when something like &quot;THAAD&quot; is erected at the door of its home</td>
<td>The US is presented as hegemonic in contrast to Chinese identity. This difference makes it threatening to China’s security, with its deployment of THAAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opinion_artele_170710_42</td>
<td>两国元首同意继续就朝鲜半岛核问题保持密切沟通与协调。同时，中方再次表态，反对美在韩部署“萨德”反导系统。中美在半岛问题上步调并不完 全一致。</td>
<td>At the same time, China once again expressed its opposition to the US deployment of the &quot;THAAD&quot; anti-missile system in South Korea. China and the U.S. are not fully aligned on the Peninsula issue</td>
<td>US interests on the Korean Peninsula are presented as being different to those of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opinion_article_170308_2</td>
<td>“两个超越。首先是超越社会制度的不同。中美各自选择了不同的制度和发展道路。中国对我们的社会制度和发展道路充满自信，当然，我们也乐见美国能够把自己的国家建设得更好。”</td>
<td>&quot;Two transcendences. The first is to transcend the differences in social systems. China and the United States have chosen different systems and development paths. China is full of confidence in our own social systems and development paths. Of course, we are also happy to see that the United States also sufficiently develop itself.</td>
<td>The US is presented as an Other to construct China’s identity as a socialist state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opinion_article_170531_11</td>
<td>美调動航母等战略武器在半岛附近“秀肌肉”，突然发动对叙利亚空袭，均引起半岛震动。一段时间，西方媒体热炒，美准备对朝发动军事打击。面对重重乱象。</td>
<td>The United States mobilized aircraft carriers and other strategic weapons to &quot;show its muscles&quot; near the peninsula, and suddenly launched air strikes on Syria, all of which caused the peninsula to shake. For a while, the Western media was agitated, and the United States was ready to launch a military strike against North Korea. Confronting the chaos</td>
<td>The US is presented as acting provocatively, destabilizing the region, in implicit contrast with China’s pursuit of stability</td>
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<tr>
<td>opinion_article_170727_41</td>
<td>曾被日本侵略者视为“土匪武装”，却陷日军于汪洋大海；曾被国民党认为“一年期可削平之”，却把国民党军队赶出大陆；曾被美军当作“乌合之众”，却把美军打回三八线。人民军队战胜一个个强敌，成为世所公认“无法复制的军队”。</td>
<td>[The PLA was] once regarded by the Japanese invaders as &quot;bandit armed forces&quot;, but trapped them in the ocean; once regarded by the Kuomintang as something that &quot;can be flattened in one year&quot;, but they expelled the Kuomintang troops from the land; once regarded by the US military as &quot;a motley crew&quot;, but they sent the U.S. military back to the 38th Parallel. The PLA defeated a powerful enemy and became the universally recognized &quot;army that cannot be copied&quot;.</td>
<td>Japan, the Kuomintang, and the US are presented as Others which try to challenge PLA dominance, refuse to recognise its identity. An identity of Chinese strength is constructed through contrast.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>opinion_article_160114_12</strong></td>
<td>美国仍在加紧推行“亚太再平衡”战略，对其他强国崛起可能挑战其地位之焦虑感上升</td>
<td>The United States is still stepping up its “Asia-Pacific rebalancing” strategy, and its anxiety about the rise of other powers that may challenge its status has risen.</td>
<td>The US is presented as an Other which seeks to maintain dominance and to prevent China’s rise.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>article_151209_242</strong></td>
<td>全世界都在一定程度上遏制中国崛起，特别是以美国为首的西方国家，对中国快速崛起不适应、不包容，甚至不接受。新世纪以来，美国已视中国为其实力全球 <strong>霸权</strong> 的主要挑战者</td>
<td>The whole world is <strong>containing China’s rise</strong> to a certain extent, especially Western countries such as the United States. They are not adapting to, are intolerant of, and even will not accept China's rapid rise. Since the beginning of the new century, the United States has regarded China as its main challenger to <strong>global hegemony</strong>.</td>
<td>The US is presented as hegemonic and therefore different to China. It seeks to contain China and so blocks it from achieving its identity as a powerful and dominant state.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>article_151209_242</strong></td>
<td>日本国家战略既受到美国的强烈影响，又有想摆脱这种影响的强烈倾向。单凭日本自身之力很难战胜中国，美日同盟则有可能。 <strong>中国崛起</strong>，是中国在寻求突破。日本挑事，也在寻求突破，它想成为所谓的“正常国家”。中、日都想破局，但都被美国限制着。</td>
<td>Japan’s national strategy is not only strongly influenced by the United States, but it also has a strong desire to get rid of this influence. It is difficult for Japan to defeat China alone, but it is possible for the US alliance. The <strong>rise of China</strong> is China's pursuit of breakthroughs. Japan is picking things up and looking for a breakthrough. It wants to become a so-called &quot;normal country.&quot; Both China and Japan wanted to break through, but they were both <strong>restricted</strong> by the United States.</td>
<td>The US is presented as an Other which seeks to maintain a different order in Asia and so blocks China (as well as Japan) from achieving its identity as the dominant power in the region. The statement also presents Japan as a different Other which competes with China for regional dominance.</td>
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</table>
### article_151209_242

Beginning in 1981, the United States and Japan began to formulate a secret marine military plan called the "yoke" against the Chinese navy and have exercised it many times. Today's warships are equipped with a system to display the position of Chinese navy ships through satellite positioning. This system can operate for 50 years. [...] It is reported that F-22 aircraft may be introduced in Japan. The US military claims that the F-22 can drop bombs anywhere in the world within two hours.

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### opinion_article_150626_24

The American media even criticized China on a series of issues such as the South China Sea, network spies, and North Korea. It seems that only when Chinese officials come to the United States to "show loyalty" to the Sino-US Economic and Strategic Dialogue will the Americans be truly satisfied.

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### opinion_article_150916_55

China and the United States have different situations, with different historical cultures, social systems, and stages of development. It is inevitable that the two countries will have some differences and problems.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article ID</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Chinese Text</th>
<th>English Text</th>
<th>Chinese Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>article_180402_32</td>
<td>The economic reality of the United States simply does not support Washington’s efforts to force China to form an alliance. If some Americans think that they can use something more than the economy to coerce China into submission, then the recent trends in North Korea’s situation and China’s development in the South China Sea are telling those American people that this route is not working.</td>
<td>美国的经济实力根本不足以支持华盛顿逼中国就范。如果有些美国人以为可以动用经济之外的手段胁迫中国就范，那么新来朝鲜局势的动向，以及中国在南海的行动都在告诉那部分美国人，此路行不通。</td>
<td>The US is presented as an Other that is interfering / pressuring China. This presentation is used to construct an identity for China as strong in contrast. There is perhaps an implicit connection between China and North Korea, as both are on the receiving end of US efforts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>article_151209_242</td>
<td>Behind all the international issues that China faces, there is the influence of the United States.</td>
<td>中国面对的一切国际问题背后都有美国的影子。</td>
<td>The US is presented as an Other that is preventing China from achieving strength</td>
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<td>opinion_article_150916_55</td>
<td>Intensify the promotion of the &quot;Asia-Pacific Rebalancing&quot; strategy, shifting the focus from counter-terrorism to preventing the challenges of the rise of other countries.</td>
<td>加紧推进“亚太再平衡”战略，重点从反恐转向防范其他大国崛起的挑战</td>
<td>The US is presented as an Other that behaves in a way that conflicts with China’s interests and challenges its rise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>opinion_article_160508_30</td>
<td>The US, in a period where the theme is change, has insisted on solving problems through war, hitting the southern wall and falling out of bad luck. It also brought catastrophes to the people in the Middle East and North Africa. The clear opposite is China. Since reform and opening, China has adhered to the path of peaceful development.</td>
<td>美国在时代主题发生变化的情况下，坚持通过战争解决问题，撞了南墙、倒了大霉，也给中东和北非人民带来了浩劫。与之形成鲜明对比的是中国。改革开放以来，中国坚持走和平发展道路</td>
<td>The US is presented as warmongering and provocative, in contrast to China which pursues peace.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article ID</td>
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<td>160508_30</td>
<td>But after the founding of New China, the United States adopted a <strong>hostile policy</strong> towards China. The US is presented as an Other which pursues a different system in Asia and which seeks to stop China’s emergence.</td>
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<td>160926_42</td>
<td>There is also the conflict caused by the persistent deployment of THAAD on the Korean peninsula by the United States and South Korea, which makes us vigilant. In China, with the deepening of anti-corruption efforts and the advancement of reforms, the obstacles encountered have become more and more severe. Economic transformation is climbing over hurdles, and the journey ahead is long. The US actions on the Korean Peninsula are described to try to inhibit China’s continued growth.</td>
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<td>160731_44</td>
<td>The situation on the Peninsula has become more tense. The core of the US “Asia-Pacific Rebalancing” strategy is aimed at China. The US is presented as increasing tensions in region, while China is constructed as seeking stability. The US is presented as seeking to prevent China’s rise.</td>
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<td>140509_117</td>
<td>Wu Sike: To maintain Asia’s security and stability, the US’s Asia-Pacific rebalancing strategy is not necessary. The premise of “rebalancing” is to break the “balance”. This strategy directly refers to the economic and security issues. The US is presented as refusing to recognise China’s growing power and dominance. It is described as pursuing a different order in the region. The US is also presented to be provoking tensions in...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opinion Article</td>
<td>鼓吹“有限主权论”</td>
<td>推行“有限主权论”，美国千方百计地要控制自己的盟国；冷战结束后，美国提出“先发制人的战略”，“人权高于主权”，发动了阿富汗战争和伊拉克战争。上述做法本质上都是在推行霸权主义，不仅没有带来预期的效果，反而使霸权主义陷入被动。与此同时，和平共处五项原则却表现出了强大的生命力。中国是和平共处五项原则的倡导者，也是坚定的执行者。</td>
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<td>&quot;Aggression&quot; and &quot;provocation&quot; worldwide are by none other than the United States. In the past 23 years since the end of the Cold War, the United States has successively invaded, attacked, and occupied many sovereign countries.</td>
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<td>The US is described as provocative and disrespectful of sovereignty, in contrast to China which is presented as seeking peace and stability. The US is presented as an Other that threatens China's sovereignty.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The US is described as provocative and disrespectful of sovereignty, in contrast to China which is presented as seeking peace and stability. The US is presented as an Other that threatens China's sovereignty.</td>
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such as Panama, Haiti, Yugoslavia, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Libya. **The use of force to change the status quo** has caused tens of thousands of civilian casualties in many countries around the world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>article_140512_2103</th>
<th>朝鲜人民军板门店代表处发言人11日发表谈话谴责美国在“无人机事件”中庇护韩国，称无人机事件是朝鲜所为，论是反朝阴谋活动,</th>
<th>According to a report from the Korean Central News Agency on December 12, the Korean People's Army Representative Office of Panmunjom issued a statement on November 11 and condemned the United States for sheltering South Korea in the &quot;Unmanned Drone Incident,&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>article_141227_2346</td>
<td>实在缺少分寸，结果招致黑客攻击，蒙受损失；朝鲜则因涉嫌这次攻击而招致网络报复，可能面临美国进一步制裁。这一事件看来没有赢家</td>
<td>North Korea, on the other hand, has incurred online retaliation for the alleged attack, and may come in for further sanctions from the US. There seems to be no winner in this event.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The US is presented as pressuring North Korea. In this, North Korea is implicitly made similar to China as on receiving end of US attempts to bully Asian nations.</td>
<td>North Korea is presented as sharing China’s identity as being pressured by the US.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.2: Statements of similarity between China and North Korea in People’s Daily articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>opinion_article_</td>
<td>中美构建“新型大国关系”等因素，使朝鲜的地缘战略价值同冷战时代相比确有某种变化，但对其完全无视也是十分错误和不智的。</td>
<td>The establishment of a “new type of major power relations” between China and the United States has made North Korea’s geostrategic value different from that of the Cold War era. There has been change, but completely ignoring it is also very wrong and unwise.</td>
<td>China and North Korea are presented as still having a common Other in the United States.</td>
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<tr>
<td>141202_40</td>
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<tr>
<td>opinion_article_</td>
<td>抗美援朝战争中，中国付出数十万优秀儿女的鲜血和生命，才捍卫了同东北地区的和平边界，维护了半岛及地区和平稳定 [...] 中国通过抗美援朝战争确立的战略地位的重要性和所产生的巨大国际影响，包括深植于朝鲜人民心底的影响，是不可估量的，这笔战略资产决不能付之东流</td>
<td>In the War to Resist American Aggression and Aid Korea, China paid in tens of thousands of outstanding lives to defend the peaceful border with the Northeast and maintain peace and stability on the peninsula and the region [...] China’s strategic position through the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea was confirmed. The importance of and the huge international influence it produced, including the influence deeply rooted in the heart of the people North Korea, are immeasurable, and this strategic asset must not be lost.</td>
<td>China and North Korea are presented as having a shared interest in defending themselves against the US and maintaining peace and stability in the region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>141202_40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opinion Article</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Chinese Translation</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>opinion_article_141202_40</strong></td>
<td>The two countries [China and North Korea] still have common interests in seeking peaceful development and international justice.</td>
<td>两国在寻求和平发展和国际正义上仍有共同利益。</td>
<td>China and North Korea are described as having shared interests. A collective identity is constructed against US and Japan as Others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>opinion_article_140109_99</strong></td>
<td>Not only was it strongly opposed by China, South Korea, North Korea and other countries that were victims of the war.</td>
<td>不仅遭到中国、韩国、朝鲜等二战受害国的坚决反对。</td>
<td>China and North Korea are presented as having had a shared experience in WW2, and having a shared Other in Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>opinion_article_140429_107</strong></td>
<td>On October 5th, 1991, Comrade Deng Xiaoping met with North Korea’s senior chairman and said something important: the foundation of the relationship between our two countries is the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, relations based on an “alliance” or on being “unbreakable”, these are unreliable. Practice has proved that these five principles are the most reliable.</td>
<td>1991年10月5日，邓小平同志会见朝鲜的金日成主席，说了一番语重心长的话：我们两国关系的基础是和平共处五项原则，什么“联盟”，什么“牢不可破”，那都是靠不住的，实践证明这五项原则是最靠得住的。</td>
<td>China and North Korea are presented as sharing a historic connection with each other and having a shared understanding of international norms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>opinion_article_140821_124</strong></td>
<td>The first official confrontation between Japan and China on the Korean Peninsula took place in 663 AD. The second confrontation was during the Wanli reign of the Ming Dynasty, the China-North Korea Alliance won.</td>
<td>中日在朝鲜半岛第一次正式交锋发生在公元663年。第二次交锋在明朝万历年间，中朝联盟获胜。</td>
<td>China and North Korea are described as sharing a history of collaboration, fighting against a common Other in Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion Article 141127_57</td>
<td>首先，朝中是两个独立的主权国家。</td>
<td>First, China and North Korea are two independent sovereign states.</td>
<td>China and North Korea are presented as being similar in seeking to defend their sovereignty from Others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion Article 141127_57</td>
<td>朝鲜是社会主义政治体制，它难有替代中国的地缘政治选择。中朝友好是双方共同需要，不是中国一厢情愿。</td>
<td>North Korea has a <strong>socialist political system</strong>, and it is difficult for it to have a geopolitical alternative to China. The <strong>friendship</strong> between China and North Korea is a <strong>common need</strong> of both parties, not China's wishful thinking.</td>
<td>China and North Korea are described to share a socialist political system in contrast to Others. China and North Korea are presented to share interests in common.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion Article 150721_35</td>
<td>日本三菱材料公司只向二战期间的美国劳工战俘道歉，对于<strong>同样被强征</strong>的中国和朝鲜劳工，该公司却只字未提。</td>
<td>Mitsubishi Materials Co., Ltd. only apologized to American prisoners of war during the war, but did not mention a word about the Chinese and North Korean laborers who were also conscripted.</td>
<td>China and North Korea are described to have had a shared experience, both opposed to the Japanese Other in WW2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 180328_37</td>
<td>应中共中央总书记、国家主席习近平邀请，朝鲜劳动党委员长、国务委员会委员长金正恩于3月25日至28日对我国进行非正式访问。</td>
<td>At the invitation of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and President Xi Jinping, Chairman of the Workers’ Party of Korea and Chairman of the State Council, Zheng Eun, paid an official visit to our country from March 25 to 28.</td>
<td>China and North Korea shared communist identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The traditional friendship between China and North Korea was personally created and cultivated by the leaders of the two parties and the two countries. It is the precious wealth of both parties. [...] Our previous generations of leaders have common ideals, beliefs and profound understanding. The revolutionary friendship, mutual trust and mutual support have written a good story in the history of international relations.

China and North Korea are described to have shared interests and to share a common revolutionary identity.

The traditional friendship between China and North Korea has a long history and is precious. Under the care and cultivation of the leaders of China and North Korea, the traditional friendship between China and North Korea has experienced years of baptism. The traditional friendship between China and North Korea has emerged from the struggle to safeguard justice and peace, and has been carried forward in contributing to the development of the cause of socialism.

China and North Korea are presented as having a shared socialist identity. They are described as sharing an interest in defending peace and justice. This identity is constructed against the US and Japan as implied Others.
| article_150723_652 | 昆明市区内一家名为金达莱的朝鲜餐厅生意火爆。据了解，该朝鲜餐厅开业一年多，其中有30多名来自朝鲜的服务人员作为朝鲜的劳务派遣人员来到昆明工作，工资由朝鲜统一发放。他们除了迎客和上菜服务以外，还能歌舞，为客人表演节目。图为朝鲜服务员在门前迎客，同时自学汉语。 中新社发 任东摄 | A North Korean restaurant named Dalai in the urban area of Kunming has prosperous business. It is understood that the North Korean restaurant has been in business for more than a year, and more than 30 service staff from North Korea came to Kunming as North Korea’s labour dispatch staff to work. In addition to welcoming guests and serving dishes, they can also sing and dance, and perform festivals for guests. | The statement perhaps describes a shared culture for China and North Korea. |
| article_151107_1063 | 当前，在朝鲜的外国媒体数量不多，设立常驻分社的只有中国、俄罗斯两国共4家媒体，美联社、日本共同社则在朝鲜设立了代理分社。 | Currently, there are not many foreign media in North Korea. Only four media outlets from China and Russia have permanent branches. The Associated Press and Kyodo News have set up agency branches in North Korea. | China is presented as having an interest in North Korea and maintaining good relations with it. |
In the sample from Weibo, there was also a group of posts that constructed an identity for the Chinese Self as seeking independence and dominance in Asia, with this identity constructed through difference from presentation of Japan and the US as Others. For example, a post from 25 October 2014 offers a similar identity discourse to the first state media article discussed above (my italics emphasising key statements):

> China and North Korea in one war completely destroyed the wild ambition of the big powers to invade. As a result, these powers changed their strategy, changed from armed attack to peaceful evolution and formulated a series of strategies, pinning their hopes on China’s third and fourth generations.

In this post, North Korea is incorporated into the Chinese Self and together their identity as independent and strong is constructed through juxtaposition with the “big powers” or the US. Although this post is talking about the past, it is notable in the way that, like the People’s Daily article discussed earlier, it presents the US as an Other to construct a Chinese and North Korean collective Self.

Other posts in the sample expressed an identity for China as a socialist state that seeks to achieve security and dominance in the region. Again, they did this through the presentation of the US as an Other. A number of posts constructed an identity for the Chinese Self as communist through differentiation from the US as capitalist. An example is a post from 28 March 2015:

> The people who stir up problems in Sino-US relations are generally Chinese Maoists [haha] Russia and North Korea are so good. Why do the children of high-ranking officials and rich people always go to the United States? Do they want their loved ones to be poisoned by Western capitalism? : From my observation, the people who stir up the relationship between China and Russia are basically Chinese, and very few Westerners. I believe @马鼎盛 of Phoenix Satellite TV.

This presents the US as a capitalist ideological Other which is different from the Chinese Self. A number of posts also presented the US as being aggressively imperialist and seeking to impose its own dominance onto
the region, in a way which conflicts with China’s pursuit of independence. Some examples of this are posts from 13 and 14 February 2016:\footnote{See Appendix A2: North Korea Weibo posts [#3 & #4]}:

*The US fascists* completely don’t care about protecting or expanding China’s interests, the CCP should wake up. //: Now I can clearly see, the special forces of the US did not sneak into North Korea, but into China! *The thing we should be most frightened of and worried about*, seems not to be little Kim… [13/02/16]

*The US imperialist* and the United Nations Security Council clamoured hoarsely: North Korea’s development of two bombs and one satellite “affects the region’s ‘stability’”…. But so far North Korea has not stationed a single soldier in other countries, but the US *emperor* dressed as "maintaining world peace" has moved military "exercises" to the North Korean door and placed sophisticated weapons around the border. [14/02/16]

These posts present the US as “imperialist” and an “emperor” in a way that emphasises its difference from a Chinese Self that has a long history of resisting imperialism. Linked to this is the reference to the “US fascists” which connects the US with Japan and alludes to China’s experience in the Second World War. The US is presented as acting in ways that make it contrast with an identity for the Chinese Self where it is secure and unchallenged. It is described as trying to interfere in China and “sneak” into the country. It has “placed sophisticated weapons around the border”. Through this depiction of the US, an identity for China as anti-imperialist and anti-fascist, and struggling to maintain its security, is created. In a similar way to the *People’s Daily* articles discussed above, these posts construct China (and North Korea) as contributing to the stability of the region, in contrast with the US, which creates instability. The difference associated with the US makes it threatening to China.

Also noticeable in the first of these posts is the way that the author criticises the Chinese government. Stating that “the CCP should wake up”, they imply that the government is failing to recognise the essential otherness of the US and the way in which it presents a threat to China because of this. This might be seen as an example of how this identity discourse both constructs a specific “Revolutionary” identity for China and challenges other competing discourses that present China’s relationship with the US differently.

In these posts, the difference that is ascribed to the US as Other is presented as overshadowing North Korea’s difference from China. The idea that North Korea might be creating instability which places it at odds
with China is eclipsed by US difference. This is such that “North Korea has not stationed a single soldier in other countries, but the US emperor… has moved military “exercises” to the North Korean door and placed sophisticated weapons around the border” [my italics]. In this way, the presentation of US difference constructs similarity between China and North Korea. Another post from 23 February 2016\(^{19}\), again presents the US as being very different in a way that challenges the idea of difference between China and North Korea.

Does North Korea bomb your embassy?! Does North Korea collide with your planes? Does North Korea impose economic sanctions on you? Does North Korea require you to buy its national debt?! Does North Korea force the yuan to appreciate?! Does North Korea export genetically modified food to you? Does North Korea receive the Dalai Lama and Rebiya Kadeer? Does North Korea incite Tibetan independence, Xinjiang independence? Has North Korea sheltered Tibetan and Xinjiang independence elements?! Has North Korea protected the democratic movement? Has it criticized your people?

Here the US is presented as being different because of how it interferes in China’s affairs and supports those who are against China. The wide-ranging post connects the US with a host of issues, making it antithetical to a particular Chinese identity.

\(^{19}\) See Appendix A2: North Korea Weibo posts [#5]
Table 5.3: *Statements of difference* between China and the US on Weibo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NK1</td>
<td>说是侦测朝鲜导弹，实为监视中国的一举一动</td>
<td>[The US] claims it is detecting North Korean missiles, but it is actually monitoring China’s every move.</td>
<td>The US is presented as interfering with China, blocking its identity. China and North Korea are described as having a shared concern about the US as interfering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK2</td>
<td>回复@旧报纸R:[怒]:朝鲜配合美国给中国施压啊，他妈滴作死的举动，他欲死的时间点选择很准的。看来是要自选做筹码了。[:作揖]:回复@天择一剑:骨气倒真有。:有骨气！这都是让国际社会给逼的！</td>
<td>Reply @旧报R:[ Angry]: North Korea cooperates with the United States to pressure China. His damn move, he chooses exactly when he wants to die. It seems that you have to choose your own bargaining chip. [:作揖]: Reply @天择一剑: The bones are really there. : Have a backbone! This is all forced by the international community!</td>
<td>The US is presented as an Other that is putting pressure on China and seeking to interfere with it. Interestingly, here North Korea is associated with the US.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK3</td>
<td>证明了霸权主义、强权政治及侵略扩张者就是纸老虎</td>
<td>Prove that hegemonism, power politics and aggressive expansion are paper tigers</td>
<td>The US is presented as hegemonic and aggressively expansionist. An identity of Chinese strength is constructed through its ability to resist this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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20 See Appendix A3 for full identification of posts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NK4 17/08/15</td>
<td>同时警告特朗普政府不要破坏解决朝鲜问题的国际联合，不要挑起中美贸易战。尽管如此，特朗普仍于今天下午签署备忘录</td>
<td>At the same time, it warned the Trump administration not to undermine the efforts of the international alliance to resolve the North Korean issue and not to provoke a Sino-US trade war. Despite this, Trump still signed the memorandum this afternoon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK5 17/08/25</td>
<td>美国的战略缓冲区都跨过太平洋到了朝鲜半岛，有人居然觉得我们战略缓冲区没必要</td>
<td>The US strategic buffer zone has crossed the Pacific Ocean to the Korean Peninsula, yet some people actually think that our strategic buffer zone is unnecessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK6 17/12/13</td>
<td>着同样的民族情节，韩国不跟中国好拉美国实在是二百五，朝鲜问题，只有中国能解决并且会避免韩国陷入战火，要让美国解决，韩国就没了</td>
<td>The North Korean issue can only be resolved by China, and it will prevent South Korea from falling into the flames of war. If the United States is required to resolve the issue, South Korea will be gone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK7 17/12/13</td>
<td>远离美国，向中国靠拢</td>
<td>[South Korea should] stay away from the United States and move closer to China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK8 15/01/23</td>
<td>我只是对美国霸权主义多有批评罢了</td>
<td>I just criticise American hegemonism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The US is presented as an Other that engages in a trade war with China and challenges its identity.

The US is described as an Other which seeks to dominate the Asian region. A China – North Korea collective identity, and China’s need to maintain a strategic buffer with North Korea, are constructed in contrast with this.

China bringing peace and order to the region, constructed against the US as an Other.

The statement presents China’s ability to provide order in the region. This identity for China is constructed against the US as an Other.
<p>| NK9 (15/05/12) | 正值亚洲邻国和华盛顿关注中国海上活动增加 | At a time when Asian neighbours and Washington are concerned about the increase in China's maritime activities | The US is presented as an Other which seeks to maintain dominance in Asia and prevent China’s own control of the region. |
| NK10 (15/06/25) | 联合国做了美国侵略朝鲜的傀儡，这是联合国永远无法抹去的耻辱[弱]: [哈哈] | The United Nations became the puppet of the United States’ aggression against North Korea. This is a shame that the United Nations will never be able to erase [weak]: [haha] | The US is presented as an Other which behaves aggressively and tries to change Asian states. China and North Korea are described to have a shared identity as victims of this. |
| NK11 (15/06/28) | 全中国人民和全世界人民””将既不受帝国主义的利诱，也不怕帝国主义的威胁”” | The entire Chinese people and the people of the world &quot;will neither be lured by imperialism nor afraid of the threat of imperialism&quot; | The US is presented as an Other that is associated with imperialism. It is portrayed as being different to China (and rest of world) that resists imperialism. This difference therefore makes it threatening to China. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NK12 (15/08/04)</td>
<td>話</td>
<td>朝鲜战争结束后，蒋介石[...]:在这个世界上，没有人是毛泽东的对手，盟国（美国）说我蒋介石不行，可是他们又怎样呢，我看他们西方国家也是一群蠢猪，从哪方面都无法相比！16个国家最精良的军队竟然被毛泽东打的如此狼狈，耻辱啊！</td>
<td>After the Korean War, Chiang Kai-shek [said] In this world, no one is Mao Zedong’s opponent. The allies (the United States) said that Chiang Kai-shek is not capable, but what about them? I see that they are also a bunch of idiots in Western countries, they are incomparable in any way! It's a shame that the most sophisticated army of 16 countries was so embarrassed by Mao Zedong!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK13 (15/08/29)</td>
<td>美帝和小日本</td>
<td>美帝和小日本可要小心喽！“胖子”和“小男孩”现已转世在朝鲜了，且还很活跃[吃惊]</td>
<td>American Emperor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK14 (15/10/10)</td>
<td>朝鲜现场，志愿军付出巨大流血牺牲，打败了以美国为首的联合国军</td>
<td>On the North Korean battlefield, the volunteers made huge sacrifices and defeated the United Nations Army led by the United States</td>
<td>The US is presented as an “enemy” Other in the Korean War. China’s identity is being constructed in opposition to this presentation of the US.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK15 (14/10/18)</td>
<td>万恶的美帝愈发嚣张</td>
<td>The evil American emperor is getting more and more arrogant</td>
<td>The US is described as imperialistic and evil, in a way that makes it different from the Chinese Self. It is associated with arrogance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK16  (14/12/10)</td>
<td>瓦房叶“解放战争中为人民立下了不朽功勋，朝鲜战争中为打败美国侵略者、保家卫国做出了贡献。”</td>
<td>Wafangye &quot;made immortal feats for the people in the War of Liberation and contributed to defeating the American invaders and defending the country in the Korean War.&quot;</td>
<td>The US is presented as an Other which tried to invade China, seeking a different identity for the region. The statement constructs Chinese identity in the way it has resisted this.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NK17  (14/12/22)</td>
<td>美政府决定对北朝鲜制裁，起因是断定来自中国网络对美国电子空间的攻击是北朝鲜控制的。</td>
<td>The US government decided to impose sanctions on North Korea because it concluded that the attack on the US electronic space from the Chinese network was by North Korea.</td>
<td>The US is presented as an Other which is interfering in Chinese and North Korean affairs. The statement therefore portrays China and North Korea as having a shared identity as victims of this interference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK18  (16/02/14)</td>
<td>美国参议院12日通过将中国驻美国大使馆前的广场命名为“刘晓波广场”的提案</td>
<td>The US Senate passed a proposal on the 12th to name the square in front of the Chinese Embassy in the United States &quot;Liu Xiaobo Square&quot;</td>
<td>The US is presented as an Other that promotes democracy and seeks to interfere in China’s domestic politics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK19  (16/02/15)</td>
<td>环球这是逼着朝鲜叛离中国还是逼着高层投降美国</td>
<td>Is this forcing North Korea to rebel against China or forcing high-level leaders to surrender to the United States?</td>
<td>The US is described as seeking a different regional order and to challenge China’s identity and relations with North Korea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK20  (16/03/30)</td>
<td>在帝国主义纷纷封锁邻邦朝鲜时</td>
<td>When the imperialists blocked neighbouring North Korea</td>
<td>The US is presented as imperialist and to place pressure on Asian countries. China and North Korea are presented as having shared interests against this Other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK21 (16/06/21)</td>
<td>美帝国主义和一切反对派都是纸老虎</td>
<td>US imperialism and all opposition parties are paper tigers</td>
<td>The US is associated with imperialism and weakness. The identity of China as strong is constructed in contrast.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NK22 (16/08/16)</td>
<td>美军在南朝鲜赖着不走，妄图把南朝鲜作 为威胁中国 和俄国的跳板</td>
<td>The US military stays in South Korea, trying to use South Korea as a springboard to threaten China and Russia.</td>
<td>The US is described as being aggressive and as having interests that are different from those of China, seeking to attack China. This difference makes the US threatening to China.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discourse 2: “Stakeholder” discourse

A second identity discourse was also present in the two types of material. This discourse also constructs the Chinese Self as a communist state, but instead one that had modernised and is integrated into international society. It presents China as playing an important part within international society and supporting some of its norms. Rather than presenting similarities between China and North Korea, this identity discourse instead presents these two states as different. The identity of the Chinese self as a responsible and integrated communist nation is constructed through presentation of North Korea as different. North Korea is described as not truly communist, as having a cruel and hereditary political system, and as behaving in disruptive or aggressive ways that contrast with China’s own responsible actions. These differences ascribed to North Korea make it threatening to China.

The “Stakeholder” discourse in People’s Daily

Articles expressed a discourse that constructed China as responsible through contrast which the presentation of North Korea as an irresponsible Other. An example of this is an article from 13 September 2017\(^\text{21}\), which contains the following passage (my italics emphasising key statements):

> International society absolutely cannot admit North Korea’s status as a nuclear country, and equally is unwilling to see the Korean Peninsula experience war again. It can be said, achieving the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and upholding the Peninsula’s peace and stability is the international society’s common understanding. If the Peninsula “has nuclear weapons”, this creates difficulties, but it is understandable that it might do so. In other words, there are a thousand different reasons why North Korea is “acquiring nuclear weapons”, but the destruction of the international non-proliferation system constitutes a threat to international and regional peace and security, and this is something international society will not accept.

While the Chinese Self is not mentioned explicitly, the article constructs a collective identity for China and international society. Together, these share a “common understanding” about the situation on the Korean Peninsula, including the need to maintain “peace and stability” and the need for denuclearisation. This identity is constructed through the presentation

\(^{21}\) 海外版望海楼：解决半岛问题的抉择时刻, Overseas Edition: The Decisive Moment for Resolving the Peninsula Issue, People’s Daily, 13/09/17 (Appendix A1.6)
of North Korea as an Other, which is different in that it is “acquiring nuclear weapons”. The actions of this North Korean Other, and the difference they represent, prevent the Chinese Self (and the international community) from fully achieving an identity where there is a non-nuclear peninsula and a world that is peaceful and stable. They lead to the “destruction of the international non-proliferation system” upon which this identity is based. The difference represented by the North Korean Other therefore presents a threat to China.

Another article which similarly constructs an identity for the Chinese Self as a collaborative member of international society, through contrast with the presentation of a different North Korean Other is that from 2 March 2016. This article was published when China agreed to the United Nations’ sanctions after North Korea carried out its fourth nuclear test. It contains the following passages:

China which has an important influence on the formation of these resolutions, treats the resolutions with a wider and more long-term perspective. […]

First, China’s support for the resolution expresses its distinct attitude to the North Korean issue. China opposes North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons and insists that the Korean Peninsula cannot have nuclear weapons, no matter whether it is North Korea or South Korea, no matter whether they produced them themselves or they have been deployed there. The main aim of the United Nations Security Council passing this resolution is to stop North Korea from advancing a step on its nuclear programme. […]

China declares that North Korea continues to defy the United Nations Security Council resolutions and therefore must pay the price. China firmly upholds the international nuclear non-proliferation mechanism’s authority and effectiveness and will not shelter any country that develops weapons of mass destruction. This is a great power’s appropriate role. […]

Acting as one of the United Nations Security Council’s five permanent members, China supports the “UN Constitution”, upholds justice, and positively participates in the UNSC’s resolutions regarding North Korea. China is one of the main Asian participants in the 6-Party talks, continuing to advance all parties struggle to bring peaceful resolution, and for the Peninsula issue it displays the actions of a responsible great power.

These passages emphatically construct an identity for the Chinese Self as a “responsible great power” and the article repeats this idea several times, including in the headline. This Chinese Self is presented as being very

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22 海外版望海楼:中国负责任大国的道义与担当, Overseas Edition: China’s Responsible Great Power Morality and Undertaking, People’s Daily, 02/03/2016 (Appendix A1.7)
connected to the United Nations and international community, with China described as “acting as one of the United Nations Security Council’s five permanent members”.

The particular Chinese Self constructed in these passages is given meaning through differentiation from the presentation of North Korea as Other. China’s responsibility is being constructed in contrast with North Korea’s lack of responsibility, with the text describing how this Other continues to “defy the United Nations Security Council”. The Chinese Self is constructed as being a law-abiding nation that “supports the UN Constitution” and “firmly upholds the international nuclear non-proliferation mechanism’s authority”, juxtaposed against North Korea as an Other which is presented as breaking these regulations. The presentation of North Korean difference appears to also be connected with its development of nuclear weapons. It is described as developing “weapons of mass destruction”. Using this way of naming North Korea’s nuclear weapons perhaps draws on discourses about rogue states. The presentation of North Korea’s nuclear programme emphasises its difference from the Chinese Self and the rest of the international community.

The identity discourse seen in these articles therefore presents North Korea as an Other that is very different from the Chinese Self. Through this contrast, the Chinese Self is made into a responsible member of international society which shares a common interest in maintaining a non-nuclear, peaceful and stable Korean Peninsula. The table below gives more examples of how this identity discourse is presented in a larger number of articles from the sample analysed. It shows statements that express North Korean difference from a particular Chinese Self.
### Table 5.4: Statements of difference between China and North Korea in People’s Daily articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| article\_170210\_122 | 然而，朝鲜

不为所动，继续推进

核导项目，于同年9月进行了第五次核试验，并在今年年初宣称

“洲际弹道

火箭发射准备工作进入最终阶段”。 | However, North Korea **remained unmoved** and continued to advance its nuclear and missile projects. In September of the same year, it conducted its fifth nuclear test and declared at the beginning of this year that "intercontinental ballistic rocket launch preparations have entered the final stage."

North Korea is presented as being different from China and the international community because it pursues nuclear weapons development and ignores the international community and China’s wishes. |  |
| article\_170425\_860 | 中方坚决反对

联合国安理会

决议的行为，同时希望有关各方保持克制，避免做加剧半岛局势

紧张的事 | China firmly **opposes** actions that **violate** the resolutions of the UN Security Council. At the same time, we hope that all parties concerned will exercise restraint and avoid doing things that aggravate tensions on the peninsula.

North Korea is presented as different from a law-abiding China because of the way it violates international law. |  |
| article\_170603\_1183 | 现在，中朝两国正在走向“正常

国家”关系，中国

既不会因为朝鲜已经丧失了“缓冲地带”或“战略屏障”的意义而抛弃朝鲜，

也不会为朝鲜做出损害中国和地区安全利益而护短。 | Now, China and North Korea are moving towards a "normal state" relationship. China will not abandon North Korea just because **North Korea has lost the meaning of "buffer zone" or "strategic barrier".** Nor will it protect a North Korea that **harms** China’s and regional security interests.

North Korea’s identity is described as changing, with it moving from being a “buffer zone” to being more different from China. North Korea is presented as being different because its interests are in conflict with or harm those of China. |  |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document ID</th>
<th>Text Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>article_170705_128</td>
<td>It stated that North Korea’s move once again seriously violated relevant Security Council resolutions, leading to a dangerous escalation of the situation. The North Korean leadership must stop further provocative actions and fully comply with international obligations. Guterres emphasized that it is very important for the international community to remain united in meeting this severe challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_170915_370</td>
<td>According to the Japan Broadcasting Association, North Korea launched a missile at 6:57 a.m. on the 15th. The missile flew over Hokkaido, Japan, and crashed into the Pacific Ocean, 2000 kilometres east of Erimo Cape, Hokkaido at 7:16. In the morning of the same day, the Japanese government issued an alarm to 12 counties in the northeast through the &quot;National Instantaneous Alarm System.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_171123_1073</td>
<td>Deutsche Bank pointed out that the risks facing the world economy next year mainly include geopolitical risks such as the situation on the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article ID</td>
<td>Text Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>171227_604</td>
<td>洲政局等地缘政治风险，以及全球通胀水平上涨过快等。 Since the beginning of this year, North Korea has continuously conducted nuclear and missile tests, while the United States and South Korea have expanded the scale of military exercises. The situation on the Korean peninsula has continued to show signs of tension. North Korea is described as increasing the tensions in East Asia. This is in contrast to China which seeks regional stability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170710_42</td>
<td>今年以来，朝鲜连续进行核试验和导弹试射，美韩两国则扩大军演规模，朝鲜半岛局势不断呈现紧张态势。 China and the United States will focus on international and regional issues. Regarding the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula, China reaffirms its adherence to the basic principles of achieving denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, maintaining peace and stability, and resolving issues through dialogue and consultation. This statement describes North Korea as different because of its pursuit of nuclear weapons, which conflicts with China’s aim of denuclearization. The presentation of North Korea as an Other is constructing a collective China and US Self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170204_31</td>
<td>朝鲜公然违反联合国安理会决议，进行两次核试验，多次试射弹道导弹，引发半岛局势紧张。 In flagrant violation of UN Security Council resolutions, North Korea conducted two nuclear tests and repeatedly tested ballistic missiles, which triggered tensions on the Peninsula. North Korea is presented as different from the international community (UNSC) and China as part of this</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
North Korea’s possession of nuclear weapons undermines the international nuclear non-proliferation system and violates UN Security Council resolutions. If North Korea deliberately conducts another nuclear test alone, it will only lead to further severe international sanctions and become even more isolated in the international arena.

Second, China and Russia jointly urge the DPRK not to take actions that violate the resolutions of the UN Security Council. China and Russia understand North Korea's security concerns but believe that North Korea's development of nuclear missile is not conducive to national and regional security. The Security Council has so far opposed North Korea’s possession of nuclear weapons and has taken measures to curb the development of North Korea’s nuclear missiles.

North Korea is described as different from the rest of the international community (including China). A collective identity for the international community is constructed against North Korea as an Other.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
<th>Chinese Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>impose new sanctions on North Korea and urged North Korea to return to the path of non-nuclearization: However, due to the complexity and particularity of the Peninsula’s confrontation and game, &quot;acquiring nuclear weapons&quot; has also become a rope put on one's neck. The more you move on &quot;acquiring nuclear weapons&quot;, the more isolation and pressure you experience.</td>
<td>回到无核化轨道；但由于半岛对立和博弈的复杂性及特殊性，“拥核”也成了套在自己脖子上的一条绳索，在“拥核”上动作越大，受到的孤立、压力越大。</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The two counties [China and South Korea] will advance diplomatic channels regarding the Korean Peninsula question. The South Korean side recognises the Chinese side’s position regarding THAAD.</td>
<td>北朝鲜被描述为对中国的安全威胁，并将其与国际社会的一致不同。</td>
<td>North Korea is presented as solitary and isolated in a way that emphasises its difference from the international community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The two counties [China and South Korea] will advance diplomatic channels regarding the Korean Peninsula question. The South Korean side recognises the Chinese side’s position regarding THAAD.</td>
<td>北朝鲜被描述为对中国的安全威胁，并将其与国际社会的一致不同。</td>
<td>North Korea is presented as solitary and isolated in a way that emphasises its difference from the international community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the 9/11 attack in 2001, the Defence Department’s hawks talked about the development by North Korea and Iran of long-range missiles that can be launched into the United States soon.</td>
<td>北朝鲜被描述为对中国的安全威胁，并将其与国际社会的一致不同。</td>
<td>North Korea is presented in a way that implicitly associates it with terrorism? North Korea is described as a security threat to China and the international community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It can strengthen coordination and cooperation on international and regional issues such as North Korea’s nuclear weapons, the Middle</td>
<td>北朝鲜被描述为对中国的安全威胁，并将其与国际社会的一致不同。</td>
<td>North Korea is included in a group of Others that are different and threatening to the international community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>opinion_article_151102_71</strong></td>
<td>配合，为世界和平稳定继续发挥作用。</td>
<td>East, counterterrorism, and Afghanistan, and continue to play a constructive role for the stability of the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>opinion_article_170308_2</strong></td>
<td>包括继续推动朝鲜半岛无核化，以及在气候变化、能源保障和疾病灾难等非传统安全方面的协力。</td>
<td>Including continuing to promote the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, as well as agreements on non-traditional security aspects such as climate change, energy security, and epidemics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>在回答如何看待朝鲜半岛局势时，外长剑眉一挑——“（朝鲜和美韩）就像两组不断加速的列车，互不相让，难道双方都做好了迎头相撞的准备吗？当务之急要做的就是亮起红灯、同时刹车。”今后，我们仍然愿意做一名‘扳道工’，把半岛核问题扳回到谈判解决的轨</td>
<td>When answering about how we should view the situation on the Korean peninsula, the Foreign Minister raised his eyebrows—&quot;North Korea and the United States plus South Korea are like two continuously accelerating trains, not giving way to each other. Are the two sides ready for a head-on collision? What we do is to turn on the red light and brake at the same time.&quot; &quot;In the future, we will still be willing to &quot;switch track&quot; to bring the Peninsula nuclear issue back to the path of negotiation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150910_682</td>
<td>A landmine explosion occurred on the South Korean side of the South Korean military zone (DMZ), causing serious injuries to two South Korean officers and soldiers. After investigation, the South Korean determined that the landmine was buried by North Korea, but North Korea denied this. North Korea is described as acting provocatively and being threatening.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The “Stakeholder” discourse on Weibo

A similar identity discourse was found in the Weibo posts analysed. This constructed a Chinese Self integrated into the international community and behaving as a responsible major power, providing leadership and promoting peace and stability, through the presentation of North Korea as a different Other. These posts generally do not contain explicit statements about the identity of the Chinese Self, with this instead being more implicitly suggested through their presentation of North Korea as different from China. Examples are posts from 28 January 2016 and 11 February 2016\(^{23}\) (my italics emphasising key statements):

Support the UN’s political attack on the Kim dictatorship. The world has two big evil cults, North Korea’s Communist Party and Islam. Hereditary politics, rogue government, corrupt officials, brainwashed citizens, anti-humanity, anti-democracy, anti-election, anti-livelihood. [28/01/16]

North Korea has twice disregarded China’s attitudes, first carrying out nuclear tests, and then firing missiles. It’s equivalent to two slaps. External comments pointed out that Kim Jong-un’s recent actions show that he is going further and further on his own way, which means that the risk of North Korea losing control is rapidly increasing. The meeting of military leaders from the United States, Japan and South Korea has undoubtedly sounded the alarm over the Korean Peninsula. [11/02/16]

The first of these posts presents North Korea very negatively, associating the regime there with corrupt and illegal activities, as well as with cruelty and evil. This kind of description implies that North Korea is different from how the poster thinks states should be, and the way in which the Chinese Self behaves or should behave. North Korea is depicted as a “dictatorship” with “hereditary politics”. It is “anti-democracy” and “anti-election”. All these words attributed to North Korea emphasise how it is different from both China and the rest of the international community, constructing China and the international community as sharing values in common.

Both of the posts group China and the world together by describing North Korea as being different. The first post says “the world has two big evil cults” and draws boundaries between North Korea and the rest. Meanwhile, the second post describes how North Korea, or Kim Jong-un, is “going further and further on his own way” and so presents it as being

\(^{23}\) See Appendix A2: North Korea Weibo posts [#6 & #7]
separate, or different, from the rest of the international community, including China. In this second post, the description of how North Korea “twice disregarded China’s attitudes” is also notable, because it implies that one of the ways North Korea is seen to be different is that it refuses to recognise China’s identity as an influential state within the world.

While the Chinese Self constructed in these posts is one that is integrated into the international community and acts responsibly, it generally still has an identity as a communist state. However, this appears different from the kind of revolutionary communism that was presented in the first discourse and that placed China at odds with the rest of the international community. Here China is presented as a state that has succeeded because of its socialist model (See the People’s Daily articles from 4 March 2016; 19 April 2016) and risen to a position of leadership within the international community. This communist identity for China is constructed through differentiation from North Korea, which is described as not truly communist. An example is a post from 3 February 2016:

"Shen Ma Domestic imports is only a hereditary fig leaf: Seeing it, I don’t dare to believe. I originally thought North Korea was a socialist country, that it believed in Marxist-Leninist ideology and worshipped capital theory, striving to achieve a classless society. How can the truth be so weird? Books by Marx and Engels are still banned, and they believe in the Kim Dynasty. Our mainstream media does not seem to have reported, how the "war friend" is actually not a socialist country, I cannot believe it…"

While the meaning of the start of this post is unclear, the part following this describes North Korea as not truly “socialist”, implicitly differentiating it from a Chinese Self which it is implied represents real socialism. The post also describes North Korea as being “hereditary” and believing in the “Kim Dynasty” in a way common in posts that presented North Korean difference. Here, North Korea is presented as being different from China both because it is not socialist and because of the nature of its political regime. This presentation of North Korea as an Other is used to construct an identity for China as a truly socialist country, but one which has a modern political system.

The post is also interesting because it describes how China’s “mainstream media does not seem to have reported” on the real nature of the North Korean regime. In China, mainstream media is effectively the state media, and therefore this comment can be seen as a criticism of the CCP.

24 See Appendix A2: North Korea Weibo posts [8]
for not recognising the different nature of North Korea and continuing to pursue a policy of support. In this way, this post which is an expression of the “Stakeholder” discourse, challenges the “Revolutionary” discourse and its portrayal of closeness between China and North Korea.
Table 5.5: Statements of difference between China and North Korea in Weibo posts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NK23</td>
<td>朝鲜算哪门子共产主义，就一世袭的家国体制</td>
<td>What kind of communism is there in North Korea, it is a <strong>hereditary</strong> family-state system.</td>
<td>North Korea is presented as having a hereditary system that makes it different from the Chinese communist Self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK24</td>
<td>你先好好管管朝鲜吧！而朝鲜好像根本不管中国。</td>
<td>Take care of North Korea first! And North Korea does not seem to <strong>pay attention</strong> to China at all.</td>
<td>North Korea is presented as a danger. It is an Other that does not recognise China’s identity as a strong nation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK25</td>
<td>中朝边境这么敏感的地区，朝鲜士兵可以随意携枪进入，进入后还可以玩失踪</td>
<td>In such a sensitive area on the border between China and North Korea, North Korean soldiers can enter with guns at will, and after entering, they can go missing without a trace</td>
<td>North Korea is depicted as a threatening Other which challenges China’s security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK26</td>
<td>美国大大方方承认朝鲜的核地位，任由东北亚各国开展核力量竞赛，那么，连大哥都敢杀</td>
<td>The United States generously recognizes <strong>North Korea’s nuclear status</strong> and allows Northeast Asian countries to carry out a nuclear power race. Then, it would dare to kill the eldest brother [i.e., China]</td>
<td>North Korea is presented as having different interests to China in seeking to become a nuclear power. It challenges China’s dominance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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25 See Appendix A3 for full identification of posts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Chinese Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NK27 (17/03/07)</td>
<td></td>
<td>如何对待朝鲜<strong>极权政治</strong>是一条分界线</td>
<td>How to treat North Korea’s <strong>totalitarian</strong> politics is a dividing line</td>
<td>North Korea is described as an Other that is associated with totalitarianism. It is made to be different from a more liberal idea of the Chinese Self, an identity which is implied in contrast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK28 (17/03/21)</td>
<td></td>
<td>朝鲜官方通讯社朝中社2月23日以“卑鄙的做法，低级的算法”为题发表署名评论，批评中国“实际上同敌对势力要搞垮朝鲜制度的阴谋大同小异”。那个“口口声声标榜‘友好邻邦’以大国自居的国家，没有政治主见，对美国随波逐流，辩称意在制止核计划”。[围观]这就是你们<strong>极左的祖国</strong>对中国的态度。</td>
<td>North Korea’s official news agency, Korea Central News Agency (KCNA), published a signed comment on February 23 under the topic &quot;Despicable Practices, Low-level Functions&quot;, criticizing China for also being &quot;the same as the hostile forces' conspiracy to bring down the North Korean system.&quot; That &quot;country that claims to be a &quot;friendly neighbour&quot;, as a big country &quot;has no political opinions, and goes with the United States, arguing that it intends to stop the nuclear program.&quot; [Onlookers] This is the attitude of your <strong>ultra-left</strong> motherland towards China.</td>
<td>North Korea is presented as an Other because of how it does not respect China’s identity. It seeks to challenge China, criticising its actions. North Korea is associated with radical left politics in China, and possibly with the “New Left” and so this can also be seen as a challenge to the “Revolutionary” discourse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK29 (17/03/24)</td>
<td></td>
<td>把朝鲜作为一个<strong>神经病</strong>患者，非常贴切</td>
<td>It’s very appropriate to regard North Korea as <strong>crazy</strong></td>
<td>North Korea is described as a ‘crazy’ or mentally unstable Other. The statement implicitly constructs a rational Chinese Self in contrast to this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK30 (17/04/06)</td>
<td>迟早在朝鲜会看到这一幕的:彻底的反人类罪行，令人震惊</td>
<td>Sooner or later we will see this in North Korea: a total crime against humanity, shocking</td>
<td>North Korea is associated with human rights abuses. In contrast, a more enlightened Chinese Self is implied.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK31 (17/04/23)</td>
<td>朝中社再次以“还不好意思随波逐流？”为题，不点名批评中国，北京官方无须理睬平壤指责，不与它论战。我们的语言应当是行动</td>
<td>KCNA [Korean Central News Agency] once again criticised China with the title &quot;Are you embarrassed to drift with the crowd?&quot; without naming names. Beijing officials ignored Pyongyang’s accusations and did not argue with it. Our language should be action</td>
<td>North Korea is presented as an Other which does not respect China. It criticises it and therefore challenges its identity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK32 (17/05/09)</td>
<td>这真是一个硬到不行的民族，看来朝鲜金家政权的末日为期不远了！</td>
<td>This is really a nation that is ruthless and bad. It seems that the end of the Kim family regime in North Korea is not far away!</td>
<td>North Korea is described as cruel and bad and is associated with a hereditary system of government, which makes it different to China’s political system.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK33 (17/05/13)</td>
<td>发展核武器，不过是个人独裁统治和敲诈勒索</td>
<td>The development of nuclear weapons is only for personal dictatorship and extortion</td>
<td>North Korea is associated with a negative dictatorship and cruel behaviour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Key Points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK34</td>
<td>17/05/18</td>
<td>North Korea installed an anti-missile system in Mexico. It <em>secretly financed</em> Canadian rebels. North Korea also conducted military exercises in Cuba. It <em>bombed</em> civilians and then created many refugees.</td>
<td>North Korea is presented as an Other that behaves aggressively in the world. This is implied to contrast with China’s responsible international behaviour. (However, this post seems to maybe be using North Korea in place of the US?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK35</td>
<td>17/11/15</td>
<td>The US government warned that North Korean hackers tried to use malware to launch cyber attacks.</td>
<td>North Korea is presented as acting illegally.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK36</td>
<td>17/11/29</td>
<td>After China sent a special envoy to the DPRK for private talks, and North Korea once again launched a nuclear weapon, <em>slapping China in the face</em> and embarrassing it.</td>
<td>North Korea is depicted as an Other which pursues actions that conflict with China’s interest. It is presented as disrespecting China’s identity and therefore challenging this.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK37</td>
<td>15/06/21</td>
<td>Netizen: Can anyone tell me the difference between South Korea and North Korea? God's reply: In South Korea the choice is who is elected, while in North Korea it is the sun that chooses.</td>
<td>North Korea is associated with a hereditary political system and is presented as different to elsewhere in the world.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK38</td>
<td>15/08/22</td>
<td>If South Korea and North Korea start a war, will China aid North Korea? Of course, not.</td>
<td>China and North Korea are described as different. It is suggested that therefore China will no longer support North Korea in conflict.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NK39 (15/12/30)</td>
<td>中国访朝的结果不妙，朝鲜访华的命运不佳。</td>
<td>The result of China's visit to North Korea is not good, and the fate of North Korea's visit to China is not good.</td>
<td>The statement suggests a conflict of interest between China and North Korea.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of qualitative analysis

In both the samples of *People’s Daily* articles and the samples of *Weibo* posts, the articulations of China’s identity were found to fall into two main groups. First, there were those that constructed an identity for China as a communist state seeking to resist outside interference and re-establish itself as dominant in the region, with this identity constructed through presentation of the US and Japan as Others. Second, there were those that presented China as a modern state connected to the international community, with this identity constructed through presentation of North Korea as an Other. These were therefore taken as being the main identity discourses within the material. I labelled them as the “Revolutionary” discourse and “Stakeholder” discourse. Their key features are depicted in the following table (Table 5.6):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse 1</th>
<th>Discourse 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Revolutionary Discourse”</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Stakeholder Discourse”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>North Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Similar</em></td>
<td><em>Different</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US and allies / International community</td>
<td>US and allies / International community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Different</em></td>
<td><em>Similar</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5.6: Framework of the main identity discourses found through the qualitative analysis*

**Revolutionary Discourse**

In the first discourse, which I labelled the “Revolutionary discourse”, the Chinese Self is presented as rising 崛起 and growing in power to become a strong nation 强国 and to resume its rightful place as a major power 大国 in the international system. China is presented as an important Asian continental power which should rightfully be dominant and provide order 秩序 to the Korean Peninsula and East Asian region.

This Chinese Self is described as being different from the US and Japan, which in contrast are presented as overseas powers 海洋势力 that

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26 See for example: People’s Daily article from 16 September 2015
27 See for example: People’s Daily article from 14 January 2016.
28 See for example: People’s Daily article from 6 November 2014
29 See for example: People’s Daily article from 21 August 2014
30 See for example: People’s Daily article from 21 August 2014
have different social and political systems. These Others are presented as seeking to impose a different political system or order on the region. Particularly in the Weibo posts, these others are associated with the pursuit of imperialism, which is in contrast to China’s identity as an independent nation, with the US referred to as US Emperor. In this identity discourse, the US is the main Other and is presented as being different to China in a range of ways. It is contrasts with a Chinese Self which is socialist / communist because of its capitalism. The US is also presented as being different to a Chinese Self which seeks to regain its own dominant position in the region because it is trying to impose and maintain its own hegemony and preserve its primacy. It is described as doing this partly through a policy of rebalancing, which sees it increasing its strength in the region in a way that conflicts with China’s identity as the strongest regional power. The US and Japan are presented as challenging China’s identity, by engaging in aggression against China and trying to interfere in its internal politics.

In this first discourse, partly because of the construction of difference from the US and allies, North Korea is then presented as similar to China. This discourse uses phrases that emphasise the friendship between China and North Korea, particularly in the People’s Daily articles. The two nations are referred to as wartime friends. Other articles describe the two states as having common interests or needs. North Korea is similar to China in sharing its socialist ideology. The two are also described as being similar because of their history of having undergone revolution. The similarities between the two are also expressed in terms of family, with North Korea described as China’s

31 See for example: People’s Daily article from 6 November 2014; People’s Daily article from 16 September 2015
32 See for example: People’s Daily article from 21 August 2014
33 See for example: Weibo post from 28 June 2015; 29 August 2015
34 See for example: Weibo post from 18 October 2014
35 See for example: Weibo post from 28 March 2015
36 See for example: People’s Daily article from 31 July 2016; People’s Daily article from 9 December 2015; People’s Daily article from 29 April 2014; Weibo post from 23 January 2015
37 See for example: People’s Daily article from 21 August 2014; People’s Daily article from 9 May 2014
38 See for example: People’s Daily article from 6 November 2014
39 See for example: People’s Daily article from 27 November 2014; 38 March 2018
40 See for example: People’s Daily article from 2 December 2014; People’s Daily article from 27 November 2014
younger brother 兄弟 and the states together being one family 一家. North Korea is described as being like China in that it is seeking self-survival 自身生存.

**Stakeholder Discourse**

In the second discourse, which I have labelled the “Stakeholder” discourse, the Chinese Self is presented as a modern state integrated into the international community. It is described as responsible 负责, or as a responsible great power 负责大国. This Chinese Self is presented as having undergone a process of reform and opening 改革开放 which has led to it being connected with the rest of the world. It is described as being international 国际 and connected with international society 国际社会. It is presented as sharing common 共同 interests with the US and international society, as well as to be engaging in cooperation 合作 and coordination 协调 with both the US and the wider international community.

In this discourse, the Chinese Self is constructed primarily through difference from North Korea as an Other. North Korea is presented as being very different. It is described as having a dictatorship 专权 and having a political system of hereditary succession 世袭, both making it different from China. It is presented as isolated 孤 from international society, in contrast with a China which is presented as integrated into this. In the Weibo material, North Korea is presented using a wide range of negative adjectives that differentiate it from an implied morally good Chinese Self, with it being described using words such as bad 坏 and cruel/ruthless 狠, as well as being referred to as evil 惡. Also on Weibo, North Korea can be referred to using terms associated with illegality, described as a

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41 See for example: Weibo post from 3 March 2017.
42 See for example: People’s Daily article from 27 November 2014.
43 See for example: People’s Daily article from 4 March 2016.
44 See for example: People’s Daily article from 8 May 2016.
45 See for example: People’s Daily article from 10 July 2017; People’s Daily article 5 July 2017; 13 September 2017.
46 See for example: People’s Daily article 16 September 2015.
47 See for example: People’s Daily article 16 September 2015.
48 See for example: Weibo posts from 13 May 2017; Weibo post from 28 January 2016.
49 See for example: Weibo posts from 21 June 2015; Weibo post from 28 January 2016; Weibo post from 3 February 2017; Weibo post from 18 January 2018.
50 See for example: People’s Daily article from 28 April 2017; 13 September 2017.
51 See for example: Weibo post from 9 May 2017.
52 See for example: Weibo post from 28 January 2016.
corrupt \textsuperscript{53} state and a rogue 流浪 \textsuperscript{54} state, although these specific terms do not seem to appear that frequently. It is also presented as being dangerous 危险 \textsuperscript{55} to China or to the Chinese people.

In this discourse, more emphasis is placed on what North Korea does. It is also described to be acting in illegal 违法 \textsuperscript{56} ways and to be violating 违反 \textsuperscript{57} international law. It is described as harming 损害 \textsuperscript{58} the peace in the region. It is presented as seeking to acquire nuclear weapons 拥核 \textsuperscript{59}, in contrast with China which seeks a non-nuclear Peninsula. North Korea is associated with verbs such as threaten 威胁 \textsuperscript{60}, incite 刺激, and provoke 挑衅 \textsuperscript{61}, that make it contrast with China’s interests and desire to maintain peace and stability. It is presented as not listening to China (不听话/不管/不顾) and not respecting China.

**Conclusions of qualitative analysis**

The discourse analysis of samples of People’s Daily articles and Weibo posts from across the period found two main identity discourses that were present to differing extents within both types of material. I have labelled them as the “Revolutionary” discourse and “Stakeholder” discourse. The “Revolutionary” discourse presented a Chinese Self that was revolutionary and socialist in nature, seeking to secure its independence and dominance in Asia in the face of threats from outside powers such as Japan and the US, which repeatedly try to invade and interfere in its affairs. China’s identity is constructed through differentiation from these Others. In this discourse, North Korea is presented as being very similar in identity to China and sharing common interests with it. In contrast, in the “Stakeholder” discourse, the Chinese Self is presented as integrated into the international system and as a modern state that has undergone economic reforms. This identity is constructed through differentiation from North Korea, which is presented as being a different Other to this Chinese Self. The

\textsuperscript{53} See for example: Weibo post from 28 January 2016
\textsuperscript{54} See for example: Weibo post from 28 January 2016
\textsuperscript{55} See for example: People’s Daily article from 5 July 2017
\textsuperscript{56} See for example: Weibo post from 21 March 2017
\textsuperscript{57} See for example: People’s Daily article from 25 April 2017: People’s Daily article from 5 July 2017
\textsuperscript{58} See for example: People’s Daily article from 3 June 2017
\textsuperscript{59} See for example: People’s Daily article from 31 May 2017; People’s Daily article from 13 September 2017
\textsuperscript{60} See for example: People’s Daily article from 13 September 2017; Weibo post from 9 November 2016
\textsuperscript{61} See for example: People’s Daily article from 5 July 2017
discourse analysis revealed that there was considerable debate between these two main discourses throughout the period 2014 to 2018, particularly on Weibo. Although it was possible to make some observations about the changing strength over time of different elements from these two main discourses, the fact that only a small sample of articles and posts from each type of material was examined meant no firm conclusions could be reached. This motivates the next part of the analysis carried out, which used the keywords found to be associated with the two main discourses to measure quantitatively how their dominance varied over time.
5.4.2 STEP 2: Quantitative Analysis

In the first step, discourse analysis of samples established the different ways in which China’s identity was being constructed in connection with the issue of North Korea and how these articulations could be seen to cluster around two main identity discourses (the “Revolutionary” discourse and “Stakeholder” discourse). The discourse analysis indicated considerable debate between these two main identity discourses, and that the relative dominance of them in society was changing. However, it only looked at samples of articles and posts and so it was not possible to draw conclusions about the overall picture. In this second step, I therefore used quantitative computer assisted text analysis methods (as described in full in Chapter 4) to analyse the entire corpora of articles and posts. This step sought to answer two analytical questions:

- How is the construction of China’s identity in relation to the issue of North Korea changing?
- Which main identity discourses, and parts of these identity discourses, are becoming more and less dominant?

I began by conducting “co-occurrence analysis” (Step 2a) which counted the changing frequency with which particular terms are used in association with the word “China” as well as the names of other states in the two types of material. After this, I used dictionary-based analysis for measuring the changing dominance of the main identity discourses. In both, the keywords focused on are those identified as associated with the main identity discourses during the discourse analysis.

**Step 2a: Co-occurrence analysis**

Using the keywords identified during the discourse analysis as a guide, this stage of the analysis looked at the changing frequency with which different meaning conveying keywords were associated with certain names of states in all of the posts and articles. This showed the changing ways the Chinese Self is being presented. It also showed the changing ways in which various states are being presented as Others to construct identities for China. The text analysis package Quanteda was used to count the number of times different keywords appeared within a 5-word
window either side of the words “China”, “the United States”, “International Society”, and “North Korea” within all the articles/posts published during each quarter of the year.

In the presentation of these results below, I begin with the frequency keywords co-occur with China, before moving on to the frequency words appear alongside the names of other states. I present the co-occurrence of each keyword shown in bold with the state name, first in the Weibo posts and then in the People’s Daily articles.
China

I first examined how China itself was being presented in the two types of material. The discourse analysis had suggested that the “Revolutionary” discourse particularly emphasised China’s growing strength and the way that the US and Japan sought to constrain this. I therefore looked at the changing frequency with which the word “strong” was associated with China. On Weibo, there is a noticeable decline in the frequency of use of the word through most of 2016, perhaps suggesting less attention to this aspect of China’s identity. Similarly, the People’s Daily articles do not use the word very frequently in connection with China during this middle period.

Figure 5.1: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "strong"
The discourse analysis also suggested that in this first identity discourse, China was associated with communism. I therefore looked at the frequency with which the word “communism” (also part of the Chinese Communist Party) was used in connection with China. The results of this are inconclusive. Although there does appear some decline in use in the middle period, it is largely only relative to the increased use in Q3 / Q4 of 2015. This increased frequency might be connected to the 70th anniversary of the Second World War, with discourse at the time discussing communist China’s role in this.

Figure 5.2: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "communist" 共产

Weibo:

People’s Daily:
The discourse analysis indicated that the “Stakeholder” identity discourse presented China as having carried out “reform and opening” and integrated into the international system. I therefore looked at the frequency that the word “opening” was used in connection with China in the two types of material. On Weibo, there are noticeable increases in the use of “opening” alongside China at the start of 2016 and 2017. In the People’s Daily articles, there is a steady increase in the use of word in connection with China. The spike in 2018 may be because this was the 40th anniversary of the launch of “reform and opening” in 1978.

Figure 5.3: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "opening"
Another way in which the “Stakeholder discourse” presented China as integrated into the wider world was through references to its role in international society. I therefore looked at the frequency with which “international society” 国际社会 was mentioned alongside China in the two types of material. On Weibo, there is a marked increase in discussions of China in relation to international society in Q1 and Q3 of 2016, and then through 2017. These were times when North Korea was increasingly active in nuclear development / testing. There is less of a clear change in the People’s Daily articles, but these do seem to discuss international society more frequently in relation to China at the same times.

Figure 5.4: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "international society" 国际社会

Weibo:

People’s Daily:
Together with discussion of China’s role in international society, the discourse analysis also showed China was presented as a member of the UN Security Council. I therefore looked at the changing frequency that “security council” 安理会 was used alongside China. On Weibo, there is a marked increase in mentions of the Security Council in relation to China at the start and end of 2016, and then during 2017, times when North Korea was very active. In the People’s Daily articles, there are also peaks in Q1 2016 and then in Q3 of 2017. This might suggest attention was being paid to China’s role in the UNSC at these times.

Figure 5.5: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and “Security Council” 安理会

Weibo:

People’s Daily:
In the discourse analysis, articles were found to be not only mentioning China’s role within international society but also discussing the influence it had. I therefore looked at the changing frequency with which “influence” 影响 was used in connection with China. Here we see a very marked increase in the presentation of China as internationally influential in the Weibo posts from the start of 2016 and then during 2017. This indicates that the public were talking about China’s international influence at this time. While there is an overall increase in the People’s Daily articles, this is less pronounced, with China presented as influential during 2016 and in late 2015 likely due to the anniversary of WW2.

Figure 5.6: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "influence" 影响
The “Stakeholder” discourse also appeared to present China as “responsible” 负责, with this constructed through differentiation from the presentation of North Korea as an irresponsible Other. In the Weibo posts, there is a clear increase in the use of the word in connection with China from the start of 2016 onwards. The much greater use by the public of this keyword in connection with China is arguably significant. In People’s Daily, use of the word only increases slightly overall but there is a similar spike in use alongside China at the start of 2016.

Figure 5.7: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "responsible" 负责

Weibo:

![Graph showing frequency of co-occurrence between China and "responsible" in Weibo posts.]

People’s Daily:

![Graph showing frequency of co-occurrence between China and "responsible" in People’s Daily articles.]

The United States

China’s identity is also constructed through differentiation of it from the US as an Other. One way the US was made an Other was the description of it as being an “imperialist state” 帝国 or engaged in “imperialism” 帝国主义. However, frequency counts for the co-occurrence of these terms with the US were inconclusive. Although on Weibo, there does appear a decline in references to the US in relation to imperialism in 2016, this is not particularly marked and is mostly relative to the frequent usage in Q1 2016. The US appears to be once again described as imperialist in 2017, which may be related to the planned deployment of THAAD. The People’s Daily articles do not really describe the US in this way.

Figure 5.8: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and “imperialist state” 帝国
The discourse analysis indicated that the US was also constructed as an Other through description of it as “hegemonic” or as pursuing “hegemony” which challenged China’s dominance. I looked at the changing frequency “hegemony” was used alongside the US. On Weibo, there was a rise in association of the US with hegemony during Q3 2016 and Q1/Q2 of 2017. This may be connected to discussion of THAAD. It would suggest that the idea of the US as a different Other persisted through the period. In the People’s Daily articles, there is a decline in the use of the word with the US, apart from in Q3 of 2016, likely again related to THAAD.

Figure 5.9: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and "hegemony" 霸权
The discourse analysis had also suggested that as part of a construction of China’s identity against the US as Other, the US was presented as being different because of its “capitalist” 资本主义 economic system. I therefore looked at the changing frequency with which the word “capital” (as a way of capturing “capitalism” and “capitalist”) was used in association with the US in the two types of material. In the Weibo posts, there is a decline in the frequency that the US is associated with capital(ism) during 2016 and early 2017. For People’s Daily, the word is not used very much, but there is an increase in use in late 2017 and early 2018, likely related to the China-US trade war.

Figure 5.10: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and “capital” 资本
In the discourse analysis, I found that the US was being presented as an Other through descriptions of its “rebalancing” to Asia. This depicted it as seeking to challenge China’s rise to a position of dominance in the region. I therefore looked at the frequency “balancing” was used with the US. Here, in the Weibo posts there is increased discussion of the US’s rebalancing during 2017, which might again be related to discussion of the planned THAAD deployment. Interestingly, in the People’s Daily articles, the term seems to be used a lot less after the end of 2016. This may reflect a desire by the CCP to present China as having achieved a position of equality and no longer being challenged by the US in this way. The results nevertheless suggest that the idea of the US rebalancing remained fairly dominant.

Figure 5.11: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and "balancing" 平衡
Alongside challenging China’s rise by balancing against it, the discourse analysis also suggested that the US was presented as an Other through descriptions of how it “interferes” 干涉 in China’s affairs and seeks to change its identity. These results are again difficult to interpret. While in the Weibo posts the US is portrayed as interfering slightly less during 2016 and early 2017, either side of this period it is quite frequently depicted in this way. This may suggest there was no real change in the public’s perception of the US as Other in these terms. In the People’s Daily articles, there is a decline in the presentation of the US as interfering until the middle of 2017, which may be related to the Trump presidency and start of the US-China trade war.

*Figure 5.12: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and “interfere” 干涉*
Although the US appears to continue to be perceived as a different Other in some ways throughout the period analysed, the discourse analysis suggested that the growing sense of difference between China and North Korea also worked to increase feelings of similarity between China and the US. I therefore also looked at the changing frequency of words expressing such similarity. This included how frequently the word “cooperation” 合作 was used in connection with the US at different times. In the Weibo posts, there is steadily rising use of the word in connection with the US from 2016 onwards, with frequent use in 2017. In the People’s Daily articles, there is also increased frequency of use in 2017, as well as an early spike which may be related to the anniversary of WW2 ending.

Figure 5.13: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and "cooperate" 合作
Similar to the word “cooperation” is the use of the word “co-ordination”. This was seen to be used to present similarity or alignment between China and the US, possibly constructed against North Korea as an Other. In the Weibo posts, there is a marked change to the description of the US in connection with co-ordination from the start of 2016 onwards. Meanwhile, in People’s Daily this word is already being used in connection with the US during 2015, but then the frequency of use peaks at particular times, possibly in relation to North Korea’s nuclear activity.

*Figure 5.14: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and "co-ordinate"*
Another way of suggesting similarity between China and the US would be to describe them as having common interests or aims, or facing common problems. I therefore looked at the changing frequency with which the word “common” 共同 was associated with the US in the two types of material. In the Weibo posts, after being used only a small amount in connection with the US in 2015, the word “common” steadily increases in frequency and is particularly frequently used during 2017. In the People’s Daily articles, there is little change in the frequency that the word is used apart from a decline during 2016 which may reflect tensions between the two countries at that time.

Figure 5.15: Frequency of co-occurrence between the US and “common” 共同

Weibo:

![Weibo freq chart]

Period

People’s Daily:

![People’s Daily freq chart]
International Society

Alongside the US, I was also interested in how international society is presented in the material. While international society is often discussed with the US, it may also be treated as separate. I therefore looked at the changing frequency that words expressing similarity were used in connection with international society, starting with “cooperation”. On Weibo, there is a rising association of international society with cooperation in the period from 2016 to late 2017. In the People’s Daily articles, whilst “cooperation” is frequently used alongside international society at all times, there are rises in frequency at the start of 2016 and through 2017.

Figure 5.16: Frequency of co-occurrence between International Society and "cooperate"

Weibo:

People’s Daily:
The discourse analysis had also shown instances where articles or posts described China and international society as having a “common” understanding or sharing common perspectives. In the Weibo posts, the word is not frequently used in connection with international society, but there are increases in Q1 and Q3 of 2016, and in late 2017, which were times when North Korea carried out nuclear tests. The People’s Daily articles have a similar pattern, but with a more marked increase in frequency of use in connection with international society during 2017. This might reflect the rise of a discourse of Chinese leadership at this time.

Figure 5.17: Frequency of co-occurrence between International Society and "common"
North Korea

The two main identity discourses present North Korea very differently. In the “Revolutionary” discourse, North Korea is presented as being similar to China. I therefore first looked at the frequency with which keywords expressing similarity were used in relation to North Korea. On Weibo, the label “wartime friend” is used more often to refer to North Korea at the start of the period analysed, then declines after this. This phrase is not used frequently by People’s Daily.

Figure 5.18: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and “wartime friend”

Weibo:

![Graph showing frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "wartime friend" on Weibo]

People’s Daily:

![Graph showing frequency of "wartime friend" in People’s Daily]
The discourse analysis also revealed that the similarity between China and North Korea is sometimes expressed through descriptions of them as being part of the same family, particularly by describing North Korea as China’s (little) “brother”. While the word does appear to be used less frequency over time on Weibo, this decline is not really pronounced until the autumn of 2017. Nevertheless, I would argue there is still a marked decline in public discussion of North Korea in these terms over the period. The term is hardly used at all in relation to North Korea in the People’s Daily articles.

Figure 5.19: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "brother" 兄弟

Weibo:

People’s Daily:
Another way in which similarity between China and North Korea appeared to be expressed was through the descriptions of North Korea as being a fellow socialist state. I therefore looked at the frequency that “socialism” 社会主义 was used alongside North Korea. On Weibo, the association of North Korea with socialism appears to decline over the period analysed. Notably, the phrase is not really used alongside North Korea in the People’s Daily articles suggesting the relationship with North Korea is not described in ideological terms.

Figure 5.20: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "socialism" 社会主义 (Note different y-axis scales)
Discourse analysis also indicated that North Korea was seen as being similar to China because it had also undergone a revolution. I therefore looked at how frequently “revolution” 革命 was used alongside North Korea in the two types of material. On Weibo, the connection with revolution is frequent in late 2015 and then declines, but also peaks again briefly in Q2 2017. This might possibly be because of an anniversary at this time. Although the word is used less frequently with North Korea in the People’s Daily articles, it similarly seems to decline in use after the middle of 2015. We might conclude that the construction of North Korea as similar in these terms was fading.

Figure 5.21: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "revolution" 革命
The discourse analysis revealed statements presenting North Korea as different from China. These functioned in the “Stakeholder” discourse to construct China’s identity against North Korea as an Other. I therefore looked at the changing frequency words conveying difference occurred alongside North Korea. One group of words ascribed North Korea a negative character, describing it as being “evil” for example. On Weibo, there is increased use of this term to describe North Korea in 2016 and 2017. The term is hardly used in People’s Daily, perhaps because it is too strong a term for the official discourse.

Figure 5.22: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "evil"
Figure 5.23: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "ruthless" (cruel) 狠

A similar negative adjective applied to North Korea to present it as being different from an implied positive Chinese Self appeared to be “ruthless” or “cruel” 狠. In the Weibo material, there is an increase in the use of this word to describe North Korea at the start of 2016 and then throughout the whole of 2017. Again, the word is not frequently used to describe North Korea in the People’s Daily articles, probably because this kind of strong and emotional language does not tend to be used by official state media.
The discourse analysis also suggested that another way which North Korea was presented as different from China was in its political system, where while China had democratic selection of leaders, North Korea instead used hereditary succession. I therefore looked at the frequency with which the word “hereditary” was used alongside North Korea. On Weibo, there is a considerable increase in the use of this term ascribing difference to North Korea during 2016 and 2017. In People’s Daily, the term is barely used.

Figure 5.24: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and “hereditary”

Weibo:

![Weibo chart]

People’s Daily:

![People’s Daily chart]
North Korea is also described as different because it acts in ways that are dangerous or threatening to China and the Chinese public. On Weibo, there is a large increase in the use of “dangerous” alongside North Korea at the start of 2016, and then again at the start of 2017 and throughout this year. In People’s Daily, North Korea is not very frequently described as dangerous, but there is also some increased usage in 2017.

Figure 5.25: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and “dangerous”

- **Weibo:**
  - Bar chart showing frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and “dangerous” over periods from 2014 to 2018.

- **People’s Daily:**
  - Bar chart showing similar data as Weibo, but with less frequent usage overall.
A similar pattern is seen for descriptions of North Korea as “threatening” 威胁. In the Weibo posts there is a very large increase in the use of word alongside North Korea from the start of 2016 onwards. This suggests North Korea was increasingly seen as presenting a danger to China and its public after this time. The People’s Daily material shows a similar change in use, with an increase in the frequency that the word is used to describe North Korea in early 2016 and then through 2017.
As was discussed in the qualitative analysis, North Korea is also presented as being different from China because of the things it does. In particular, North Korea’s attempts to “acquire nuclear weapons” 拥核 are presented as a significant form of difference from a Chinese Self which aims to denuclearize the region. In both the Weibo posts and the People’s Daily articles, North Korea is described to be “acquiring nuclear weapons” much more frequently at the start of 2016 and throughout 2017 (Note the different y-scale of the two charts however).

Figure 5.27: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "acquire nuclear weapons" 拥核 (note the different y-axis scales)
In connection with its pursuit and use of nuclear weapons, North Korea is also presented as different from a Chinese Self which is part of the international community because of the way in which it “violates” the shared norms held by this community and China as a part of it. On Weibo, the word is increasingly frequently used in connection with North Korea from the start of 2016. In the People’s Daily articles, there is an increased use of the word to describe North Korea at the same times.

Figure 5.28: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "violate" 违反

Weibo:

![Weibo Frequency Chart]

People’s Daily:

![People's Daily Frequency Chart]
The discourse analysis indicated North Korea is presented as different because it acts to disturb the region, unlike a Chinese Self that seeks peace and stability. One of the terms ascribed to North Korea in this depiction is “provoke” 挑衅. On Weibo, North Korea is increasingly described as provocative from Q3 2015, then the word is used a lot in 2017. In the People’s Daily articles, North Korea is not described using this word frequently until later, at the start of 2016. The word is then only used frequently at times.

Figure 5.29: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and "provoke" 挑衅 (Note the difference in the y-axis scales)
North Korea is made a different other through descriptions of how its actions “harm” the peace and stability of the region. This is in contrast to a Chinese Self which seeks to maintain stability and provide order. Here, there is an increased frequency with which the word is used to describe North Korea after a large peak in the first quarter of 2016. The increased frequency is much more sporadic in the People’s Daily articles than in the Weibo posts, but nevertheless North Korea is presented as harming the peace of the region more after 2016 in both types of material.

*Figure 5.30: Frequency of co-occurrence between North Korea and “harm” 恐嚇*
Conclusions from the Co-occurrence Analysis
The quantitative co-occurrence analysis shows how different elements of the two main identity discourses that were found in Step 1 shift in dominance over time. Three main conclusions can be drawn from this analysis:

• **A decline in the frequency of words used in connection with China presenting it as having a revolutionary identity, and an increase in words that present it as a stakeholder**
  First, the frequency that certain words were used in connection with “China” shows the growing dominance of elements of the “Stakeholder” discourse. In both the *People’s Daily* articles and the *Weibo* posts, there are declines in the frequency that the words “strong” and “Communism” are used in connection with China after the end of 2015 and through until the end of 2017. This may suggest that these elements of China’s identity, which can be seen as key parts of the “Revolutionary” identity discourse, were less dominant during this time. In connection with this, there is also a marked increase in the frequency that words from the “Stakeholder” discourse are used in connection with China from the start of 2016 onwards, particularly in the *Weibo* posts. Between early 2016 and the end of 2017, the words “international society”, “security council”, “influence”, and “responsible” are all used frequently in connection with China in the *Weibo* posts. This might indicate the growing public discussion of China using these aspects of the “Stakeholder” identity discourse.

• **Only limited change in the frequency of words used in connection with the US, some increase in frequency of words suggesting alignment**
  Second, the changing frequency with which certain words were used in connection with the US presents a mixed picture. Many words presenting the US as a different Other – such as “imperialist”, “hegemony”, “interfere”, and “balancing” – appeared with similar frequency across the period. This suggests that the US continued to be treated as an Other that was different to China in some ways. However, alongside these words, it was also seen that in the *Weibo* posts, after the start of 2016, and particularly in 2017, there was an increase in the frequency with which words suggesting alignment – “cooperation”, “coordination”, “common” - were used in association with the US. This might suggest that although the US continued to be viewed as a different Other in some ways, there was also
increasing recognition of it as being a partner in cooperation against North Korea.

- **A decline in the frequency of words presenting North Korea as similar to China, and an increase in words presenting it as different**

Third, there is a very marked shift in the frequency with which certain words were used in connection with “North Korea”, particularly on Weibo. In the Weibo posts, there was a decline in the use of terms suggesting similarity between China and North Korea - “wartime friend”, “socialism”, “revolution” – after the initial period of 2014 and especially from the start of 2016 through until the end of 2017. These terms were not really used much in the People’s Daily articles and therefore it was not possible to see a similar change in frequency here. Alongside this, perhaps the most pronounced change in the co-occurrence frequency was the increase in terms suggesting North Korean difference from China – “cruel”, “hereditary”, “dangerous”, “threatening” – that was seen in the Weibo posts from the start of 2016 through until the end of 2017. There was also an increase in the frequency that other terms suggesting North Korean difference – “provoke”, “harm”, “acquire nuclear weapons”, “violate” – were used in both the People’s Daily articles and the Weibo posts after the start of 2016. This indicates that, particularly amongst the Chinese public, there was a growing understanding of North Korea as being very different, and so threatening, to a Chinese Self that was viewed as being a “Stakeholder” in international society.

This first part of the quantitative analysis examined how these separate keywords that form elements of the two main discourses move individually. It is also valuable to measure how they are moving together as a whole. This means measuring the changing dominance of the two main discourses, based on these different keywords which are taken to constitute them. The next section of the analysis does this by forming groups of words that are representative of the two main identity discourses – the “Revolutionary” discourse and “Stakeholder” discourse – and measuring how the dominance of these groups of words changes in the two types of material.
Step 2b: Measuring the changing dominance of the main identity discourses

To summarise the analytical steps taken so far: the qualitative discourse analysis carried out in the first step found that there were two main identity discourses in the material. I labelled these two discourses as the “Revolutionary” discourse and the “Stakeholder” discourse. This discourse analysis also indicated that the dominance of these two identity discourses used by the online public was changing over time, or that at different times more of the Weibo posts were expressing one or other of these main identity discourses.

Quantitative co-occurrence analysis then gave further evidence of how elements of these two main discourses were changing over time. There was declining presentation of the Chinese Self in revolutionary terms and rising descriptions of it as “responsible” and “influential” and connected to international society. There was also increasing description of the US in terms suggesting alignment with it. Terms suggesting similarity with North Korea declined, while those suggesting difference increased.

I next wanted to more accurately measure the changes in this dominance, on Weibo, of the two main identity discourses during the period being analysed from 2014 to 2018. This forms the second part of the quantitative analysis (Step 2b) which sought to answer the following question:

- Which main identity discourses are becoming more and less dominant in Chinese society?

To do this, I used the Quanteda text analysis package and created two dictionaries each containing 35 keywords found to be associated with the two main identity discourses (for the lists of keywords see the Appendix A4). I then used the text analysis package to classify the 258,083 Weibo posts and 6743 People’s Daily articles as being either of discourse 1 (the Revolutionary discourse) or discourse 2 (the Stakeholder discourse). I summed the number of posts of each discourse type within each month. The results of this analysis are shown on the following pages.
Figure 5.31: The changing dominance of the “Revolutionary” (Discourse 1) and “Stakeholder” (Discourse 2) discourses in the Weibo posts between October 2014 and December 2018.
Figure 5.32: The changing dominance of the "Revolutionary" (Discourse 1) and "Stakeholder" (Discourse 2) discourses in the People's Daily articles between October 2014 and December 2018.
In this section of the analysis, I sought to measure the changing dominance of the “Revolutionary” discourse and “Stakeholder” discourse in the two types of material. In the figures presented above, the changing heights of the pairs of bars represents the total number of posts or articles of each discourse type per month. This changes a great deal and in some months there were more articles or posts being published than in others. This is useful information as it represents the intensity with which the topic was being discussed. However, it is not the main finding focused on in the analysis here. Instead, I am looking at the relative balance between the bars side by side, or between the numbers of articles or posts categorised as each discourse type.

To begin with the results for the Weibo posts (Figure 5.31), the balance between the two discourse types is overall quite even. However, during November and December of 2014, the “Stakeholder” discourse (coloured in blue) became more dominant in the Weibo posts than the “Revolutionary” discourse (coloured in red). During 2015, the total number of posts is lower and the numbers of posts for each discourse remains roughly equal. This probably reflects the fact that there was less debate about relations with North Korea during this period. However, even during this period there were more posts expressing the “Stakeholder” discourse in March, May, August, and November, which may indicate how this discourse was gaining dominance. In February and March of 2016, immediately after North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test, the total number of posts increases considerably, reflecting the fact that China’s relations with North Korea were under intense debate at this time. During these months, there are a much greater number of posts expressing the “Stakeholder” discourse (in blue) than the “Revolutionary” discourse (in red). This “Stakeholder” identity discourse had become more dominant. After this, even though the total number of posts each month dies down, posts expressing the “Stakeholder” discourse continue to outnumber those of the other discourse type almost every month.

Moving on to examine the results from the People’s Daily articles (Figure 5.32), there are more articles expressing the “Stakeholder” discourse (coloured blue) throughout the entire period (apart from March
which is likely to reflect the fact that the state media articles tend to use diplomatic and moderate language more frequently and this often corresponds to the type of language in this identity discourse. Nevertheless, we can still see a change in the relative dominance of the two main identity discourses within the *People’s Daily* articles. In the early period, through until October 2015, there remain a lot of articles expressing the “Revolutionary” discourse (in red) and particularly in July and August of this year, these are almost equal to the number expressing the “Stakeholder” discourse. After this, the number of articles expressing the “Revolutionary” discourse is much lower for a sustained period through until April 2017, and always much smaller than the number of articles categorised to be articulating the “Stakeholder” discourse. This might perhaps indicate that the *People’s Daily* articles were reflecting the change in overall dominance, as seen on *Weibo*, of the two discourses in their content.

The bigger picture here is a shift in dominance of the two main identity discourses within Chinese society, largely produced by a shift in dominance on *Weibo*. From the start of 2016 onwards, the “Stakeholder” discourse was seen to be more dominant overall.

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62 In March 2018, the possibility of a meeting between then US President Trump and North Korean President Kim Jong-un began to be discussed, following North Korea’s participation in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. The change in relative dominance of the two discourses in *People’s Daily* at this time may reflect a renewed attempt by the Chinese state-media to propagate a particular narrative about relations with North Korea during this period of uncertainty.
5.4.3 STEP 3: Lacanian analysis to explain the dominance of main identity discourses

The discourse analysis of samples of articles conducted in the first step of the analysis for this case study revealed that there were two main identity discourses within the material, in competition with each other. I labelled these discourses as the “Revolutionary” discourse and “Stakeholder” discourse respectively. The quantitative analysis then showed that, particularly in the public discussions, the relative resonance of these main identity discourses changed over the period being analysed between 2014 and 2018. While at the start of the period the two identity discourses appeared to be more equally resonant within Chinese society, after the start of 2016, the “Stakeholder” discourse became much more resonant. I would argue that the “Revolutionary” discourse had previously been the dominant discourse through which relations with North Korea were understood, but by 2014 it had already begun to lose some of this resonance with the public.

The aim of this part of the analysis is to explain why these two discourses resonated within Chinese society, with a particular focus on explaining why the “Stakeholder” discourse gained such resonance during the period under analysis to make possible changes in China’s North Korea policy. It therefore sought to answer the question:

• How can we explain the dominance of different identity discourses?

To do this, the analysis that follows makes use of Lacanian theory about the reasons why people invest in particular identity discourses, as I have discussed in detail in the theory chapter (Chapter 3). In summary, Lacanian theory sees individuals in society as desiring a full identity that, because of the nature of language and the way it constructs our identities, can ultimately never be achieved. To pursue full identities, people will invest in discourses which offer them particular identities. The discourses work to produce fantasies which channel people’s desire for a full identity, providing master signifiers that hold the promise of regaining a full identity that is felt to have been lost, and also deploying Others which cover over the lack of this full identity.

Those identity discourses which effectively produce such fantasies and channel our desires are the ones that are most likely to resonate. When members of Chinese society invest in a particular identity discourse about
relations with North Korea, they are doing so because they feel this identity discourse can satisfy their desire for a full identity, or because they find the fantasy that the discourse is producing compelling. This means that we can explain the resonance of particular identity discourses by close reading of texts that articulate these discourses, looking at the way in which fantasies are being produced by their textual features.

In the following section, I present Lacanian analysis of four articles taken to be representative of the two main identity discourses that STEP I found being expressed about the issue of China and North Korea (two articles for the “Revolutionary” discourse and two for the “Stakeholder” discourse). I would argue that close analysis of a small number of articles in this way is sufficient to find how these identity discourses are producing fantasies which channel desire for a full identity. Almost any article that is a part of the identity discourse should contain some textual features producing the fantasy. So, although analysing more articles could help to reinforce findings, it is not necessary. In selecting the representative articles submitted to Lacanian analysis, I chose those articles which I deemed to be rich in language related to China’s identity and therefore likely to yield findings. For this reason, I did not attempt to analyse the articulations of the identity discourses in the Weibo posts, because these were considered too short for this kind of analysis.

For each representative article, my analysis follows the same structure in detailing the elements of the fantasy produced: I first attempt to categorise that article based on Lacan’s four ideal-typical discourse types (See Chapter 3); Next, I describe the way in which the article uses master signifiers to present a promised identity for China; Then I describe how it presents Others to explain the fact that this full identity being promised has not yet been achieved. The analysis of each article starts by presenting a translation of the article, either in full or abridged where the article is very long. This text has the different Lacanian features marked, with master signifiers used to promise an identity highlighted (in grey) and Others offered to explain why this has not been achieved underlined. I begin with analysis of the “Revolutionary” identity discourse, asking why this might have been previously so resonant in Chinese society.

The Previous Resonance of the Revolutionary Discourse
The quantitative analysis indicated that at the start of the period being analysed, or during 2014 and early 2015, the two main identity discourses
found were in intense debate with each other and the “Revolutionary” discourse still retained resonance within Chinese society. I would argue that this was an identity discourse which had previously been very dominant as the framing discourse through which China’s relations with North Korea were understood. Then the increasing resonance of the “Stakeholder” discourse worked to challenge it. As such, it is necessary to try to explain why the “Revolutionary” discourse had previously been so resonant. To do this, I will provide a close analysis of two articles that might be seen as representative of this discourse, focusing on the way in which they construct a fantasy that channels desire for a full identity.

Article 1: Once Again Recognise the Korean Peninsula’s Geostrategic Value

The first article chosen for analysis here was written by an academic, and frequent author of opinion pieces for state media, Li Dunqiu (李敦球) and was published in the state run tabloid Global Times on 21 August 2014, before also being published in People’s Daily. The article is an example of the intense debate that was going on during 2014 regarding China’s relations to North Korea. The sides in this debate frequently grounded their arguments in expressions of China’s identity.

63 重新认识朝鲜半岛的地缘价值, Once Again Recognise the Korean Peninsula’s Geostrategic Value, Global Times, 21/08/14 (Appendix A5.1)
Global Times: Once again recognise the Korean Peninsula’s geostrategic value

The Korean Peninsula is positioned in the middle of Northeast Asia, and also seems as if it stretches a gangplank into the ocean. In history, continental powers and oceanic powers have collided and tested their strength many times here. 120 years ago, it was exactly here that the flames of the Sino Japanese War ignited. It is necessary to once again recognise the Korean Peninsula’s geostrategic value.

The first time China and Japan officially clashed on the Korean Peninsula was in 663 AD. The second time they clashed was in the Ming Dynasty period during the reign of Wanli, when the union of China and North Korea gained victory, safeguarding the stability of the East Asian order, and at the same time exposing “Japan’s despicable coveting of China’s mainland territory”. After the Meiji Restoration, in 1885 “Datsu-A Ron” was published, proposing that China’s “All Under Heaven” order was already collapsing and Japan should turn to Western civilization, assume the role of leader in establishing a new order in Asia. How to establish a new order? Japan could only seek opportunities on the Korean peninsula. In 1894, North Korea’s East Study Peasants Party revolted, and Japan saw a suitable opportunity, to protect its foreign farmers it dispatched soldiers to the Korean peninsula, and then Chinese and Japanese troops directly clashed. The Sino-Japanese war was therefore ignited. This resulted in a watershed rewriting of East Asia’s geostrategic order, and from this point oceanic powers replaced continental powers as the leaders / dominant powers regulating of the East Asian international order.

After that there were several more rounds of fierce fighting. In 1904 a war between Japan and Russia broke out, then there was the War of Resistance against Japan, and the Korean war. Before reaching the 1960s, the Korean Peninsula has been the centre of large-scale conflict four times. Regarding this, the former South Korean president has said. “If our history is that of experiencing hardship and being invaded by foreign powers, then this is what the Korean Peninsula’s geostrategic environment has created”. The essence of all of these battles was continental powers and oceanic powers directly testing their strength.

History proves, when the mainland and the peninsula are united and strong these are the times when the order on the Peninsula and in the

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64 Datsu-A Ron” was an editorial published in the Japanese newspaper Jiji Shimpo on March 16, 1885 arguing that Meiji Japan should abandon the conservative governments of Qing China and Joseon Korea and align itself with the West

65 “All Under Heaven” or “Tian Xia” (天下) is the name given to a historical Chinese concept which was used to mean the entire geographical world. In Imperial China, it was believed that China was the centre of the known world and that the Chinese Emperor presided over this entire world, or everything under heaven.
Northeast Asian region is most stable. While, in the 120 years between the Sino-Japanese war and today, because the oceanic powers intervened, this directly led the Korean peninsula to be unstable and turbulent, with frequent wars. Nowadays, these wars are still not completely concluded and there is still turbulence.

In recent years, people have been continuously doubting or even denying North Korea's geostrategic value for China. They believe that the traditional geostrategic perspective has already expired. These people still have no way to explain why the US on the contrary is strengthening its alliance with South Korea and also its alliance with Japan. Clear eyed people all know, once control over the North Korean situation has been lost, enemy countries will stick in their hands, and be able to use the Northeast as a shortcut “straight to Beijing”.

Today's Japan no longer has a strategic position for deciding China's future and destiny. Today's US is playing the role that Japan played at that time. The US is carrying out its so-called “Rebalancing” strategy, the target of which is precisely to preserve a US dominant East Asian international order. Unlike Japan at that time, the US does not have ambitions on the Chinese mainland.

China has undergone more than a hundred years of gradual progress, especially realising the reform and opening strategy, and finally the East Asian order is step by step returning back to its traditional concentric pattern. In this key period, the Chinese people must not be confused about geostrategic issues. Sun Yat Sen once said “It only requires the perseverance of China, then we can realise Korean independence, and also free Korea, then can shield China's safety”.

For some texts, it is immediately clear which of Lacan's four discourses they are expressing. However, others like this article do not clearly appear to be one particular form of discourse, but rather a combination of several. The discourse in this article arguable mostly resembles a Lacanian “Master's Discourse” in that it projects a number of master signifiers that strongly express a particular identity for China and are received by the Other to fit into their system of signification. The sense of lack of a full identity in the discourse, or the split subject, is repressed and made latent beneath this identity offered for China, which is presented as the universally recognised way that things are. The article tends to phrase statements about China’s identity as being the essential “truth” of things, stating that “history proves” (line 40) this version of things is an objective reality. The article also contains elements that seem to fit with a “University Discourse”, drawing on established factual knowledge to make its arguments.
The Promised Identity – A Dominant Power in East Asia

The article presents a promise of an identity which China has lost but is now close to regaining: that of the central and dominant power in a concentric East Asian order, providing stability to the region. The article does this through the use of a number of master signifiers which present China’s identity in this way, highlighted in grey in the text above. China is presented as being associated with a particular kind of “East Asian Order” (line 14). This order is described as one which has a “traditional concentric pattern” (lines 66 and 67) and is also presented as “China’s ‘All Under Heaven’ order” (line 17), phrases that describe China as being the central point and having control over the entire known world around it. Through these phrases, therefore, an identity is given for China as strong and dominant within Asia and beyond.

This identity of Chinese dominance is further developed. The article describes how, when this “order” associated with China is present, then the “mainland and the peninsula are united and strong” (lines 40 and 41). These two words help construct an identity for China as being dominant and in control of the region. When China has this identity, it is presented as being able to achieve “victory” (line 14) over others, something which further conveys an image of Chinese strength. This Chinese identity is also associated with regional “stability” (line 14) and making the region “stable” (line 42). In sum, it is an identity where China is at the centre of the regional order, is strong and dominant, and provides stability to both itself and the nations around it.

The article quite explicitly presents this identity as having been lost, describing how there was “a watershed rewriting of East Asia’s order” (line 25) where the language used points to a redefinition of meaning. However, the article channels our desire for a full identity by promising that this “lost” identity is close to being regained. It describes how “China has undergone more than a hundred years of gradual progress […] and finally the East Asian order is step by step returning back to its traditional concentric pattern” (lines 66 and 67). The full identity promised for China in the master signifiers is one which it is on the brink of recovering again. In the fantasy that is produced by the discourse, these master signifiers all hold out the promise of the missing object a or the identity that has been
lost but is now to be regained, they promise a form of *enjoyment* that can satisfy our desire for a full identity.

This promised identity for China as strong and dominant, at the centre of a traditional East Asian order, is framed in a way that links it to certain policy actions. This reflects the way that Lacanian fantasies, as described by Solomon (2015), typically present promised identities, anchored in master signifiers, as being achieved if certain actions are taken. A statement will say something like: “true ‘justice’ will be recovered if” (Solomon 2015, p.48). The article promises that China can once again regain its identity as dominant in the region, but that this “requires the perseverance of China” (lines 69 and 69). It is arguing that in order to achieve this promised identity, it is necessary for China to continue to recognise the geostrategic significance of the Korean peninsula, and therefore to continue to support North Korea. This will allow it to use North Korea to “shield China’s safety” (line 70), as it has done in the past, and so reclaim the historical identity which is associated with this.

*Presenting Others to Cover the Lack – The US and Japan*

However, these master signifiers used to present an identity for China – an “East Asian order”, “strong”, “stable” – have some ambiguity about them. It is unclear what they fully mean. Whilst they appear to articulate an identity for China, they do not define exactly what this identity will be. In this way, whilst appearing to offer a full identity for China, an identity that it is on its way to realising, they also produce a sense of *lack* or an awareness about the impossibility of ever reaching a full identity. For this reason, while offering the promise of a full identity, the fantasy being produced by the discourse also needs to provide a reason why this promised identity has not yet been achieved. It needs to cover over the sense of *lack* created. To do this, the discourse presents Others as blocking the achievement of the full identity, or “stealing” China’s *enjoyment*.

The article is full of these statements which produce Others as scapegoats for the frustrations of identity, underlined within the text above. These Others are made into the reason why China does not (yet) enjoy the full identity which is being promised to it. The main Other deployed in this way within the article is the US, which is presented as enjoying an alternative identity as the leader of a different regional order, so blocking the way for China. The article describes how “the US is carrying out its so-called ‘Rebalancing’ strategy, the target of which is precisely to preserve a US-dominant East Asian international order” (lines 58 to 60).
Here, as is suggested by Solomon (2015), the Other is granted an excess of enjoyment and made to seem as if it has achieved a full identity that conflicts with that pursued by China.

The article also to some extent presents Japan as an Other in this way. In this respect, the statements in the middle of the article are very interesting. Here, the article states that “today’s Japan no longer has a strategic position for deciding China’s future and destiny” (lines 57 and 58), and that “today’s US is playing the role that Japan played at that time” (line 58). The US is presented as taking over the role as Other which Japan had in the past. The terms “future and destiny” can be seen as part of the presentation of China’s promised identity: it is described as a country which has an inevitable path, which is in the process of becoming something, in a way that fits with the broader promised identity described above. The statements give to the US the role of “deciding” this identity, making it even more emphatically into something that gets in the way of the full identity being realised.

However, despite arguing that the US has taken over from Japan as China’s Other in this way, the article still seems to imply that Japan also continues to obstruct the realisation of the promised identity. After describing the series of conflicts China has had with Japan through history, the article states that “these wars are still not completely concluded and there is still turbulence” (line 45 and 46). Japan is described as a member of an alliance with the US, along with South Korea. There is the suggestion that countries including Japan are only waiting for a moment of weakness before they will invade China again: “Clear eyed people all know, once control over the North Korean situation has been lost, enemy countries will stick in their hands” (lines 52 to 54). In this way, the depiction of Japan as a historical Other is extended into the present day. Japan is described as stealing China’s enjoyment of an identity of regional dominance by presenting an ongoing threat to the country.

As well as these external Others which stand in the way of it realising its full identity, the article also appears to present internal or domestic Others which are connected with them. It describes how “in recent years, people have been continually doubting or even denying North Korea’s geostategic value for China” (lines 48 and 49). This presents these internal doubters as also standing in the way of China achieving its promised identity, and therefore also as being Others which provide a justification for
the lack of full identity. In this way, the external Others are closely connected to domestic politics within China in the discourse.

Article 2: Cannot “Abandon” North Korea, this 65-year partnership

As a second article representative of the “Revolutionary” discourse, I have chosen another article also written by Li Dunqiu, and published on 27 November 2014 in the state-owned tabloid Global Times66. This article is notable in that it featured in direct debate with the “Stakeholder” discourse. The article is interesting to compare with the first article above, because it does not appear to make such an explicit promise about the identity China is close to regaining, although this still continues to be present in the background of the text. Instead, this article focuses on the presentation of Others which are standing in the way of China achieving a particular identity only implicit in the text. As such, it draws on the broader “Revolutionary” discourse for resonance. As in the previous article, the Lacanian features are marked, with master signifiers highlighted (in grey) and statements presenting Others underlined. Where the article presents language defining the relationship between China and North Korea, I have marked this in italics.

66 李敦球：不能“放弃”朝鲜这65年的伙伴 (Li Dunqiu: Cannot “Abandon” North Korea, this 65-year partnership, Global Times, 27/11/14 (Appendix A5.2)
Cannot “Abandon” North Korea, this 65-year partnership

In recent years in China, voices denying China and North Korea’s relations have unceasingly appeared. Calls to “abandon North Korea” have also appeared in Chinese public opinion, even forming the recommendations of some of China’s strategic studies figures. It can be seen that today, 65 years after China and North Korea established diplomatic relations, there are not only huge differences in opinion about how to treat China-DPRK relations, but also extremely serious problems.

Those advocating that China should “abandon North Korea” give two reasons. The first is that the traditional geo-political concept has already expired. Contemporary conflict does not need geostrategic buffer zones, and so North Korea has lost its function as being China’s strategic buffer. Suppose this theory has grounding, then, why does the US not withdraw its military from South Korea and Japan, but on the contrary unceasingly strengthens its military presence? There is no need to doubt, the Korean Peninsulas geostrategic value still exists. The second reason is that there exist many contradictions between China and North Korea, frictions and divides. They argue that in international affairs North Korea sometimes does not listen to China and has become China’s negative equity, so China should “abandon” North Korea. This reason seems to be more provocative. However, this is the superficial appearance, and does not stand up to probing.

First, China and North Korea are two independent sovereign states, and so it is not possible for their national interests to always be completely the same. It is also not possible for everything to be done in complete coordination. In fact, allied countries also have lots of contradictions and divergences. The issue is the need to separate out the different contradictions and manage them.

Second, the nature of these present conflicts between China and North Korea are not the same as the conflicts that exist between China and Japan. China and Japan’s conflicts involve land and sea territory, historical understanding and East Asian geo-political questions, which exist at the strategic level and are unreconcilable conflicts. China North Korea relations also cannot repeat the disastrous track of the Sino-Soviet split. Because China is not that year’s Soviet Union and it does not want to control North Korea. North Korea also absolutely does not possess the strength which China had when resisting the Soviet Union. North Korea has a socialist political system and it is a geostrategic choice for China that is difficult to replace. The China-North Korea friendship is both countries’ shared need and is not Chinese wishful thinking.

Thirdly, the North Korea problem’s essence is a legacy of the Cold War. It is tied to the cornerstone of the Cold War on the Korean Peninsula, namely the Armistice Agreement and the US-South Korea alliance. North Korea, for self-survival and security, sometimes needs to “fight alone”. It
can be confirmed, aside from the two cornerstones of the Cold War, the North Korean issue also will continue to exist for a long time. China and North Korean relations therefore will inevitably be influenced. In terms of geopolitics, China and North Korea’s fundamental interests are the same. At least while the East Asian geopolitical situation does not experience a fundamental change, China and North Korea’s fundamental interests also cannot change.

To go back a step, if China really “abandons North Korea”, there could emerge three kinds of results: The first kind is that North Korea enters into the embrace of a third country; The second is that North Korea collapses as a result of enemy political, economic, and military encirclement and pressure; The third is that North Korea, isolated and cut off from help, decides upon a life and death battle, and the Korean Peninsula again bursts into war. Whichever outcome occurs, they are all not to China’s benefit, and also could once again lead to an overseas power taking control of the whole Korean peninsula, which would be the negative repeat of the dreaded events from history. The Sino Japanese War occurred because of Japan and Qing China fighting over the Korean Peninsula, and the waves of that survive. Presently, the US has taken over from Japan to be the maritime power to regulate the order on the Korean Peninsula. If China “abandons North Korea”, then the US can once again obtain the strategic interests that it didn’t achieve during the Korean War. Never give the United States big gifts due to strategic misjudgements. Those who advocate “abandoning the dynasty” really forget the pain before the scar is healed.

This article arguably most resembles the Lacanian “University Discourse” in the way that it is using a range of signifiers to express an identity for China and while these statements may be underpinned by certain master signifiers, these master signifiers remain latent behind the text. The article presents a lot of factual, almost academic, information to support its arguments. It uses the “system of signification”, or the knowledge embodied in a wide range of social discourses and formed of different meaning bearing signifiers. As is the case for this Lacanian discourse type, the expression of this knowledge about the world produces a split subject or the lack of a full identity. The discourse therefore needs to use a fantasy to cover over this sense of lack, deploying Others as getting in the way of the enjoyment of a full identity. In this way the article is dominated by the presentation of Others opposing China.

*The Promised Identity – A Strong and Dominant China*

A promised identity for China is only really hinted at in the article. In this respect, the final line is notable, where the article describes how people
supporting a split with North Korea “forget the pain before the scar is healed” (lines 74 and 75). This presents China as a country that has been wounded and points towards the “Century of Humiliation” narrative and the idea that China has faced many years of invasion and interference from outside powers (Z. Wang, 2012). The statement also ascribes to China an identity as “healing” and suggests that it is in a process of regaining something that has been lost to it during this time. When this article is read alongside the first article discussed above, we might see these statements as references to a promise that China is rising and recovering its dominance in the region. In this sense, the article gestures towards a “lost” identity that China once had. Apart from this, however, the article does not really present many statements giving an identity for China. Those statements which do seem to point to a particular identity for China have been highlighted (in grey).

*Presenting Others to Cover the Lack – The US and Japan*

The majority of the article is devoted to statements presenting Others as standing in the way of China’s achievement of a full identity. Like the first article discussed above, the main Others presented here are Japan and the US. For Japan, the article describes how “the Sino Japanese War occurred because of Japan and Qing China fighting over the Korean Peninsula” (lines 67 and 68) and presents Japan as historically bringing conflict to the region and challenging China’s dominant identity. It suggests that Japan continues to do this in the present day, describing how “China and Japan’s conflicts involve land and sea territory, historical understanding and East Asian geo-political questions, existing at the strategic level” (lines 35 to 37). Like the first article, Japan becomes an Other which acts to prevent China from enjoying a particular identity in the region.

As well as Japan, the US is also presented in this way. In similar language to the first article, this article describes how “the US has taken over from Japan to be the maritime power to regulate the order on the Korean Peninsula” (line 69 to 71). It again therefore presents the US as an Other which stands in the way of China achieving dominance in the Asian region. It asks “why does the US not withdraw its military from South Korea and Japan, and on the contrary unceasingly strengthens its military presence” (lines 15 to 17) and attributes to the US the enjoyment of dominance and strength in the region which should be China’s instead. As in the other article, China’s continued progress to a full identity is made contingent on its support of North Korea, where “if China ‘abandons North
Korea’, then the US can once again obtain the strategic interests that it didn’t achieve during the Korean War” (lines 72 and 73).

In this respect, the article is also notable in the way that it uses a number of master signifiers to define the nature of the relationship between China and North Korea, as part of China’s identity. I have marked these master signifiers in italics in the text. China and North Korea are described as having a “partnership” (line 1) and a “friendship” (line 43), to share “socialist” (line 42) systems and to engage in “coordination” (line 29). North Korea is defined as one of China’s “geostrategic buffer zones” (line 13) or as a part of the Chinese Self. All of these terms are ones whose meanings the “Revolutionary” discourse and “Stakeholder” discourse fight over, as shall be discussed more in the analysis below.

This second article can therefore be seen to be leveraging the desire for a full identity for China. The desire to see China regaining dominance in the East Asian region is used in order to make a particular argument about China’s North Korea policy. Although it does not so explicitly promise an identity for China as the centre of the regional order, it still suggests this identity, and presents various others that are standing in the way of China achieving this full identity or serve as scapegoats for the ultimate frustrations of identity. The two articles both offer examples of the “Revolutionary” discourse and the way in which it is channelling people’s desires for enjoyment.

Analysed in this way, it can be seen why the “Revolutionary” discourse resonated so much in the past. It presented a really compelling fantasy to channel people’s desire for a full identity. This fantasy promised an attractive identity for China as once again the dominant power in Asia, enjoying stability and prestige at the centre of a traditional East Asian order. At the same time, the fantasy presented Others, in the form of Japan and the US, that could explain the ultimate lack of a full identity, providing a reason for why this promised identity for China has still not been achieved. The question that remains is, if this identity discourse was able to resonate so effectively with the public, how was the “Stakeholder” discourse able to challenge it and gain more resonance within Chinese society for a period of time? Below I analyse articles representative of the “Stakeholder” identity discourse in the same way, arguing that this discourse resonated because it challenged some of the master signifiers used by the “Revolutionary” discourse and then presented an alternative identity that China was on its way to achieving.
The Growing Resonance of the Stakeholder Discourse – 2016 to 2018

The quantitative analysis indicated that from the start of 2016 onwards the “Stakeholder” discourse became much more resonant within Chinese Society, particularly through 2017. In order to analyse why this discourse became so resonant during this period, I will provide close analysis of two articles that can be seen as representative of it, looking at the way in which these articles construct fantasies which channel desire for a full identity. For this identity discourse, it proved more difficult to find a representative article for the discourse as a whole, because elements of it tended to be articulated in different texts in different ways. This identity discourse also tended to be expressed more frequently by members of the Chinese public than by the Chinese government, again making it harder to find longer articles expressing it as these are typically produced by Chinese state media under the guidance of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Nevertheless, it was still possible to find some articles suitable for analysis of this identity discourse.

Article 1: In China, there doesn’t exist a question about ‘abandoning’ North Korea

The first article chosen which expresses this identity discourse was published in the state-run tabloid newspaper Global Times at the end of 2014[67]. The article was written by a retired deputy commander in the People’s Liberation Army, Wang Hongguang, in response to the second article by Li Dunqiu discussed above as representative of the “Revolutionary” discourse. The debate between the two articles can be seen as a broader debate going on at the time between the two identity discourses. Because the article by Wang is quite long, I shall here only include the most relevant sections of this article (the full article is included in the Appendix). In the same way as the previous articles, the Lacanian features are marked, with master signifiers highlighted (in grey) and statements presenting Others underlined. Where the article presents language defining the relationship between China and North Korea, I have marked this in italics.

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[67] 中国不存在“放弃朝鲜”的问题, In China there doesn’t exist a question about “abandoning” North Korea, Global Times, 1/12/14 (Appendix A5.3)
In China, there doesn’t exist a question about ‘abandoning’ North Korea

[...]

China and North Korea both have their own national interests – they have some interests that may be close or the same, and some interests that may have a huge difference between them.

For example, North Korea is acquiring nuclear technology and China requires North Korea to abandon nuclear technology. This constitutes a different national interest that is being advanced and pursued. Regarding the issue of large principles, China has no need to allow its own interests to be harmed for the sake of North Korea’s interests. North Korea acquiring nuclear technology has already created a serious threat of nuclear contamination on our country’s border regions, and the Chinese government for the sake of the common Chinese people in the nuclear areas, has not only severely criticised North Korea’s acquisition of nuclear weapons, but also completely with reason required North Korea to take measures to move these further from China, so that it cannot give China a nuclear threat. On this point, are “China and North Korea’s fundamental interests the same”?

Besides, North Korea’s acquisition of nuclear technology could provoke Japan and South Korea to also acquire nuclear weapons. Suppose the small Northeast Asian region has Russia, China, North Korea, South Korea, and Japan at the same time acquiring nuclear weapons, and also add it being under the shadow of US nuclear weapons, can the Northeast Asian region still enjoy peace and quiet? For China, based on its principles, to continue its own national standpoint and oppose North Korea harming our country’s interest, cannot be considered as abandoning North Korea. Before, we have cleaned up North Korea’s mess too many times. Experts should understand the author clearly. After today, it should not be necessary.

Second is that Professor Li said “North Korea has a socialist political system, and it can hardly have a geopolitical alternative to China”. In fact, North Korea early on abandoned Marxist-Leninism as the guiding ideology of party building. There is no similarity with China in ideology and it is not a true proletarian party and socialist country.

[...]

Our country is governed by the Communist Party and different groups participate in politics, with negotiations and elections producing collective leadership of the party and the country. But the three generations of North Korean leaders have been the result of hereditary succession. Are there similarities between the two? The Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese government are officially two equal political parties, and
these two parties both interact with North Korea, the same as other countries and parties that are friendly to our country. This is regular political party relations and national relations. Besides, countries with different political systems can harmoniously interact with each other, and in the whole world this can be found everywhere. That “North Korea can hardly have a geopolitical alternative to China” is the result of it being a closed off country, and it is not necessary for China to bear the responsibility for this.

Third, western countries demonise North Korea using the “human rights” banner and involve themselves with North Korea’s internal politics, but China absolutely doesn’t interfere. That North Korea is far away from international society, that its internal politics are strictly protected and controlled, and that it is extremely guarded about the outside world is beyond dispute. Well, every country has so-called “Human Rights” issues, including the US itself. Recently, the police in a small town in the United States shot and killed a 12-year-old boy with a toy gun, which caused riots across the country, and there is proof. Honestly speaking, China does not understand much about North Korea’s human rights situation and cannot listen to those who have fled North Korea and jump to hasty conclusions.

China and North Korea in 1961 ratified the “China-North Korea Mutual Assistance and Friendship Treaty”, and this has already been signed again twice. The treaty stipulates: "When a contracting party is attacked by any country or group of countries, the other contracting party will provide military and other assistance as soon as possible." This treaty is effective until 2021. This in reality already gives North Korea political and military protection. The treaty also stipulates that: “The parties will continue to coordinate on all important international issues related to their common interests.” It might be asked, is North Korea’s acquiring of nuclear weapons coordination? The treaty further stipulates that: “The two parties will continue to make every effort to maintain peace in Asia and the world, and the security of all countries.” If North Korea is practically observing this treaty, then it would not fire missiles when our country’s passenger planes are about to fly over North Korean airspace and put the 200 passengers onboard in great danger. It would not catch our country’s fisherman on the high seas near North Korea and pose a serious threat to the safety of our fishermen’s lives and property.

North Korea has also repeatedly announced the abolition of the “Armistice Agreement”, bringing the North, South and US into a state of war. While the China – North Korea Friendship Treaty is still effective, once the North and South (and US) start to fight, what position would that place China in? Is this China “abandoning North Korea” or North Korea going it alone? This is not a question of whether North Korea listens to China or where in the China – North Korea Friendship Treaty is it clearly
set down. North Korea’s actions have already harmed China’s fundamental interests, I don’t know how the professor arrives at the conclusion that “China and North Korea have the same fundamental interests”.

Fourth is the issue of making North Korea act as our country’s “strategic buffer”, or not having this “strategic buffer”. In an era of globalisation, and informatisation, speaking from a geostrategic political relations and military affairs perspective, the importance of position has greatly decreased. In history, the Korean Peninsula has never been the main strategic orientation of the central regime, but this region has often been important in dragging down the regime.

However, entering the 21st Century, looking from politics, it is of course important to be friendly with neighbouring countries including North Korea. Which country does not want its neighbours to be good neighbours rather than evil neighbours? China is friendly to its neighbours, and so does not use force against weak countries like the Philippines. This is even regarded as a sign of weakness by some of the international community and the domestic community. However, looking at it from the whole, even if the neighbours around are evil, this cannot obstruct China’s pace of modernisation, as China is rising.

Last century in the 60s and 70s, North Korea was even more indifferent to China than other countries; When China established diplomatic relations with the United States, especially after the reform and opening up, it made irresponsible remarks. It was not until the drastic changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe that the situation improved.

Speaking loudly, even if the Northeast region would definitely be affected, it cannot break off our country’s modernisation course. Again, we must clearly see that China cannot control the situation on the Korean Peninsula. The 6 Party Talks didn’t take off – can China be responsible if the Korean Peninsula breaks into war? If North Korea “decides on a deadly battle and reignites a war”, the antagonism is not with China, and there is no need for China to burn itself. Whoever initiates the war is responsible. There has not been a “Socialist camp” for a long time, and China has no need to fight for its brother. Everybody understands this right?

To conclude, the relations between the two countries and two parties of China and North Korea need to be established on the basis of normal country and normal party relations. Start out from our country’s interests, and also consider the interests of North Korea (including those corresponding to whichever country) – if it should be supported, support it, and if it should be opposed, oppose it. Support fairness and justice, build
This article arguably most closely resembles the Lacanian “Hysteric’s Discourse” being defined by a tone of questioning and criticism. It places the split subject, and the lack of a full identity in the prominent Agent position, in many ways drawing attention to the fact that China’s identity is fluid, ambiguous and subject to debate. Throughout the article, Wang appears to be challenging the identity proposed for China in relation to North Korea by another discourse, questioning the meaning of the master signifiers that this discourse has offered to label China’s identity. However, the article also appears to be offering a different alternative identity for China, that of modern socialist state which is successfully integrated into the international system and engages in cooperation with other nations.

Throughout the article, there are statements, often phrased as questions, which challenge the meaning of master signifiers deployed by another discourse to present China’s identity in relation to North Korea. I have italicised these statements in the text. The article challenges the use of the phrase “strategic buffer” (lines 101 and 102) to describe North Korea as a part of the Chinese Self, arguing that that this term does not really mean anything in the modern word. In a similar way, the article seems to challenge the use of the word “coordinate” (line 81) to label the interactions between China and North Korea, arguing that the meaning which is applied to this term does not accurately capture the way in which the two countries relate to each other. In this way, the article seems to essentially empty out the meanings which have been given to certain master signifiers being used by the “Revolutionary” discourse to construct a particular identity for China in relation to North Korea. These words or phrases that are used to describe China’s identity in connection with North Korea are exposed as being ambiguous or in a sense meaningless.

This is perhaps most noticeable with the way the article treats the word “socialist” (line 36) which can be seen as a key master signifier of the “revolutionary discourse” used to give China an identity that makes it similar to North Korea. This word is made to seem meaningless or hollow in this context because North Korea “is not a true proletarian party and socialist country” (line 40). As such, all the uses of the word by the other discourse also become essentially meaningless, and there is no longer a “socialist camp” (line 136) that defines the identity of China and North
Korea together. However, as well as undermining the way in which the master signifier “socialist” is being used by the other discourse to present China’s identity, the article also fills the term with new meaning and presents a new conception of the socialist identity as associated with China. China is connected with a true “socialism” constructed through contrast with North Korea. It is described as retaining “Marxist Leninism as its guiding ideology” (lines 38 and 39). The article goes on to state that: “Our country is governed by the Communist Party” (line 44) and to further project this contrasting kind of socialist identity for China.

*The Promised Identity – A Responsible Modern Major Power*

In this way, the article both challenges the identity offered by another discourse and also presents an identity for the Chinese Self, or one which it is promised to be close to achieving. This identity is offered through the use of a range of master signifiers that are used to describe China within the article. I have highlighted these in grey within the text above. The article first presents China as having become a modern nation state with a modern political system, describing how “different groups participate in politics, with negotiations and elections producing collective leadership of the party and the country” (lines 44 and 45, my italics for master signifiers). Interestingly, this essentially implies that China has a form of democracy.

This identity is given meaning through contrast with the presentation of a North Korean Other which has a system of “hereditary succession” (line 47). China is then described as having undergone an economic process of “reform and opening up” (line 123) which also adds to this presentation of it as having become a more modern nation. Throughout the article, to reinforce this presentation of China as a modern nation state there are repeated references to its “modernisation” (line 117 and line 130). China is described as following a “modernisation course” (line 130). This depicts it as in the middle of a process, suggesting that this identity is one it is moving towards.

The article presents China, as a modern nation that relates to other states in the international system in a particular way. It engages in “regular political party relations and national relations” (lines 51 and 52) and “normal country” (line 141) relations with others instead of ideology-based socialist relations. The article here suggests that as a modern state which has been accepted into the international system, China is able to have relations with different kinds of states regardless of ideology. It describes
how “countries with different political systems can harmoniously interact with each other” (lines 52 and 53). China is described as a nation which, while still communist, has been accepted into the international community and can engage in friendly relations with other states including the US. Alongside this, the article describes how “China is friendly to its neighbours” (line 112) and further projects an identity for China as a peaceful and cooperative member of the international system. With this promised identity, the article suggests that the Northeast Asian Region will “enjoy peace and quiet” (line 29), where the use of the word “enjoy” is suggestive of how this is a promise of Lacanian enjoyment or a full identity for the Self.

In addition to presenting it as “friendly” and peaceful, the article also describes China to have “principles” (line 30) or to be a principled actor in international affairs. China is described as promoting “fairness” and “justice” (line 145). These master signifiers which are associated with the Chinese Self function to create a particular kind of identity that China has in the world, or is promised to be close to achieving. The final lines of the article further present this identity for China as an integrated member of the international community, calling on China to “build an image of the country as a responsible great power” (line 146, my italics to denote master signifiers). Here the two master signifiers “responsible” and “great” are deployed to encapsulate the identity that the article promises China is close to achieving. It is a modern nation state accepted into the international community and engaging in friendly relations with others, whilst acting in a responsible and principled way.

This promised identity for China - that it is becoming a modern, accepted, and responsible power - is implicitly framed in the article in a way that links it to certain policy actions. This reflects how Solomon states that the promised identities, anchored in master signifiers, in Lacanian fantasies are typically presented: “a more perfect ‘democracy’ is ours if we only” (Solomon 2015, p.48). Here, the article suggests that China will achieve the promised identity, and become a truly “responsible great power” in the international system, if it adopts the correct policies towards North Korea and does not continue to support North Korea whatever it does. Based on the identity discourse it presents, the article argues that “we have cleaned up North Korea’s mess too many times… after today, it should not be necessary” (lines 32 to 34).

These master signifiers are being used in the article to promise a “lost” identity that China is close to regaining – they suggest a modern,
strong, respected China that is integrated into the international system and engages in cooperative relations with others. The idea that this is an identity China had before and has lost is not really explicit within the article. But I would argue that the article should be read in the context of a broader discourse about China’s quest to “regain” its place as an accepted member of international society (Suzuki, 2007).

Presenting Others to Cover the Lack – North Korea

These master signifiers used to evoke this identity for China are all somewhat ambiguous in nature. It is not clear exactly what is meant by China’s “modernisation” or it being “responsible” or “friendly” and therefore the full identity which is being promised by these words is incomplete, the meaning of it open to different interpretations. In order to fix the meanings of these terms, the article presents an Other in North Korea which is contrastingly pre-modern or “hierarchical” and “irresponsible” and “evil”. In this way, the article on one level appears to be trying to fill these words with meaning through differentiation.

However, the presentation of North Korea as an Other in the article can also be analysed in Lacanian terms for the way in which it functions to cover over the underlying sense of a lack of a full identity. Because the master signifiers offered to describe this promised identity are essentially ambiguous, they also summon a sense of lack of a full identity. As part of the fantasy it constructs to channel our desire for a full identity, the article therefore needs to provide reasons why the full identity which is being promised – that of China as a modern, accepted part of the international community – has not yet been completely realised. Why is China still only in the process of becoming a “responsible great power” and why do these master signifiers lack the kind of concrete meaning that completely defines its identity?

As well as offering a promise of an identity for the Chinese Self to be regained, the fantasy produced by the discourse needs to present Others as reasons why this promised identity has not yet been achieved. This article therefore presents North Korea, and the nature of China’s relations with it, as offering a reason why China has not yet become a completely modern state that is integrated into the international system. I have underlined in the text the sections where it is doing this. North Korea is presented as “stealing” China’s enjoyment of the full identity as a modern state being promised. The article describes how when China embarked on a process of “reform and opening up” (line 123), which is presented as...
part of its assumption of a modern identity, North Korea “made irresponsible marks” (line 123) and challenged this Chinese identity. It also describes how North Korea has been “dragging down the regime” (line 107) and suggests that it is working to challenge China’s development. The article also appears to imply that for China, being closely connected to North Korea, prevents other countries from fully recognising it as a modern state that is integrated into the international system.

North Korea’s actions are presented as blocking China from achieving an identity where it enjoys peace and stability in the region and engages in friendly relations with neighbouring countries (line 110). The article describes how, instead of supporting China to “make every effort to maintain peace in Asia and the world, and the security of all countries” (lines 81 to 83), North Korea “fire[s] missiles when our country’s passenger planes are about to fly over North Korean airspace and put the 200 passengers onboard in great danger” (lines 84 to 86). It “catch[es] our country’s fisherman on the high seas near North Korea and poses a serious threat to the safety of our fishermen’s lives and property” (lines 86 to 88).

In effect, North Korea acts to “steal” China’s enjoyment of the peaceful and harmonious identity it would otherwise enjoy as a modern state that has become an integrated and accepted member of international society. The section of the article about China’s regional relations with its neighbours also reflects this. Here, the article first projects an identity for China as a good neighbour (part of the discourse around the “good neighbour policy”). It then also asks “Which country does not want its neighbours to be good neighbours rather than evil neighbours?” and presents North Korea as the “evil” neighbour that prevents the countries of the region from having harmonious relations with each other.

In this way, the article contains an identity discourse which produced a Lacanian fantasy to channel our desire, offering a promise of an identity that China is close to achieving whilst also positing an Other which explains why this promised full identity has not yet been achieved. The discourse in the article resembles the “Hysteric’s discourse” and is therefore defined by its presentation of lack and the fluidity of identity, primarily seeking to undermine the “Revolutionary” discourse presented in other articles. However, in its articulation of the “Stakeholder” discourse the article still offers a compelling vision of an identity that China is on its way to achieving.
Article 2: The Morality and Duty of China as Responsible Major Power

The second article chosen as a representation of the “Stakeholder” identity discourse was published in *People’s Daily* on the 2 March 2016, shortly after China voted in the UN Security Council in support of sanctions to respond to North Korea’s fourth nuclear test which was conducted earlier in that year. The article is one of the limited number of examples of the “Stakeholder” identity discourse being expressed in full in the official media produced by the Chinese government, and was published at a time when the quantitative analysis suggested this identity discourse had become really resonant within Chinese society. In this article, the “Stakeholder” discourse, and the fantasy being produced by this, are somewhat more implicit than in the article analysed above. However, this article is notable in that the identity it promises for China is expressed in very similar terms to the first representative article analysed. It therefore shows the way in which this identity discourse is being reproduced multiple times in different ways in separate texts. The Lacanian features are again marked in the text, with master signifiers highlighted (in grey) and statements presenting Others underlined:

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The Morality and Duty of China as a Responsible Major Power

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), with 15 votes in support, passed resolution number 2270 concerning the North Korean issue. This new resolution condemns how at the start of the year North Korea carried out nuclear tests and launched a satellite using ballistic missile technology. It requires North Korea to give up its nuclear programme. When the resolution came out, it was immediately taken note of by western media, the resolution’s rules regarding North Korean sanctions receiving much attention.

However China, which has an important influence on the formation of these resolutions, treats the resolutions with a wider and more long-term perspective.

First, China’s support for the resolution expresses its distinct attitude to the North Korean issue. China opposes North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons and insists that the Korean Peninsula cannot have nuclear weapons, no matter whether it is North Korea or South Korea, no matter whether it is these states themselves that have produced them or they have been deployed there by others. This resolution passed by the UNSC this time has a main aim of stopping North Korea from advancing a step on its nuclear programme.

From looking at the sanctions content, when resolution 2270 is compared with the UN’s previously passed resolutions, 1718, 1874, 2087, 2094, the clear difference is it is more “forceful”. The resolution requires that countries forbid the transportation to North Korea of materials that could be used for nuclear weapon. It tightens the arms embargo on North Korea including conventional weapons, freezes capital related to the development of nuclear weapons, and strengthens the control of shipping to North Korea. China declares that North Korea continues to defy the UNSC resolutions and therefore must pay the price. China firmly upholds the international nuclear non-proliferation mechanism’s authority and effectiveness, and will not shelter any country that develops weapons of mass destruction. This is a major power’s appropriate role.

Second, China firmly supports the resolution upholding the principle of justice. China proposes that the sanctions must avoid harming the North Korean people, and even more opposes use of the name of sanctions to shake the authority of the regime. In reality, with the efforts of China and other countries, this UNSC resolution is relatively balanced, and only makes precision strikes against North Korea’s nuclear programme, while at the same time considering North Korea’s humanitarian situation and population. Some measures involving the population, healthcare, and other humanitarian things have been “exempt”.

Even though western public opinion has repeatedly put pressure on China, and required China to “punish North Korea” according to the
western way, China has still proceeded realistically, focusing on the overall situation, and undertaking to be a major power.

Finally, China takes an objective position on the use of the resolution. China believes, the UN resolution cannot resolve the Korean Peninsula’s conflicts, and also has no way of getting rid of the enmity between North Korea and the US. To start from the roots in resolving the Korean Peninsula’s nuclear issue, it is necessary to return to the negotiations track. The resolution can constitute a new launching point for negotiations and a “paving stone”. Therefore, China has proposed the dual track approach to the denuclearization of the Peninsula, taking into account all parties rational views, including North Korea’s security concerns, and applying forceful denuclearisation measures. The proposal by China is a comprehensive and systematic model, embodying major power wisdom.

Furthermore, China pays close attention to the Peninsula and region’s peace and stability. China has uninterruptedly called for all parties to maintain restraint, to avoid war and disorder occurring on the Peninsula, recommending that all parties do not abandon efforts at repeated discussion, and do not abandon the responsibility they have assumed for the Peninsula’s peace and stability. China has also clearly warned other countries, they should not fish in troubled waters to achieve their own gain, breaking the efforts made by international society to find a political solution to the Peninsula issue.

Acting as one of the UNSC’s five permanent members, China supports the “UN Constitution” guidelines, upholds justice, and positively participates in the UNSC’s resolutions regarding North Korea. China is one of the main Asian participants in the 6-Party talks, continuing to advance all parties struggle to bring peaceful resolution, and for the Peninsula issue it exhibits a responsible major power’s actions.
The discourse in the article resembles the Lacanian “University Discourse” in that it contains statements about a commonly agreed upon identity for China, with these statements underpinned by certain master signifiers. The discourse in the article uses these statements (or system of signification) to convey an idea of the missing object a or the nature of China’s identity in the world, but in doing so they also produce a sense of lack of an idea of the split subject, although this remains latent here. In this respect, the fantasy produced by the discourse appears to be slightly incomplete, because although it offers a strong promise of an identity which China is close to achieving, the article does not all that effectively pinpoint Others that function as an excuse for why this identity has not yet been achieved.

The Promised Identity – A Responsible Major Power

The article presents a promise of an identity that China is regaining: that of a strong major power which is integrated into, and influential in, international society. It does this using different master signifiers and phrases containing these. I have highlighted these in grey within the text. These master signifiers evoke this identity in different ways. As is emphasised in the headline of the article, it presents China as becoming a “responsible major power” (line 1 and line 81). In its international behaviour, China is presented as “embodying major power wisdom” (lines 63 and 64) where the master signifiers used both ascribe different aspects of the “Stakeholder” identity to China, presenting it as both important and also as being wise or having particular qualities. In a similar way, the article describes China to be playing a “major power’s appropriate role” (line 36) where the language use emphasises the way in which China is living up to a particular identity expected of it by the rest of international society.

In this way, the article promises an identity for China as accepted by international society. Reinforcing this, it describes how China is “one of the UNSC’s five permanent members” (line 76) and “one of the main Asian participants in the 6-Party talks” (line 79), where both labels attached to China depict it as both being integrated into international society and also being an important member of this international society. This presentation of China as being significant within the United Nations and international society more broadly is also stressed earlier in the article, where China is described as having an “important influence” (line 12) on the actions that are taken. The suggestion here is not only that China is
influential, but also that it shapes international society through its “distinct attitude” (line 16) or special approach to peacekeeping.

As part of this identity which is promised, China is associated with certain qualities, including acting “realistically” (line 50), being “objective” (line 53), and showing “wisdom” (line 64). These master signifiers all serve to support the identity for China that is being offered within the discourse of the article. Along with these, the article also presents China as seeking to “uphold the principle of justice” (lines 38 and 39) and uses a label identical to that used in the first article. This presents China as acting even-handedly within international society and not showing favour to either side in the situation on the Korean Peninsula. Like in the first article, it combines with other master signifiers to present a particular identity or character for China as an actor within international society.

Presenting Others to Cover the Lack – North Korea and the West

All of these master signifiers, which function to make a promise of an identity in the world that China is close to achieving – “responsible”, “important”, showing “wisdom”, and upholding “justice” – are ambiguous in meaning and can be interpreted in different ways. As such, as well as offering a vision of what China is becoming or of the enjoyment of a full identity, they all produce a sense of lack or a sense that this full identity has not yet been achieved. Although it does not do so particularly explicitly, the article also presents Others as being the reasons why the full identity is not yet realised. First, the article appears to suggest that North Korea acts as an Other which prevents China and the international community from together achieving its aims and as such it acts to block the enjoyment of “peace and stability” (line 71) in the region. In comparison to the first article analysed above, however, this presentation of North Korea as an Other which acts to block China’s realisation of its identity is more muted.

The article then also appears to present a further Other which acts to “steal” China’s enjoyment of the full identity being promised: the West. The article describes how “western public opinion has repeatedly put pressure on China and required it to “punish North Korea” according to the western way” (lines 49 and 50), depicting the West as an Other which acts to prevent China from achieving the kind of rational and fair identity as an international actor which it would otherwise achieve. Later on, the article also alludes to the US actions in the region, suggesting that these also stand in the way of China’s realisation of the promised identity, “breaking the efforts made by international society to achieve a political solution to
the Peninsula issue” (line 73 and 74). In this way, both North Korea and the US (and the West as a whole) seem to be offered side by side as reasons why China has not yet fully achieved its identity as a member of the international system.

Conclusions of Lacanian Analysis

The use of Lacanian theory in the above analysis of representative articles that express the two main identity discourses indicates both why these discourses resonated within Chinese society at different times, as well as why the “stakeholder” discourse started to resonate more during the period 2016 and 2017. Both identity discourses offer a promise of an identity that China is on its way to achieving, with these promised identities sharing much in common – revolving around China’s strength and status within the world and ultimately being about the goal of China’s “rise”. Each of the identity discourses can be seen to have produced a Lacanian fantasy that channels a desire for a full identity and the ultimate lack or frustration related to this.

The “Revolutionary” discourse produced a compelling fantasy which promised China was close to regaining its position as the central pole in a traditional concentric East Asian regional order, a position which it once had but has lost. This fantasy also presented Others in the form of the US and Japan which provided reasons why this full identity had not yet been realised. The “Stakeholder” discourse instead offered a different fantasy where the identity promised for China was that of a modern state and an important and integrated member of the international community. This fantasy presented North Korea as the main Other which was standing in the way of China achieving this promised identity, through its actions to destabilise the Korean Peninsula and its close association with China. During 2016 and 2017, this fantasy of promised enjoyment and posited Others was more compelling for members of Chinese society, leading to the greater resonance of the “Stakeholder” discourse at this time. The “stakeholder” discourse effectively channelled both the Chinese public’s desire for a full identity and their frustration at the sense of lack they felt as they tried to define this.

Based on this analysis, I would argue that the “Stakeholder” identity discourse was able to resonate in Chinese society to the extent that it did during this period, and to overshadow the previously dominant “Revolutionary” discourse, because all of the elements of the fantasy which it pro-
duced were very compelling to the Chinese public. This fantasy first offered to the Chinese public a very strong promise that China was on the brink of becoming an important, influential, and respected member of international society which could engage in prosperous and harmonious relations with different nations around the world. Through this, it gave the Chinese public, hungry for confirmation that their nation was being accepted and gaining prestige within the world, something to invest in.

The force of this promise was probably helped by other events occurring around this time, which would have confirmed the promise being made that China was close to gaining this position of importance within international society. In particular, Chinese president Xi Jinping’s opening speeches at the UN climate change conference in Paris at the end of 2015 and then his 2017 speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos both offered tangible examples that the identity being promised in the discourse was truly being realised (McLean-Dreyfus, 2015). Alongside this, the “decline” of the US was very apparent at this time. This is likely to have also helped to make the identity being promised in the discourse more compelling. This would also have served to take away from the force of the fantasy being produced in the “Revolutionary” discourse, which depended on presenting the US as an Other that was blocking China from achieving a promised regional dominance. The fact that the US seemed a diminished threat to China at this time would therefore have made this fantasy less compelling.

The fantasy produced by the “Stakeholder” discourse then not only promised this attractive identity for China as an influential member of international society, but also offered North Korea as an Other which was standing in the way of this. During the period from late 2015 through until 2017, the almost continual belligerent activity from North Korea is likely to have helped make this aspect of the fantasy appear much more compelling to the Chinese public. North Korea really did appear to be stealing China’s enjoyment of this identity during this period, or as one of the articles analysed above phrased it, to be preventing China from enjoying the “peace and quiet” that it should rightfully obtain as a modern nation integrated into the world.

The fantasies produced by the two identity discourses offered competing visions of what China was becoming and also offered competing Others, in the US and North Korea, to explain why it has not yet achieved this. In the period I looked at, North Korea seems to have been a more compelling Other. This presentation of an Other, and the attractive identity
being promised to China, as an international leader, together helped make the “Stakeholder” discourse more compelling to members of the Chinese public. Eager to see China achieve a full identity as a respected and influential member of the international community, they invested in this discourse and the identity it promised.
5.5 Case Study Conclusions

This chapter has examined short-term foreign policy change in China’s relations with North Korea. It aimed to make sense of those short-term changes in China’s North Korea policy that occurred in 2016 and 2017, which saw China showing greater willingness to cooperate with the international community in taking action against North Korea. The analysis found that these changes in China’s foreign policy occurred at the same time as changes in the dominance within Chinese society of main identity discourses related to North Korea, with a “Stakeholder” identity discourse that was especially being produced by members of the Chinese public becoming much more dominant at this time. It can therefore be argued that the dominance of this “Stakeholder” discourse, which occurred as a result of “bottom up” pressure from the Chinese public, made possible the change in China’s North Korea policy towards more cooperation with international society.

The discourse analysis of samples of People’s Daily articles and Weibo posts conducted in the first step of the analysis found that there were two main identity discourses being expressed in this material, which I labelled as the “Revolutionary” and “Stakeholder” discourses. The “Revolutionary” discourse presented China as a communist and revolutionary state that was seeking to secure its position as a strong and dominant nation in Asia. This identity for the Self was constructed through difference from the US and Japan as Others, whilst it also presented North Korea as being very similar to China and sharing common interests with it. The “Stakeholder” discourse instead presented China as a modern state that is integrated into the international system, behaving responsibly and engaging in cooperative relations with other states. This identity for the Self was constructed through difference from North Korea as an Other. This discourse analysis indicated that these two identity discourses were in debate with each other during the period being analysed, particularly in the public discussions on Weibo, with this debate becoming especially intense at particular times during the four years analysed.

The quantitative text analysis then looked at the changing dominance of these two main discourses, and parts of these discourses, in the complete datasets of the People’s Daily articles and Weibo posts. In the People’s Daily articles, or the official discourse produced by the state, the “Stakeholder” discourse was consistently more dominant, but it was seen to move from being almost equal in dominance with the “Revolutionary”
discourse to being much more dominant after the start of 2016 and through until early 2018. Meanwhile, in the Weibo posts or public discussion of the issue, there were initially several periods where the “Revolutionary” identity discourse was more dominant. Then after the start of 2016 the “Stakeholder” discourse became much more dominant through until early 2018. Overall, this presents a picture of the rise to dominance of the “Stakeholder” discourse after the start of 2016 in both types of material, but particularly in the public discussions of the issue which were taking place on Weibo.

Looking at the changing dominance of different elements of these main discourses, it was seen that a key part of the growing dominance of the “Stakeholder” discourse was the increased presentation of North Korea as an Other that was different to China. Particularly in the Weibo posts, from late 2015 onwards, there was a decline in the use of words suggesting similarity in connection with North Korea, and an increase in the use of words that instead presented it as being very different from, and therefore threatening to China. In contrast, there was a much smaller change in the frequency of words presenting the US as different, although the frequency of words suggesting China and the US shared interests did increase. This might indicate that although the understanding of the US as an Other was more muted in the period when the “Stakeholder” discourse became more dominant, there was only a partial change and this sense of US difference still persisted.

It might be argued that it was because of this continued view of the US as an Other that, in 2018 when the US-China “trade war” and competition again took hold, China’s North Korea policy saw further changes. This lingering view of the US as Other, combined with developments in US-China relations, could have helped the “Revolutionary” discourse to regain greater relative dominance, taking away the pressure on the Chinese government to cooperate with the international community in actions against North Korea and allowing for more freedom of movement in North Korea policy at this time. This could then have helped to make possible the moves from the CCP to improve relations with North Korea seen at this time, with a number of meetings between the Chinese President Xi Jinping and the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un taking place (McCurry, 2019).

However, before this, in the period 2016 and 2017 saw the growing dominance of a “Stakeholder” identity discourse in Chinese society, particularly driven by the understanding of North Korea as an Other. When
this “Stakeholder” discourse became dominant, many elements of it (especially the strong othering of North Korea) were found to be produced more on Weibo than in the People’s Daily articles. This means that the dominance of the identity discourse was largely the result of the public, rather than the result of official state-media. It suggests that the online public had a “bottom up” influence, helping this discourse become dominant in a way that then produced the changes in policy seen. The online public contributed to making the “Stakeholder” discourse dominant within Chinese society, which then placed pressure on the Chinese government to reflect this discourse and made possible the policies taken. These policies saw China cooperating extensively with the US and international community in taking actions against North Korea during 2016 and 2017.

One counterargument against this interpretation might be that the Chinese government’s greater participation with the international community was not related to changes in identity discourses but instead a response to pressure from the US or changes in the behaviour of North Korea. However, this would not explain why China showed much greater willingness to participate at this time than it had after North Korea’s third nuclear test in 2013. Already in 2013, the US had been calling for greater cooperation from China for some time and North Korea had advanced its nuclear programme to the point where its development presented a challenge to China. Another counterargument might accept that changes in Chinese identity discourse made possible the increased cooperation, but suggest that the dominance of the “Stakeholder” discourse was not the result of it being spontaneously produced by the Chinese public. If this discourse had become dominant because it was being produced primarily by state media, however, then many elements of it would have appeared frequently in the People’s Daily articles before they were produced by the public. This did not appear to be the case. Overall, my findings showed that this discourse was produced more frequently by the public.

My analysis then used Lacanian theory to explain why this “Stakeholder” identity discourse became so dominant, or why it resonated with the Chinese public. This analysis found that the “Stakeholder” identity discourse resonated strongly because it produced an effective fantasy which could channel desire for a full identity as well as frustration that this identity could never be achieved. The “Stakeholder” discourse presented a range of master signifiers – “responsible”, “major power”, “justice”, “friendly”, “important” – to promise an identity that China was close
to achieving, as an integrated, influential leader of the international community. It then presented North Korea as an Other which stood in the way of China achieving this promised identity, making it into a scapegoat justifying the lack of a full identity. These characteristics of the “Stakeholder” identity discourse brought it to dominance in the period 2016 and 2017, producing the short-term changes in China’s North Korea policy.

While the “Revolutionary” identity discourse also produced a fantasy that had helped it resonate previously, this appeared less compelling to the public at this time. It relied for much of its force on longstanding presentation of the US and Japan as Others that blocked China from becoming a strong and independent revolutionary state, where this was not apparent during this period. Much more compelling, and fitting with developments taking place at the time, was the way the “Stakeholder” discourse presented North Korea as an Other that prevented China from engaging in harmonious relations with other states. This fantasy was given more force because of the strong appeal of the identity it offered, promising that China was close to becoming an influential and important member of international society. The Chinese public invested in the “Stakeholder” discourse that both promised China was close to obtaining an attractive identity as a responsible major power and gave a satisfying explanation for why this had not yet been achieved.

Understanding China’s North Korea Policy

Looking outside of the period focused on in this chapter, and at the longer-term evolution of China’s North Korea policy, the “Revolutionary” and “Stakeholder” identity discourses will likely continue to compete for dominance within Chinese society, with shifts producing more changes in foreign policy. This could have been the case from 2018 onwards, when China appeared to again change North Korea policy towards renewed support for its neighbour (Khang, 2021). As noted above, I would suggest that this further change in policy may have been made possible by a return to dominance of the “Revolutionary” identity discourse at this time, perhaps because of the increased salience of the threat from the US. However, further analysis of the identity discourses in this period would be necessary to confirm whether or not this was the case. My findings can provide a way to interpret such further shifts in North Korea policy based on identity discourses and their changes in dominance.

My findings also indicate the psychological dynamics that might contribute to the longer-term evolution of China’s policies towards North
Korea. As was discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the short-term changes in China’s foreign policy might be understood as setting the context for subsequent changes that occur. In this way, the changes made to China’s North Korea policy during the period I have analysed may impact its response to developments concerning the Korean Peninsula in the future. The fact that the Chinese public has invested in a particular identity discourse, the “Stakeholder” discourse, can be seen to play a part in this. However, it could do so in different ways. If the public saw events as confirming aspects of the fantasy produced by this discourse, indicating that China really is moving even closer to a promised identity as an important leader of international society, or that North Korea is blocking this identity, then this could lead to the continued dominance of this identity. However, if events do not seem to reflect the elements of fantasy invested in, this may lead to a questioning of the identity discourse and the rise of a different identity.

The analysis I have carried out in this case study provides an alternative way of understanding China’s changing policies towards North Korea during the 2010s from that given by other recent studies. Many of these draw on realist theory to argue that China’s North Korea policies are based primarily on unchanging security interests (J. U. Kim, 2017; Scobell & Cozad, 2014). One recent study takes a defensive realist approach to argue China’s recent policies have been driven by a desire to maintain the status quo (J. U. Kim, 2017). It suggests that this has led to China’s increased participation with UN sanctions from 2016 onwards as an attempt to prevent nuclear proliferation across the region, but that such participation will always stop short of measures that will bring regime collapse. However, this argument does not effectively account for why China’s cooperation with the UN has been increasing and why it has gone beyond limited sanctions to incorporate measures that may bring about changes in the status quo on the Korean Peninsula. My research indicates that there are wider reasons, related to changes in discursively constructed identity, for the changes in China’s policies that have been seen and that as a result these changes are less limited and more likely to be sustained.

Other studies have also explained China’s changes in policy during the mid-2010s as being largely the result of shifts taking place in North Korea (Hoshino & Hiraiwa, 2020; Kong, 2019; Y. Zhang, 2020). Hoshino and Hiraiwa (2020) explain China’s participation with the international community and UN sanctions in 2013 and 2016 as the result of strained relations with North Korea at this time. They suggest that these strains in
the relationship were the result of the fact that North Korea saw the US as less threatening during this period, and had made progress with its nuclear programme, so that it was less dependent on China. Several other studies also argue that changes in China’s policies at this time can be explained by the fact that in this period North Korea was moving ahead with its nuclear programme and rejecting economic reforms in ways that made it appear to be opposing China (Kong, 2019; Y. Zhang, 2020).

However, these accounts that attribute changes in China’s policies to shifts in North Korea do not explain why the changes took place at this time, when these shifts were already occurring earlier. My findings indicate that alongside changes taking place in North Korea and its attitudes to the relationship, the changes in China’s policies in this period were also the result of changes in China’s identity as constructed in discourse, which altered its understanding of its relations with its neighbour. These studies that argue North Korea’s actions are the main determinant of China’s policies also indicate that since 2018, further changes on the North Korean side have meant China has once again pursued closer relations with its neighbour (Kong, 2019; Y. Zhang, 2020). They suggest the tensions in the relationship were short-lived. Although relations do appear to have warmed again since 2018, their explanation of this as based on changes in North Korea’s behaviour may overlook further changes in China’s identity that are also contributing to this. These explanations overlook the role of competing identity discourses within China.

My findings give further support to those studies that have argued changes in societal perceptions may be behind recent changes in China’s North Korea policy (C. P. Chan & Bridges, 2018; Gries, 2012; W. Li & Kim, 2020; Scobell et al., 2019). They reinforce those studies which have argued there are diverse views about relations with North Korea being expressed in China and that the views of the public increasingly differ from those of the CCP (C. P. Chan & Bridges, 2018; Scobell et al., 2019), going beyond these studies to examine how this divergence might impact on policy. They also add to these studies by showing how the debates about North Korea within Chinese society function, the main identity discourses around which these debates are structured, and how changes in the dominance of these discourses then can make possible changes in foreign policy. Like other recent studies (W. Li & Kim, 2020), my findings indicate that recent changes in China’s North Korea policy can be explained by shifts in the societal discourse through which this issue is understood. They also add to this argument by showing how this overall discursive
shift is largely the result of changes in how the Chinese public construct China’s identity in relation to this issue.

In conclusion, this chapter has shown that short-term changes in China’s foreign policy regarding North Korea can be accounted for by looking at the changes to identity discourses underpinning this foreign policy and particularly the influence of the Chinese public in producing these identity changes. There is therefore good reason to continue to look at the discursive production of China’s identity by both the state and wider society as we seek to make sense of China’s evolving approach towards relations with North Korea.
6 Case Study 2: China and the South China Sea, 2014-2018

6.1 Introduction

China’s foreign policy regarding the South China Sea is a key area of its international relations. Its approach to disputed territorial claims and interactions with Southeast Asian regional states and institutions are an important part of its relations with the international order as it grows in power. The South China Sea is also closely connected to China’s relations with the United States and has been identified as a potential focus of hegemonic competition between the two states (Mearsheimer, 2001) as well as one area where the two could engage in conflict. Therefore it is important to understand what is driving China’s foreign policies regarding the South China Sea.

China’s approach towards the South China Sea also presents a good example of the amount of short-term change seen in its foreign policy as it rises. In the past four decades, China has moved between conflictual and cooperative policies towards regional states and in its pursuit of territorial claims regarding contested islands and areas of the South China Sea. These short-term changes in China’s policies towards the South China Sea are puzzling because they do not correspond to changes in relative power, or show China being constrained by economic interdependence, in the way that different IR theories of realism and liberalism would typically predict.

This chapter takes a critical constructivist approach to understanding China’s recent foreign policies concerning the South China Sea and regional states. It seeks to explain these policies by conducting analysis that focuses on the identity discourses that form the context in which foreign policy is being made. The chapter begins by describing the short-term changes in China’s South China Sea policies that have been seen over the past two decades. Then it reviews the literature which has drawn on different theoretical perspectives to explain China’s foreign policy regarding the South China Sea. Following this, it describes the more specific questions (adapted from the overarching research question of this thesis) that are analysed in this case study. The chapter then summarises the methods and materials used to analyse identity discourses regarding China’s foreign policies towards the South China Sea, describing the three steps of
analysis conducted. Then three sub-sections of the chapter detail the analysis in each step and the findings. After each step, a brief concluding passage summarises the findings. The chapter ends with overall conclusions, drawing together the main findings from each step of the analysis.

6.2 Background

In this first section of the chapter, I provide the background for my analysis of China’s foreign policy regarding the South China Sea. First, I describe the different short-term changes in this policy that have been seen during the past four decades, largely focusing on the more recent changes. I then briefly review the existing literature that has sought to explain China’s foreign policies regarding the South China Sea and Southeast Asian states, discussing the limitations of these accounts. In doing so, this section establishes the questions that my analysis seeks to answer.

6.2.1 Short-term change in China’s foreign policy in the South China Sea

China has shown a relatively large amount of short-term change in its foreign policies regarding the South China Sea since it began to rise in 1978, with shifts between more conflictual and cooperative policies occurring in the space of a number of years and very few periods where it appeared to have a more settled trajectory. These frequent short-term changes have continued during the past two decades (see Chubb, 2021). The 1980s and first half of the 1990s were marked by aggressive action from China and attempts to consolidate its claims to disputed territory in the region (Garver, 1992), but then China switched to greater cooperation with other regional states. In the 2000s, China adopted mostly cooperative policies. In 2002, it cooperated with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in making a Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (F. Zhang, 2016), and in 2005 reached a number of different agreements on joint development with the Philippines and Vietnam (Xue, 2019).

Then in the early 2010s, or some argue after 2008 (Chubb, 2021), China changed policy and began to adopt more confrontational and aggressive policies which continued until 2016 when China again began to pursue more cooperation with regional states (Xue, 2019; Zhang, 2016). After 2018, China once again displayed confrontational activity, including
a standoff with Vietnam (Pearson & Vu, 2019) and the increased use of coast guard and naval vessels to patrol the region (Kawashima, 2021).

To make sense of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy regarding the South China Sea and regional states, this thesis focused on the period from 2014 to the end of 2018 and particular short-term changes occurring in this time period. Because the purpose of my research is not to provide a full catalogue of the specific policies adopted during this period, but rather to show general short-term changes in policy direction, I to some extent rely on the existing literature for my understanding of specific foreign policies adopted. In the early years of the period from 2014 to 2018, research largely agrees that China displayed aggressive and confrontational policies (some of which started earlier) such as launching programmes of artificial island building on disputed territory and increased coastguard patrols (Wirth, 2020; F. Zhang, 2019).

Then in mid 2016, China appeared to change to adopting more cooperative policies towards regional states. In August 2017, China and ASEAN agreed on a framework text of the Code of Conduct and then formally launched negotiations in November 2017 (F. Zhang, 2016). In the same year, China and Vietnam reached a consensus on trade and maritime cooperation and issued a joint statement and China and the Philippines agreed to a bilateral consultation mechanism, while in 2018 China and the Philippines also signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Oil and Gas Development (S. Xue, 2019).

There are two questions related to short-term foreign policy change here. First, there is the question of why, just before this period began, China switched from its previously restrained approach to take a more aggressive stance. Second, there is the question of why, having pursued more aggressive actions, in the middle of 2016 China then changed back to more cooperative policies towards other regional states.

6.2.2 Existing literature about China’s policies towards the South China Sea

There has been an extensive amount of literature looking at China’s policies towards the South China Sea and Southeast Asia, as well as particular aspects of this. These studies have taken a range of different theoretical approaches to understanding China’s South China Sea policies and there remains ongoing debate about which theory best accounts for these (Lim
There are those that draw on realist ideas about power and security in their explanations of China’s policies in the South China Sea. Several studies use offensive realist theory to argue China’s “assertiveness” in the South China Sea is a result of the ongoing power shift and its attempts to secure survival under conditions of anarchy by gaining controlling hegemony over the region (Buszynski, 2012; Friedberg, 2014; Mearsheimer, 2001; Tkacik, 2018). However, a problem with this explanation is that China’s increased aggression in the South China Sea does not correspond to its growing power (Chubb, 2021; Turcsányi, 2018). As Chubb shows, some of China’s most aggressive actions in the South China Sea took place during the 1980s and 1990s when it was considerably less powerful (see also Garver, 1992). China’s capabilities were also already significant by the early 2000s, long before it began to show the “assertiveness” that these authors suggest can be explained by the power shift. These studies do not explain why at times China has also adopted more cooperative policies in connection with the South China Sea.

Other studies instead draw on a defensive realist understanding of state behaviour which sees states as seeking security by avoiding security dilemmas and spirals of escalating tensions. These studies therefore argue that China’s policies towards the South China Sea can be explained by its desire to avoid taking actions that increase tensions (Blazevic, 2012; Fravel, 2011; Lim, 2011). For instance, Fravel (2011) argues that China has had a consistent South China Sea policy based on a strategy of consolidating its claims whilst also making efforts to prevent any escalation of tensions with the other claimants to disputed territory in the South China Sea. Li similarly asserts that China’s policies towards the region, and its moderate cooperation, are driven by a consistent logic of “balance-prevention” where it seeks to prevent other states from forming an alliance against it (Y. Lim, 2011, p.310). However, an issue with these accounts of China’s behaviour based on a defensive realist security-seeking logic is that they see China as seeking to preserve a status quo in a way that makes them of limited use to explain why China’s policies towards the South China Sea change at different times.

These security-seeking explanations also do not acknowledge that there are different kinds of threats against which China might be trying to secure itself. If the main threat to China is from the current dominant
hegemon, or the US, then it would arguably make more sense for China to cooperate with other regional states than to challenge them over territory within the South China Sea. These complexities mean that neither the “power maximization” theory of offensive realism nor the escalation avoidance of defensive realism can be simplistically applied to explaining China’s foreign policy in the South China Sea. It is instead necessary to adopt an approach that accounts for the different ways in which power and security interests might be understood by decision makers within China.

Rather than security interests, other studies have argued that China’s behaviour in the region is best explained by economic interests. However, these accounts might still be seen as drawing on mercantilist realism rather than liberalism. Contrary to liberal theories, which typically see economic interests as driving trade and cooperation, here these interests are mainly used to explain China’s aggression in the South China Sea. Economic interests become a question of national security and access to resources that might also fall under a realist account. These arguments generally point to the fact that the South China Sea is rich in natural resources, is a main source of fish for consumption in China, and is an important shipping channel. They argue that this explains why China has sought control over the region, adopting policies that obstruct economic activity or deny access to other states (Tkacik, 2018; Xue, 2019). However, this account also only explains some of China’s behaviour in the region and does not account for its extensive cooperation and pursuit of joint development.

While economic interests may be determining China’s behaviour in the region it is not clear why these should always be linked to aggressive action. China may also consider joint development as a more effective way to pursue these interests (Xue, 2019). In addition, it may be necessary for China to balance its economic interests in the South China Sea with its interests in trade with other regional nations. This understanding of China’s behaviour as being determined by economic interests does not distinguish between different kinds of economic interests. It does not recognise how China may act on these interests in various ways at different times. It therefore only offers a limited explanation of China’s range of foreign policies with regards to the South China Sea.

Another group of studies have looked to different domestic factors to explain China’s policies towards the South China Sea (Jakobson, 2014; Loher, 2016; Nie, 2018; Zeng et al., 2015; F. Zhang, 2019). Amongst these studies, there are some that argue that bureaucratic politics within China
provides a good explanation for China’s changing policies towards the region in recent decades (Jakobson, 2014; F. Zhang, 2019). These argue that ongoing competition between different institutions within China, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and People’s Liberation Army (PLA), leads to the shifts between more cooperative policies and more conflictual actions seen. However, while this does go some ways towards accounting for China’s shifting foreign policy, it does not really account for specific changes seen or describe to what extent the bureaucracy is behind these.

Other studies looking at domestic factors have also argued that domestic debates taking place in China may play a role in shaping its changing approach to the South China Sea. In this respect, they have studied debates over issues such as the definition of its “core interests” (Zeng et al., 2015) and how to define the “Nine-Dashed Line” that demarcates China’s sovereign territory (Z. Wang, 2015). However, while these studies are useful in uncovering how different competing discourses are involved in China’s South China Sea policy, they often do not conclusively show in what ways these discourses produce the foreign policy changes seen at different times.

This points to the literature that argues China’s policies regarding the South China Sea can be explained by its identity (R. Li, 2016; Loher, 2016; Nie, 2018; Wirth, 2020). A study by Nie (2018) views the debates taking place domestically in China as contests over identity and argues short-term changes in its policies regarding the South China Sea are the result of two identities that exist simultaneously and compete with each other. Although this study is useful in conceptualising these debates as related to identity, it does not really show how these different identities are being produced in China or what accounts for their changing strength to produce changes in policy. More effective in this respect are those studies that look at Chinese identity discourses related to the South China Sea. Loher (2016) explains the change to more antagonistic policy in the South China Sea during 2014 as the result of how several incidents which occurred at this time led to the emergence of a securitizing discourse in China. However, the study does not then go beyond this to show whether other discourses produced the more cooperative policies China adopted either side of 2014.

There have also been studies arguing that a “major power” identity discourse, which was domestically constructed in China, produced the conflictual policies adopted from 2012 onwards (R. Li, 2016; Wirth,
The article by Wirth (2020) is particularly interesting in relation to my approach because it suggests psychological or emotional reasons why this “major power” discourse resonated so strongly within Chinese society during this period. However, while these accounts suggest identity discourses have resulted in particular foreign policies, they do not describe how these discourses are changing to explain short-term changes in policy seen. My research aims to build on this kind of identity-based analysis by looking at debates over identity within Chinese society and the way in which changes in identity discourses may make possible the changes in foreign policy.

To summarise this review of the literature on China’s policy in the South China Sea, research which has used mainstream IR theory or looked at domestic factors has only been able to partly explain short-term changes in China’s policy. Literature that takes an identity-based approach, and particularly that looking at identity discourses produced within China, offers a promising approach but has also been limited in its ability to make sense of short-term changes in China’s South China Sea policy such as those seen during 2014 and 2015, and those seen after the middle of 2016. My research therefore adopts a critical constructivist approach and looks in detail at the underlying identity discourses being produced by the Chinese state and members of the public, examining how these make possible the policies which China adopts towards the region during the period from 2014 to 2018.
6.3 Method

6.3.1 Research questions

The general research questions guiding this thesis can be rephrased for this case study:

How can we use critical constructivist theory to make sense of the short-term change in China’s foreign policy a) between 2012 and mid 2016, when China adopted more conflictual policies in the South China Sea? And b) In mid-2016, when China changed to adopt more cooperative policies towards Southeast Asian regional states?

- What changes occurred in Chinese identity discourses relating to the South China Sea (and Southeast Asia more broadly) that may have produced these short-term changes in China’s foreign policy?

- What role did the Chinese public play in producing these changes in identity discourses and so the changes in China’s foreign policy?

- Why did specific identity discourses, that made possible certain foreign policies, become dominant or resonant in Chinese society at these times?

6.3.2 Method of analysis

In this second case study, I again adopted a critical constructivist approach and aimed to explain the recent short-term changes in China’s foreign policies regarding the South China Sea between 2014 and 2018 by looking at changes in the underlying identity discourses which form the context for these policies. The analysis used a subset of the overall material, selected because it contained the keyword “South China Sea” (南海 nanhai). This was 3302 articles from People’s Daily (between 01/01/14 and 31/12/18) and 158,899 posts from Weibo (between 01/10/14/ and 31/12/18). It followed the three analytical steps described in detail in the methods chapter (Chapter 4). A summary of these analytical steps is given again here:
STEP 1 – Qualitative: Discourse analysis to recover the main identity discourses. I carried out discourse analysis on *People’s Daily* articles randomly sampled from each year between 2014 and 2018 (approximately three sets of one article randomly chosen for each month of the year). I then carried out discourse analysis of random samples of 100 *Weibo* posts from each year between 2015 and 2018, and for the final quarter of 2014. For this analysis, I selected a smaller subset of *Weibo* posts containing the keyword “South China Sea issue” (南海问题) to ensure that the posts were largely relevant to the topic. The discourse analysis focused on how the Chinese Self was constructed through difference from Others, identifying keywords doing this. Discourse analysis was continued abductively on more samples until a framework of main identity discourses was established.

STEP 2a – Quantitative: Co-occurrence analysis. I used the computer-assisted text analysis package *Quanteda* to count the frequency with which certain keywords, found during the discourse analysis of Step 1, co-occurred in the two complete datasets of the *People’s Daily* and *Weibo* material alongside the terms “China”, “the Philippines”, “Vietnam”, “the United States”, and “ASEAN”. This was a way of analysing the changing way in which the Chinese Self and important Others were being constructed in the two types of material, as well as the changing dominance of the main identity discourses.

STEP 2b – Quantitative: Measuring the changing dominance of the main identity discourses. For this step, 35 keywords found to be associated with each main identity discourses were taken as a group. The computer text analysis package *Quanteda* was used to count the number of each of these groups of words that appeared in the articles and posts, then to classify the articles as being one of the main identity discourses. The number of articles or posts of each main identity discourse in each month between October 2014 and December 2018 was then summed.

STEP 3 - Lacanian analysis to explain the dominance of the main identity discourses. In this final step, Lacanian theory about the
psychological reasons why people invest in particular identity discourses was used to analyse why the main discourses dominated at particular times. This involved close examination of texts taken to be representative of these identity discourses. In looking at the texts, I analysed the way in which they produced fantasies which promised the recovery of a full identity for China, through the presentation of “master signifiers”, and deployed particular Others as the reasons why this full identity had not yet been achieved.
6.4 Analysis

6.4.1 STEP 1: Discourse analysis to recover the main identity discourses

The first step of the analysis in this case study involved discourse analysis of samples of articles and posts to recover the main identity discourses being expressed in these articles. This step sought to answer the analytical question:

- How are the state and the Chinese public constructing China’s identity online in relation to the issue of the South China Sea through juxtaposition of the Self / Other?

In the same way as in the first case study, I took samples from the two subsets of *People’s Daily* articles and *Weibo* posts with the keyword “South China Sea” (南

From the *People’s Daily* news articles, I took two samples of 12 articles from each year between 2014 and 2018, using the random sampling method described in the methods chapter (Chapter 4). From the opinion articles, I took one sample of approximately 12 articles from each year, where for some months there were no opinion articles.

From the *Weibo* posts, I took a random sample of 100 posts from each year 2015 to 2018, with another sample of 100 posts for the fourth quarter of 2014 when the dataset began. Here, because the data with the keyword “South China Sea” was found to contain quite a lot of irrelevant posts (南
d part of the name of a region in Guangzhou and also part of the name of the Chinese presidential compound), I took a second sample of 100 posts from each year with the more specific keyword “South China Sea Issue” (南海问题).

The discourse analysis of these sampled articles and posts was carried out as described in full in the methods chapter (Chapter 4). I primarily looked for ways in which an identity for the Chinese Self was being constructed through difference from Others. This entailed reading these texts and marking within them words or phrases that were used to describe the identity of China, as well as words or phrases that were used to describe other states in ways that were different (e.g., “China is a big and powerful nation, rising in power all the time, while Vietnam is a small country that...
follows the *declining US*”). I also noted where the texts contained expressions suggesting similarities between China and other nations. Coding of the articles and posts was performed using the *MaxQDA* software, allowing me to look at how the words and phrases grouped together to show certain clusters of words associated with the Chinese Self and the various Others being described. In this discourse analysis, I worked abductively – moving between discourse analysis of several rounds of samples and an emerging framework that contained the main identity discourses.

Through this discourse analysis, two main identity discourses for China were found to be being presented within the *People’s Daily* articles and *Weibo* posts. I labelled these main identity discourses, based on their general form, as the “Great Power” discourse and the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse.

In the description of this analysis that follows, I begin by presenting the ways in which the first main identity discourse (the “Great Power” discourse) was found to appear in the two types of material. I first present the way in which this main discourse was expressed in the *People’s Daily* articles and then move on to discuss the way in which the discourse appeared in the *Weibo* posts. For each type of material, I begin by discussing more detailed analysis of particular articles or posts to show how the identities are constructed within them. Then I present tables containing example statements showing how these identities were reproduced in a larger number of texts. After presenting the first main identity discourse, I then go on to present how the second main identity discourse (the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse) was found to appear in the two types of material, again beginning with the *People’s Daily* articles before moving on to the *Weibo* posts.

**Discourse 1: The “Great Power” discourse**

The first main identity discourse found in the material presented China as a rising power which has grown strong and is able to prevail over the other states in the region and defend itself against enemies such as Japan and the US. This identity for the Chinese Self is constructed through differentiation from a variety of Others including Southeast Asian states, which are described as being small and weak in comparison, and also the US and Japan. These Others are presented as both being very different from China and also as acting to challenge its identity as a “strong” power in a range
of ways. They are described as refusing to recognise this identity or seeking to prevent China from exercising its power or stopping it from further increasing in power.

The “Great Power” discourse in the People’s Daily Articles

In the People’s Daily articles, while this identity discourse is apparent, the presentation of it is more restrained than that found on Weibo. A group of articles in the sample from People’s Daily contained articulations which constructed an identity for the Chinese Self as a “major power” through juxtaposition with the presentation of Southeast Asian states as Others. A good example of this is an article from 15 June 2015, which presents China as a “major power” that is different from Southeast Asian regional states and suggests that these regional states do not respect their positions within the hierarchy. The article contains the following passages (my italics highlighting key phrases):

Clearly different from the Philippines, China behaves as a responsible major power, considering not only its own interests, but also all parties involved in the South China Sea issue. Ambassador Wang Min, the head of the Chinese delegation to the Conference of Parties, put forward three Chinese proposals on how to achieve sustainable marine development. The first of these is to establish a sense of a community of common destiny for the ocean. […]

Unluckily, recently there have been some countries that have sought to stir up the South China Sea issue, breaking the South China Sea’s peace and stability; they have not only not conformed to China’s rational proposals, but on the contrary have made irresponsible remarks criticized China’s contribution, recklessly smearing China. This kind of selfish behaviour hinders the normal cooperation of other countries and harms collective interests. These countries and their frequent hype about the South China Sea issue, does not at all contribute correct action to the regional peace. There is huge room for cooperation among countries in the construction of a maritime community of common destiny […]

China puts forward constructive proposals, but this is not only reliant on China’s efforts alone to be realized. Related countries also must gather together a collective understanding, controlling differences, and moving in the same direction.

The article constructs an identity for the Chinese Self as a “responsible major power”, where the meaning of “responsible” is defined

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69 关注海洋 各国应多干正事(望海楼). Focus on the Ocean States Should Do More Correct Things (Wanghailou), People’s Daily, 15/06/15 (Appendix B1.1)
through the presentation of Southeast Asian nations as Others that are acting irresponsibly. These Others make “irresponsible” remarks, act “recklessly”, and seek to “stir things up”. The difference between the Chinese Self and the Philippines is particularly emphasised here, with the phrase “clearly different from the Philippines” starting one paragraph. Passages also construct an identity for the Chinese Self as acting lawfully or correctly through a contrast with Southeast Asian nations who do not “contribute correct action”. The Chinese Self is constructed as being “rational” through a contrast with the implied irrationality of these Others. China is presented as a leader that makes positive contributions to the international order, in contrast with these Others that display “selfish behaviour”.

The article presents these explicit differences between China and Southeast Asian nations in its construction of the Chinese Self. There is also an implied difference between China as a “major” power and these Others which are smaller and less significant in the international system. In general, the article presents the Southeast Asian nations as being Others that are different from China because they are “not conforming” to its identity as a ‘major power’. These Others do not know their place in the hierarchy that is part of China’s identity construction. They refuse to recognise China’s identity and therefore act to block it from fully achieving this. Through their difference, these Southeast Asian Others therefore become threatening to the Chinese Self and its identity.

Alignment with China’s traditional Others

Another way in which Southeast Asian states are presented as being very different from China is in their refusal to oppose, or their alignment with, China’s more longstanding Others – Japan and the US. A good example of this is an article from 4 January 2014, which contains the following sections:

These above-described actions should receive international society’s strong criticism. But looking at government behaviour, apart from China and South Korea, the Southeast Asian countries that were poisoned by Japan in the Second World War keep silent […]

“Southeast Asian countries’ considerations are all about current benefit and they do not think too much about big issues. There is an expression

70 东南亚，你为什么对安倍噤若寒蝉? Southeast Asia, why do you keep silent about Abe?, People’s Daily, 04/01/14 (Appendix B1.2)
'See profit and forget meaning'. It is not an exaggeration to use this to describe the Philippines and this type of country," says Chinese Academy of Science’s Japan Researcher Gaohong […]

"Economic cooperation is one of the means. At the same time, Abe has also played the "value diplomacy" card to promote the China threat theory, and has provided Southeast Asian countries with patrol ships to contain China on the South China Sea issue."

Southeast Asian nations are presented as very different from China because, rather than sharing an experience and response to WW2, they do not condemn Japan for its actions. Unlike China, they consider current benefit as more important than seeking justice. They also cooperate with Japan to act as an Other which seeks to block China’s realisation of its identity as a strong nation, acting "to contain China on the South China Sea issue". Another article from 11 July 2014 focuses on Vietnam specifically and similarly presents it as being different from China in refusing to condemn Japan’s militarization and instead seeking to collaborate with it to patrol the South China Sea and contain China’s activity there. In this way, many articles expressing this identity discourse present Southeast Asian nations as different because of their cooperation with Japan.

The articles also present these Southeast Asian nations as Others because of their alignment with the US against China. An example of this is an article from 18 February 2016, which contains the following passage:

The development path that some people have outlined for the relationship between the United States and ASEAN is far from constructive in direction. People have noticed that before and after the opening of the meeting, the Philippines insisted on including the South China Sea arbitration case on the agenda, and urged all parties to write "arbitration" into the outcome document, with the intention that ASEAN "endorsed" the arbitration unilaterally initiated. At the same time, Washington also intends to push ASEAN countries to reach a consensus on this.

Here the Philippines, and the rest of ASEAN, become an Other because of their collaboration with the US, something which sees them together seeking to challenge China’s actions through “arbitration” in The Hague.

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71 日本外相访越月底成行 日拟为越提供大型巡逻舰, Japanese Foreign Minister’s visit to Vietnam takes place at the end of the month, Japan plans to provide Vietnam with large patrol ships, People’s Daily, 11/07/14 (Appendix B1.3)
72 美发展同东盟关系要端正心态 (钟声) The US must retain a positive attitude to develop relations with ASEAN (Voice of the Times), People’s Daily, 18/02/16 (Appendix B1.4)
The nations of Southeast Asia are presented as being different from China because they choose to work with the US to prevent China from achieving its “revival” as the strong power within the region.

An article from 2 February 2015 also offers an example of the way in which the US and Southeast Asian nations are together presented as Others which are very different from China and, through their cooperation, act to challenge China’s identity as a dominant power in the region:

As everyone knows, recently the South China Sea region has absolutely not been stable. Some countries around the South China Sea, ignoring their own previous clearly stated positions, over the past few decades have continuously eroded our country’s territory in the South China Sea and have encroached on our country’s economic interests. Responding to this, the United States proposed last year that the parties to the dispute should take the “Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea” reached in 2002 as a basis, and demand that all parties not take actions that violate the “status quo”. This aims to turn other countries’ violations of our country’s territory into an “accomplished” fact, pressuring our country into accepting the “actuality” of already received harm.

At the same time, the US with its “Pivot to Asia” is pushing its hand in. In the context of global military contraction and continued decline in military expenditures, it still emphasises the military presence of its armed forces in the Asia-Pacific region. In a recent period, the US has continuously shown “muscle” and not only conducted high-intensity reconnaissance investigations against our country, but also expanded its alliances and partnerships in this region, and objectively endorsed some other claimant countries in the South China Sea for their continued infringements against us.

Therefore, recently the South China Sea region has not been peaceful for two reasons: countries in the region have continued to infringe rights, and the major powers outside the region have intervened in the affairs of the South China Sea, wishing for the whole world to be in chaos. This in turn stimulates the claimants in the region, making them more confident and making them feel that they can do whatever they want. Obviously, an important reason for the unrest in the South China Sea is the way that the United States has damaged the situation, stirring up troubles and protecting shortcomings for personal gain. This has made conflicts that might have been resolved through direct negotiation between the countries involved in the South China Sea dispute more complicated.

The “countries in the region” and the “major powers” outside the region are conflated into one Other which acts to oppose China’s interests. An

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73 美令马前卒搅乱南海气数已尽 辱华伎俩贻笑大方, The United States has ordered pawns to disrupt the South China Sea, People's Daily, 02/02/15 (Appendix B1.5)
article from 2 June 2015\textsuperscript{74}, which is a transcript of an interview by the \textit{Wall Street Journal} journalist Adam Horvath with the then Chinese Ambassador to the US, Cui Tiankai, also presents this discourse:

Cui Tiankai: […] We are talking about the [China] South China Sea, separated from China by a short distance. If the US side does not have any intention, why does it need to do these things?

Horvath: I think you know the answer, because the US has alliance relations with some of China’s neighbours. They have their own interests in the region.

Cui Tiankai: According to this interpretation, it means that the alliance between the United States and these countries is essentially for anti-China purposes. If these military alliances are committed to maintaining regional common security and cooperating with all regional countries, then they should not do these things now. The only explanation is that these military alliances see China as an adversary or even an enemy. This is the most dangerous.

This identity discourse therefore presents both Southeast Asian nations and the US as Others which are very different from China, pursuing a different kind of regional order from that which is sought by China and challenging its identity as an increasingly strong and dominant power in the region. The table below (Table 6.1) gives more examples of how this identity discourse is expressed in articles from the sample analysed. The terms that are marked in bold are keywords associated with this identity discourse.

\textsuperscript{74} 天凯: 对美方在南海问题上过度反应感到担忧, Tiankai: Concerned about the U.S. overreaction on the South China Sea issue, \textit{People’s Daily}, 2/06/2015 (Appendix B1.6)
## Table 6.1: Statements of difference between China and Southeast Asian nations in People's Daily articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>article_140408_20</td>
<td>不是中国，而是菲律宾，在过去多年对中国的主权岛礁一再实施侵蚀，包括在1999年有意将坦克登陆舰在仁爱礁触礁。这一系列行为构成了对中国领土完整和主权的严重侵犯</td>
<td>It is not China, but the Philippines, which has repeatedly eroded China’s sovereign islands and reefs in the past years, including in 1999 when a tank landing ship struck a reef in the Second Thomas Shoal</td>
<td>The Philippines is presented as an Other that is challenging China’s sovereignty. Because this sovereignty is considered a core part of what China is, the Philippines is therefore also challenging its identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_140527_123</td>
<td>美国…最近公然升级对越挑战中国主权和权益的偏袒</td>
<td>The United States has recently blatantly escalated its partiality towards Vietnam and the Philippines in challenging China’s sovereignty and rights.</td>
<td>The Philippines is described as an Other because it sides with the US. It challenges the sovereignty and identity of China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_140401_512</td>
<td>菲律宾近年对黄岩岛提出主权要求，并向国际法庭提起诉讼</td>
<td>The Philippines has filed a claim for sovereignty over the Scarborough Shoal in recent years and has filed a lawsuit in the International Court of Justice</td>
<td>The Philippines is presented as an Other because, through the lawsuit, it is challenging Chinese sovereignty over islands. Therefore it is challenging an aspect of China’s identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_140401_512</td>
<td>以上种种迹象表明，菲律宾主导的这起诉讼，更像是一场自娱自乐</td>
<td>All the above signs indicate that the Philippines-led lawsuit is more like a self-entertaining solo drama, which is doomed to end in failure.</td>
<td>The Philippines is presented to be acting on its own and to be separate to the rest of international society. It is therefore made to seem a different</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Textual Representation</td>
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<tr>
<td>141126_13</td>
<td>Continuous attempts to accumulate facts to challenge the status quo should be condemned”, as the Japanese PM’s first visit to an Asian Security Summit, Abe made a speech, criticising China for the air defence identification zone and regarding the South China Sea. In the territorial sovereignty dispute in the South China Sea, Abe also expressed support for Vietnam and the Philippines, which are opposed to China, and have strengthened their containment against China.</td>
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<tr>
<td>141215_99</td>
<td>It pointed out the illegality of the Philippines' unilateral submission of the South China Sea disputes to international arbitration, and reiterated China's willingness to resolve disputes with neighbouring countries in the South China Sea through consultations and negotiations on the basis of respecting historical facts and international law.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Translation</td>
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<tr>
<td>article_140109_469</td>
<td>US and Philippine naval forces participated in the joint amphibious landing exercise between the two countries.</td>
<td>The Philippines is different because of its cooperation with the US. The two countries collaborate against China.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_140401_82</td>
<td>China will never sit back and watch any provocations by the Philippines attempting to invade The Second Thomas Shoal, and will resolutely defend China’s legitimate rights and interests.</td>
<td>The Philippines is described as an Other because of how it challenges China’s rights / sovereignty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_140401_82</td>
<td>[The Philippines] is the provocative party and creator of disturbance</td>
<td>The Philippines is presented as being an Other that is different to China because of the way it acts provocatively and disturbs the stability of the region. This is in implied contrast to a Chinese Self that seeks to provide order to the region.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_140401_82</td>
<td>Regarding the Philippines’ raised arbitration, the Chinese side from the start has had the position that it did not accept, does not participate [...] We urge the Philippines to look at things from the perspective of regional stability, to stop incorrectly applying law, and to return to the negotiation track</td>
<td>The Philippines is presented as different from China, pursuing destabilising international arbitration vs. acting in a way that promotes regional stability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article</td>
<td>Textual Content</td>
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<tr>
<td>China has an indisputable right to the Nansha islands and the nearby sea. The actions that China has taken are all within its rights, and are not of concern to the Philippines.</td>
<td>The Philippines is presented as an Other because it critiques China’s actions and challenges its sovereignty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The above actions of the Philippines are in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and are a serious infringement of China’s territorial sovereignty and maritime rights.</td>
<td>The Philippines is depicted as an Other to both China and the International Community. It acts in ways which conflict with both international society and also China’s interests.</td>
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<tr>
<td>So many people are dissatisfied. Even for allies like the Philippines, the US warships and aircraft deliberately invade their territorial waters and internal waters without asking... To gain the support of the US the Philippines is willing to swallow its voice on the sovereignty issue.</td>
<td>The Philippines is presented as being different because it supports the US and accepts its presence in the region, it therefore implicitly differs from China which seeks the US exit from Asia so that it can dominate the region itself.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Philippines and Vietnam continue to occupy China’s Nansha reefs and islands and construct buildings there.</td>
<td>The Philippines is presented as an Other to a Chinese Self that seeks to be dominant and unchallenged because of how it takes away sovereignty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article ID</td>
<td>Content</td>
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<tr>
<td>article_150615_528</td>
<td>Building momentum on international occasions is a common tactic used by the Philippines to disrupt the South China Sea...... The goal is very clear, that is, to confuse people, attract attention, and put pressure on China's legitimate actions in safeguarding its sovereign rights and interests. The Philippines is presented as an Other because of how it challenges China’s sovereignty and disrupts the situation in the South China Sea. This therefore contradicts an identity for China as the unchallenged, dominant power in the region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>article_150727_104</td>
<td>&quot;Suppose, around the Nansha Islands, there is an armed conflict between China and the Philippines. The United States is on the side of the Philippines under the US-Philippines Mutual Assistance Treaty. China may plant mines in the waters of the Nansha Islands. Does this state of affairs count as a crisis state? &quot; The Philippines is made into an Other because of how it acts in the South China Sea, and also because it cooperates with the US to challenge China’s position in the region.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_160310_425</td>
<td>The Philippines continues to behave illegally, unfaithfully and unreasonably, further exposing the farce behind the scenes and political figures. Conspiracy will not change the fairness of the majority of people’s The Philippines is presented as an Other because it acts illegally and unreasonably in contrast to China as reasonable and legal. Its actions challenge the “truth” that China presents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article ID</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Other Consideration</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_160409_309</td>
<td>This year the United States has allocated more than 120 million dollars in military aid to the Philippines. This is the largest military assistance in about 15 years. In addition, the Philippines is negotiating with the United States to get a fourth &quot;Hamilton&quot; class patrol ship.</td>
<td>The Philippines is presented as an Other because of how it collaborates with the US and patrols the South China Sea, therefore challenging China’s identity as dominant and unchallenged in this region.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_160715_359</td>
<td>The South China Sea Arbitration Tribunal, based on the illegal actions and demands of the Aquino III government of the Philippines, announced the so-called arbitration results, allowing the South China Sea to cause trouble. An outrageous and absurd ruling made some anti-China forces excited.</td>
<td>The statement makes the Philippines an Other because it acts in illegal ways vs. China’s legality. It challenges sovereignty, and it is “anti-China”, therefore it is implied it seeks to challenge China’s identity and development.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_161008_781</td>
<td>He also stated that he will continue to study the possibility of signing a troop visit agreement with Japan. If an agreement is reached, the Japanese Self Guard aircraft and ships will be able to use Philippine bases to refuel and supply, and conduct</td>
<td>Here the Philippines is made into a different Other because it cooperates with Japan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Vietnam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>article_140711_477</td>
<td>而是日媒关注与 中国争夺南海主权的越南要求日本提供大型巡逻舰的问题。</td>
<td>Japanese media is examining the issue of Vietnam, which is vying with China for sovereignty in the South China Sea and has requested a large-scale patrol ship in Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_140711_477</td>
<td>以体现日本与越南保持紧密合作针对中国海洋活动的愿望。</td>
<td>In order to reflect Japan’s desire to maintain close cooperation with Vietnam targeted at China’s marine activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_140606_42</td>
<td>越南的做法是企图倒打一耙。我在昨天的记者会上已经向大家介绍，中方有关船只是在中建南钻井作业平台附近执行护航安保任务，处于防守状态，是越方船只奔袭一百多海里进入有关海域。</td>
<td>Vietnam’s approach is to try to beat them up. I already told everyone at the press conference yesterday that the ships from China are performing escort security tasks near the China Construction South Drilling Platform, and they are in a defensive state. Vietnamese ships rushed more than 100 nautical miles into the relevant waters, attempting to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statement makes Vietnam into an Other because it competes for sovereignty with China, and cooperates with Japan.

Vietnam is presented as cooperating with Japan and seeking to curtail China’s maritime activities. It therefore acts in ways that conflicts with China.

The statement depicts Vietnam as a threatening Other that endangers China’s operations in the South China Sea. It constructs the Chinese Self as defensive, rational in contrast to Vietnam which is aggressive and irrational.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>China's Actions</th>
<th>Vietnam's Actions</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>140716_391</td>
<td>企图强行 <strong>冲撞</strong> 中方守卫船只，严重 <strong>危害</strong> 中方船只</td>
<td>force a <strong>collision</strong> with the guarding ship in the centre, seriously <strong>endangering</strong> the ship in the centre.</td>
<td>China is firmly opposed to Vietnam's <strong>unreasonable interference</strong> with the operations of Chinese enterprises, and has taken necessary measures to maintain operational safety.</td>
<td>Vietnam is presented as irrational and interfering. It is described in a way that makes it present a threat to China’s identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140716_391</td>
<td>中方对越方无理干扰中国企业作业坚决反对，并为维护作业安全采取了必要措施。</td>
<td></td>
<td>After the start of the operation, Vietnam dispatched a large number of ships, including armed ships. <strong>Illegal enforcement interfered</strong> with the operations in the country. Underwater special personell such as &quot;frogmen&quot; were dispatched to the sea area, and a large number of <strong>obstacles</strong> such as fishing boats and floating objects were deployed.</td>
<td>Vietnam is described as acting illegally and aggressively. It is presented to challenge the smooth operations of China’s companies and therefore to be a challenge to China’s economic identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141027_339</td>
<td>中方对中越关系转圜进程做出的最新努力 [...] 而对于改善中越关系，越方应该拿出 <strong>更多诚意</strong>。</td>
<td>China’s latest efforts to transform China-Vietnam relations [...] Vietnam should show <strong>more sincerity</strong> in improving China-Vietnam relations.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vietnam is described as an Other that acts in insincere ways and does not seek cooperation. It acts in conflict to China’s interests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The “Great Power” discourse in the Weibo posts

A similar identity discourse, which constructs a powerful and rising Chinese Self through difference from Southeast Asian nations, as well as the US and Japan, was found expressed in the Weibo posts. Particularly during the first three years of the period analysed (2014-2016), this identity discourse is expressed in many posts in strong terms. These posts constructed an identity for the Chinese Self as a major power, that was increasingly strong and dominant in the region, through juxtaposition with the presentation of Southeast Asian nations as Others. A number of posts constructed the Chinese Self as being big and powerful by presenting Southeast Asian nations as being small and weak in contrast. Two examples are posts that were made on 20 May 2015\(^{75}\) and 20 October 2015\(^{76}\) (my italics highlighting key phrases):

Reply: At present, the possibility of military confrontation between China and Vietnam on land is very small, *Vietnam has learned about the mighty power of the Chinese army*, patrolling borders to strengthen communication, and there are fewer misjudgements. The crux is currently in the South China Sea, where [China] must *suppress Vietnam’s provocative arrogance*. [20/05/15]

#South China Sea Situation# [China introduces a new way of thinking for resolving the South China Sea issue] The US intervenes in both soft and hard ways in the South China Sea. *The small nations of the South China Sea are unceasingly calling out*. China needs to teach these countries and make them stop acting provocatively [20/10/15]

These two posts both construct an identity for China as big and powerful (having “mighty power”) through contrast with the description of Southeast Asian Others as “small” and weak. These Southeast Asian nations are presented as Others that challenge China’s great power identity, showing “provocative arrogance”, “unceasingly calling out”, and “acting provocatively”. This identity construction then entails particular policy choices from China. It “must suppress” these nations, and “needs to teach” them to know their place in the hierarchy.

Other posts in this group also construct an identity for China through presentation of Southeast Asian nations as different to China because of their association with the US. This is similar to the People’s Daily articles discussed above. One example is a post from 31 March 2015\(^{77}\):

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\(^{75}\) See Appendix B2: South China Sea Weibo posts [#1]

\(^{76}\) See Appendix B2: South China Sea Weibo posts [#2]

\(^{77}\) See Appendix B2: South China Sea Weibo posts [#3]
Those national governments that follow the US running to oppose China, each one was put in a terrible fix by Mao Zedong, not even able to fend for themselves. They basically did not dare to, and did not try to, invade Chinese territory and maritime territory. So at that time China did not have a Tibet problem, did not have an East China Sea problem, and the Diaoyu Islands weren’t effectively controlled by Japan. China also did not have a South China Sea problem.

This post describes these Southeast Asian and broader Asian nations as choosing to “follow the US” and presents them as different to the Chinese Self. These nations are depicted as followers, rather than leaders, in a way which implies their weakness. A strong Chinese Self is constructed by describing weak nations that were once “put in a terrible fix by Mao Zedong” and “not even able to fend for themselves”. Because China is described to have had this identity in the past, this is an aspirational identity. The post expresses the hope that China will once again become this kind of great power. In this way, the post also seems to contrast the present-day Chinese Self with a temporal Other, or a contrasting image of how China’s identity was at a different point in time. Present day China is compared to the China of Mao Zedong.
Table 6.2: Statements of difference between China and Southeast Asian countries in Weibo posts.

| The Philippines |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Document name** | **Segment** | **Translation** | **Analysis** |
| SCS1 (17/01/12) | 安倍12日上午乘坐政府专机启程，赴菲律宾、澳大利亚、印尼、越南四国访问。安倍将在马尼拉与杜特尔特举行首脑会谈 | Abe took a government plane on the morning of the 12th to visit the Philippines, Australia, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Abe held a meeting with Duterte in Manila | In this statement the Philippines is presented as an Other because of how it cooperates with Japan. |
| SCS2 (17/01/23) | 把对付中国的招数和法律依据都替菲律宾和美国人想好了 | Think of the tactics and legal basis the Philippines and the Americans adopt for dealing with China. | The Philippines is made an Other because it associates with the US and seeks to challenge China. |
| SCS3 (17/02/05) | 自菲律宾提出南海仲裁案而引发的这一轮南海主权争议激化事件 | This round of South China Sea sovereignty disputes has **intensified** since the Philippines initiated the South China Sea **arbitration case** | The Philippines challenges China’s sovereignty and therefore can be seen to pursue a different identity to it – or challenge its identity |
| SCS4 (17/04/06) | 菲律宾总统杜特尔特4月6日表示，他已经命令菲律宾军占领菲律宾声索的南海争议岛屿 | Philippine President Duterte said on April 6 that he has ordered the Philippine army to **occupy** the disputed islands in the South China Sea claimed by the Philippines. | The Philippines is presented as an Other that challenges China’s sovereignty in South China Sea. It conflicts with an identity for the Chinese Self where it is dominant in the region. |

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78 See Appendix B3 for the full identification of the posts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCS5  (16/05/17)</th>
<th>向南海问题当事国菲律宾、越南提供巡逻机、巡逻艇等装备</th>
<th>[Japan will] provide <strong>patrol aircraft, patrol boats and other equipment</strong> to the Philippines and Vietnam, the countries involved in the South China Sea issue.</th>
<th>The Philippines is presented as an Other because of the way it cooperates with Japan and challenges China’s dominance in the South China Sea. It conducts patrols and therefore acts in ways that conflict with China’s desired identity as dominant.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCS6  (16/07/12)</td>
<td>由菲律宾阿基诺三世政府提起的南海仲裁案最终裁定于7月12日出炉。这是阿基诺三世治下的菲律宾担当主演、美国幕后操纵的一出<strong>反华</strong>闹剧</td>
<td>The final ruling in the South China Sea arbitration filed by the government of Aquino III of the Philippines was decided on July 12. This is an <strong>anti-China</strong> farce played by the Philippines under the rule of Aquino III and manipulated by the United States behind the scenes.</td>
<td>The Philippines is described as being different from China. It is anti-China and it cooperates with the US.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS7  (16/07/12)</td>
<td>台湾小哥制作的关于中国南海问题的视频，非常棒！顺便也说到两岸关系，也是句中要害。两岸同属一个中国，是时候联合一致对外了。从今天起，我承诺再也不吃菲律宾的芒果干，香蕉干，再也不去长滩岛玩。让你们想在南海争取到的利益，在其他方面通通损失掉</td>
<td>The video about the South China Sea issue made by Taiwanese brother is great! By the way, when it comes to cross-strait relations, it is also the most important point. Both sides of the strait belong to the same China, and it is time to unite against foreigners. From today on, I promise to never eat Filipino dried mangoes and dried bananas, and never go to Boracay again. Let the benefits you want to win in the South China Sea mean sacrifice of other conveniences.</td>
<td>The Philippines is made into a different Other in that it is “foreign”. Chinese identity is being constructed against this Other. The Philippines is presented as seeking to challenge the overall sovereignty of China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS8  (16/07/13)</td>
<td>菲律宾单方面提交的南海仲裁案违反了《联合国海洋法公约》与《南海各方行为宣言》</td>
<td>The South China Sea arbitration case unilaterally submitted by the Philippines violates the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea</td>
<td>The Philippines is presented as acting unilaterally and therefore as being different from the international community and China as a part of this community. It is described to violate international law, and therefore is made into a different Other in contrast with a responsible Chinese Self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS9  (16/07/14)</td>
<td>菲律宾首次明确表态要中国尊重仲裁结果】据BBC中文网7月14日报道，菲律宾外交部14日发表声明称，敦促中国“尊重”南海仲裁案的裁决结果。这是7月12日南海仲裁结果出炉后，菲律宾方面作出的最明确的一次表态</td>
<td>The Philippines made it clear for the first time that China should respect the arbitration result. According to a report on the BBC Chinese website on July 14, the Philippine Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on the 14th, urging China to &quot;respect&quot; the outcome of the South China Sea arbitration case. This is the clearest statement made by the Philippines after the outcome of the South China Sea arbitration on July 12th.</td>
<td>The Philippines is described as a different Other because of the way it challenges China’s sovereignty and more generally its identity in the international community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS10 (16/07/16)</td>
<td>除了菲律宾外长有一个发言外，没有任何代表附和日本发言。＠中国新闻网</td>
<td>Except for a speech by the Philippine Foreign Minister, no representative echoed the Japanese speech. @China News Network</td>
<td>The Philippines is made into an Other because of how it cooperates with Japan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS11 (16/07/18)</td>
<td>建立在菲律宾共和国阿基若三世政府非法行为和诉求基础上的南海仲裁案仲裁裁决</td>
<td>The arbitration award in the South China Sea arbitration based on the illegal actions and demands of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines Aquino III</td>
<td>The Philippines acts illegally and is therefore used to imply difference from a responsible Chinese Self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS12 (16/09/04)</td>
<td>菲越要求写入支持南海裁决内容被柬埔寨直接拒绝】外媒称</td>
<td>The Philippines and Vietnam requested that a statement in support of South China Sea ruling was included, but this was rejected by Cambodia] Foreign media said</td>
<td>The Philippines is presented as challenging or trying to influence China’s cooperation with ASEAN nations. It therefore is made into an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS13 (16/09/21)</td>
<td>Duterte broke his word and retracted the &quot;dismissal order&quot; against the US military. [Doraemon surprised] On September 20, Philippine President Duterte said in a speech to the 10th Infantry Division of the Philippines: &quot;I never said (to let the Americans) leave the Philippines now, because we need them in the South China Sea anyway. The Philippines cooperates with the US to challenge China in the South China Sea. The Philippines is presented as dishonest and therefore conflicts with China’s vision of good cooperation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCS14 (16/06/02)</td>
<td>At the same time, at a sensitive moment, four [US] warships sailed into the South China Sea and docked in Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam and Subic Bay in the Philippines. The Philippines is presented as an Other in that it supports the US against China. It is therefore presented as differing from China’s pursuit of dominance in the region and the exit of the US.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCS15 (16/07/12)</td>
<td>In response, China has repeatedly stated that the unilateral arbitration initiated by the Aquino III government of the Republic of the Philippines violates international law. The Philippines challenges China, and acts against international law (or China’s interpretation of this law).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS16 (16/07/16)</td>
<td>把这转给想拿南海事的美菲日 ——想偷鸡，看看主人家的脊梁</td>
<td>Send this to the US, Philippines, and Japan who want to talk about the South China Sea - if you want to steal chickens, look at the backbone of the master’s family</td>
<td>The Philippines cooperates with the US and Japan. Here it is maybe also being presented as spineless because of this cooperation. The Philippines, by acting in this way, conflicts with China’s desired identity where Asian countries together oppose Japan and US.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCS17 (16/10/21)</td>
<td>其实还差一句：南海是中国的</td>
<td>In fact, the Philippines is still one sentence short: the South China Sea belongs to China</td>
<td>The statement presents the way that the Philippines does not recognise China’s identity and its ownership of the South China Sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS18 (15/05/21)</td>
<td>南海问题适用与美菲安保条约</td>
<td>The application of the <strong>US - Philippines security treaty</strong> to the South China Sea issue</td>
<td>The Philippines cooperates with the US to challenge China in the South China Sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS19 (15/06/03)</td>
<td>菲律宾总统阿基诺3日在日本发表演讲时称，中国在南海的行为使他想起当年的纳粹德国</td>
<td>Philippine President Aquino said in a speech in Japan on the 3rd that China’s behaviour in the South China Sea reminded him of Nazi Germany.</td>
<td>The Philippines challenges China’s identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS20 (15/06/06)</td>
<td>日本与菲律宾两国领袖昨天签署一份联合声明，强化战略伙伴关系，在南海问题上抱团指责中国</td>
<td>Leaders from Japan and the Philippines signed a joint statement yesterday to strengthen their strategic partnership and <strong>accuse</strong> China on the South China Sea issue.</td>
<td>The Philippines is presented as an Other because it cooperates with Japan and challenges China (China’s identity).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Original Text</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
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<td>SCS21</td>
<td>At this time, Philippine National Television broadcasted a documentary on the South China Sea issue on the 12th, titled &quot;Freedom&quot;. The Philippine government broadcasts this film to win domestic people's support for its China policy, but what else can the film reflect?</td>
<td>The Philippines is an Other because it challenges China’s identity and does not recognise it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS22</td>
<td>The Philippines publicly announced on the 7th that it would close the door for bilateral negotiations with China.</td>
<td>The Philippines is described as not interested in bilateral negotiations which are China’s preferred approach. It conflicts with China and does not recognise China’s identity or preferred way of doing things.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS23</td>
<td>The United States, Japan, and the Philippines will use these summits to attack China again on the South China Sea issue.</td>
<td>The Philippines is presented as co-operating with the US and Japan. It acts in ways that challenge China’s identity</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCS24</td>
<td>(17/03/21)</td>
<td>Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc met with visiting South Korean Foreign Minister Yoon Byung Se in Hanoi. During the talks, Vietnam sought support from South Korea on the issue of the South China Sea dispute. According to the report, despite the political turmoil in South Korea, during the talks, South Korean Foreign Minister Yoon Byung-se still indicated to the Vietnamese side that Seoul is willing to enhance relations with Hanoi. Vietnam challenges China’s dominance in the South China Sea, tries to turn other Asian states against China.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS25</td>
<td>(17/06/21)</td>
<td>[The Vietnamese Prime Minister visited Japan, held talks, and mentioned the South China Sea issue] Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, who is visiting Japan, held talks with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the 6th. According to reports released by Japanese media, Vietnam is made an Other in that it cooperates with Japan. It therefore is presented to have different interests from China which seeks to oppose Japan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS26 (17/11/12)</td>
<td>Trump in the document said he would like to mediate on the South China Sea issue in Hanoi. He told the Vietnamese leaders that he was willing to mediate on the South China Sea issue. He said: &quot;I am a good mediator and a good arbitrator.&quot;</td>
<td>Vietnam is presented as being different from China in that it cooperates with the US.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS27 (17/11/13)</td>
<td>What he did has completely abandoned the comradely, brotherly, and friendly relations established by the older generation of leaders.</td>
<td>Vietnam’s actions make it different from China. The two states are described as no longer having close brotherly relations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS28 (17/11/13)</td>
<td>I hope that Vietnam can see the form clearly and know how to return and that it does not continue to play tricks on the South China Sea issue.</td>
<td>Vietnam is presented as deceitful and acting to trick China.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS29 (17/02/23)</td>
<td>Naval battle to destroy the ugly Vietnamese</td>
<td>Vietnam is portrayed negatively and in terms of an enemy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS30 (17/09/02)</td>
<td>Vietnam is dissatisfied with China’s military training in the northwestern part of the South China Sea: NND, road construction is not allowed, training is not allowed, does our family have no privacy at all!</td>
<td>The statement presents Vietnam as seeking to challenge China’s ability to project its power in the South China Sea. Vietnam therefore acts to challenge China’s identity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS31</td>
<td>我国原来有个东京湾，现在叫做北部湾，位于广西钦州，南海西北部，东临雷州半岛和海南岛，西临越南，与琼州海峡和南中国海相连.</td>
<td>Our country used to have a Tonkin Bay, now called Beibu Bay, located in Qinzhou, Guangxi, northwest of the South China Sea, bordering Leizhou Peninsula and Hainan Island to the east, Vietnam to the west, and connecting the Qiongzhou Strait and the South China Sea.</td>
<td>Vietnam is presented as having taken land that belongs to China, it therefore challenges China’s identity in this way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS32</td>
<td>回复@手机用户2309322515: 要害不在武器，注意财政金融安排。: 先生，刚刚看到，奥巴马宣布全面解除越南武器禁运，台海、南海问题更难了。</td>
<td>Reply @手机User2309322515: The key is not in weapons, pay attention to financial arrangements: Sir, I just saw that Obama announced the complete lifting of the arms embargo in Vietnam, making the Taiwan and South China Sea issues even more difficult.</td>
<td>Vietnam cooperates with the US to challenge China in the South China Sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS33</td>
<td>当你看到南海我们从越南手中夺回的岛礁，想到那次著名海战，请记住一个名字：</td>
<td>When you see the islands and reefs we recaptured from Vietnam in the South China Sea, and think of that famous naval battle, please remember one name:</td>
<td>Vietnam is presented as an Other that competes with China for control of islands in the South China Sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS34</td>
<td>越南在南海部署火箭炮和导弹</td>
<td>Vietnam deploys rocket launchers and missiles in the South China Sea.</td>
<td>Vietnam is presented as threatening to China. It challenges China’s dominance and security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS35</td>
<td>中越两国再因南海问题“较劲”。越南抗议中国规定的南海休渔期是侵犯越南主权和管辖权</td>
<td>China and Vietnam again &quot;competed&quot; over the South China Sea issue. <strong>Vietnam protests</strong> that China’s fishing moratorium in the South China Sea violates Vietnam’s sovereignty and jurisdiction</td>
<td>Vietnam is described to be seeking a different situation, challenging China’s identity. It challenges China’s control over fishing resources.</td>
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<td>SCS36</td>
<td>菲律宾和越南官员近日表示，菲越两国将在今年年底前签署一项“战略伙伴”协定，加强双方在防务、政治和经济等方面的关系，包括在南海问题上的合作</td>
<td>Officials recently stated that the Philippines and Vietnam will sign a &quot;strategic partnership&quot; agreement before the end of this year to strengthen their defence, political and economic relations, including cooperation on the South China Sea issue.</td>
<td>Vietnam and the Philippines together engage in cooperation against China, therefore challenging its dominance in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS37</td>
<td>南海诸小国也不断叫嚷。</td>
<td>The <strong>small countries</strong> in the South China Sea also keep shouting.</td>
<td>Vietnam is presented as small in a way used to construct China’s strength. It is described to be “shouting” and therefore challenging China’s identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS38</td>
<td>越南可以邀请日本军队进驻保护南海</td>
<td>Vietnam may <strong>invite Japanese troops</strong> to protect the South China Sea</td>
<td>Vietnam cooperates with Japan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discourse 2: the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse

A second main identity discourse was also found within the two types of material. In contrast, this identity discourse presented the Chinese Self as an important economic power in the world and a leader of international cooperation and order, particularly through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Rather than presenting Southeast Asian nations as being very different to China, this discourse instead presented these countries as being similar to it and sharing things in common. This identity for the Chinese Self, and its cooperation with Southeast Asian nations / ASEAN, is generally constructed through differentiation from “outsider” nations and particularly the US, which are presented as being very different and acting in ways that go against the shared interests of Asian nations.

The “Peaceful Asian Leader” Discourse in the People’s Daily articles

The articles contained an identity discourse which constructs China as a leader of cooperation, especially through the Belt and Road Initiative, sharing interests in common with Southeast Asian nations. A good example of this is the identity constructed for China in an article from 1 March 201779, which contains the following passages (my italics emphasising key passages):

Frankly, the rise of any great power, is always accompanied by a reorganisation of the international security order. In the history of western society, this reorganisation is usually accomplished through the struggle for hegemony of great powers, the rise of empires, and even world-wide wars. This is also the reason why some countries worry about China’s rise, but China, which has inherited the spirit of the Great Harmony of the whole world, lacks interest in the selfish pursuit of hegemony. In history, Chinese Empires, and the East Asian order surrounding this imperial nation, have been very different from the empire represented by conquest and colonisation. […]

In the course of advancing the BRI, China prefers to coordinate and cooperate with countries along the route, and to build mutual trust and an equal security order. No matter whether it is China and Central Asian nations’ Shanghai Cooperation Organization, or China and ASEAN’s security cooperation, they are both completely different from NATO, which is centred on US hegemony, and the looming US, Japan, and South Korea military alliance. In today’s world, where the western supported capitalist global security order is disintegrating, this emerging new security system

79 “一带一路” 呼唤新的国际安全体系, BRI heralds a new International Security Order, People’s Daily, 1/3/17 (Appendix B1.7)
is becoming an important tool for maintaining regional stability and safeguarding world peace.

Here an identity for China as the leader of an alternative kind of international cooperation is constructed through differentiation from the existing Western order and particularly the US as the leader of this. China’s rise to establish a new kind of order is contrasted with the western order which is “disintegrating”. The nature of the cooperation that China seeks is constructed through differentiation from NATO. In this way, China’s identity as leader is established through differentiation from the US which functions as an Other.

The US is presented as an Other which is different from a Chinese Self, described to be leading “cooperation”. The US is also an Other in that it acts to impede China’s realisation of this identity. The US acts to block China from carrying out its BRI initiative:

Some great powers from outside of the region have deliberately created a tense atmosphere in countries along the BRI, which has limited the BRI proposal’s advance. For example, a series of actions taken by the United States on the South China Sea issue have a strong purpose of containing the “Belt and Road” initiative.

The phrase “outside of the region” is used to present the US as an Other that is different from the cooperative identity of China and other regional states. The US is made to be the state which is acting provocatively in the South China Sea and disturbing the otherwise cooperative actions of the different nations.

Although this article is quite general in nature, other articles emphasise how the identity for China as the leader of cooperation and the proponent of the BRI leads to shared interests with Southeast Asian states. A good example of this is an article from 1 May 2017\textsuperscript{80}, which has the headline “BRI becomes a new opportunity for China – Philippine cooperation” and contains the following passages:

As the background of improving China – Philippine relations, the “BRI” proposal is inevitably attracting the Philippine’s attention […]

More and more countries, including the Philippines, have gradually recognised the Chinese proposal, believing that China upholds the principles of extensive consultation, co-construction, and sharing in the process of pro-

\textsuperscript{80} “一带一路”成中菲合作新机遇 (望海楼), BRI becomes a new opportunity for China – Philippines cooperation (Wang Hai Lou), \textit{People’s Daily}, 1/05/17 (Appendix B1.8)
moting cooperation, respects differences between countries, does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, and truly promotes win-win cooperation. Finally, the Philippines looks with weight on the results of the cooperation promoted by China.

[...] Since Chairman Xi Jinping raised the BRI proposal in 2013, the proposal has rapidly established itself. In a short period of a few years, China has already signed BRI agreements and MoU with over 40 countries. ASEAN countries place a great deal of attention on the BRI, and apart from Duterte, Indonesian President Joko, the Lao President Bunyan, the Vietnamese President Tan Daguang, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, the Malaysian Prime Minister Najib, and the Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi will also participate in the “Belt and Road” International Cooperation Summit Forum.

The article emphasises how China’s economic development, and its leadership of the BRI, creates a shared identity between it and the Philippines, as well as the other Southeast Asian nations that make up ASEAN. In this article, there is no very explicit Other presented, against which this collective identity is constructed. However, it still seems that this sense of similarity amongst Asian states is implicitly being constructed in contrast to difference from states outside of the region.

Other articles expressing this discourse similarly construct an identity for the Chinese Self that has things in common with the Southeast Asian nations. One is that from 10 March 201681 which contains the following passage:

On the South China Sea issue, China’s determination to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity is rock solid […] At the same time, China is willing to peacefully resolve disputes through direct discussions with relevant countries, and work with the coastal countries of the South China Sea to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea. The Chinese side’s thinking reflects its sincerity and wisdom in solving problems. Former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir pointed out to the media not long ago: “We do not believe in war. We think it is better to find a peaceful solution to this problem through negotiation”.

Here China and the Southeast Asian states are presented as having a shared interest in maintaining “peace and stability” in the region through an implied contrast with Others that seek for the region to be unstable. The article emphasises how China and these nations share views in common. The quote from the Malaysian Prime Minister at the end of this passage presents Southeast Asian states recognising China’s identity.

81 搅浑南海的企图不会得逞(钟声), Attempts to disturb the South China Sea will not succeed (Voice of the Times), People’s Daily, 10/03/16 (Appendix B1.9)
Another article which both strongly emphasises the similarities between China and Southeast Asian states, as well as presenting these states as recognising China’s identity, is that from 18 August 2016\textsuperscript{82}. This contains the following passages:

China-ASEAN relations are facing major development opportunities [and can] join hands to go together into the future that must be vision a common prosperity. […]

Just before Aung San Suu Kyi embarked on her visit to China, the 13th Senior Officials’ Meeting on the Implementation of the "Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea" just concluded in Manzhouli, China. All parties stated that they would publish and effectively implement the Joint Statement of the "Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea" as a guide. They would seek to manage divisions, increase mutual trust, eliminate disturbance, collectively exert efforts to build the South China sea into a peaceful sea, a friendly sea, a cooperative sea. All parties expressed their willingness to take the 25th anniversary of the China-ASEAN Dialogue Partnership as an opportunity, deepening China ASEAN cooperation, and advancing the China and ASEAN strategic partnership. […]

China and Southeast Asia are joined by mountains and rivers, share the same blood vessels, and enlighten each other and cooperate with each other in the course of economic and social development. In the past six years, China has become ASEAN’s biggest trading partner, and for the past four years ASEAN has been China’s third biggest trading partner. ASEAN is China’s fourth biggest market and second biggest source of imports. In 2015, the trade between the two sides reached 4722 billion US dollars, and the mutual visits by people were 23.64 million, while overseas students reached 190,000. Political mutual trust is unceasingly growing, and economic and trading cooperation is growing closer every day. People and cultural exchanges are fruitful and it is to the benefit of both sides to increase close integration.

The article really emphasises the shared identity of China and ASEAN, which are “joined by mountains and rivers” and “share the same blood vessels”. China and the ASEAN states are presented as having a wide range of common interests, in both further economic trade as well as maintaining the security of the region. Unlike in the first identity discourse discussed earlier in this chapter, where Southeast Asian states were different from China because they refused to recognise its identity, here the ASEAN states are presented as being similar to China because of their willingness to recognise its economic importance. Leaders of Southeast Asian states

\textsuperscript{82} 人民日报钟声：密切合作的大潮 印证人心向背，Voice of the Times: Proof of the Tide of Close Cooperation, People’s Daily, 18/08/16 (Appendix B1.10)
are described making official visits to China as a way of showing this recognition.

The article constructs this cooperation and similarity between China and ASEAN through contrast with the Other of “foreign countries”, which most likely refers to the US. This is most explicit in the following passage:

China insists on being good and friendly with its neighbours, adhering to the diplomatic philosophy of closeness, sincerity and inclusiveness. *It is committed to building a closer China-ASEAN community of destiny,* and promoting the building of a community of common destiny in Asia. In sharp contrast, some foreign countries have entered the 21st century physically, while their heads are still in the old era of Cold War thinking and zero-sum games. They are happy to see regional instability, and they are advocating the so-called “China threat” everywhere. They are deliberately trying to divide China and ASEAN. However, the tide of close cooperation between China and ASEAN proves that tactics moving against the trend will not succeed.

The passage presents an identity for China, which is made to seem “friendly” and “good”, to be cooperative and share interests with ASEAN states. This identity is given meaning through differentiation from these “foreign countries” which are presented as in “sharp contrast”. This Other instead acts in ways which are conflictual, and goes against the interests of Asian nations because it is “happy to see regional instability”. The Other both presented as being different from the Chinese Self (in cooperation with ASEAN) and also as trying to block this identity. It is described as seeking to prevent China and ASEAN from achieving the close and fulfilling cooperation which they both seek. The metaphor used at the end of the passage, describing the “tide of close cooperation”, is interesting in this respect. This makes the collective identity into something in motion. It is something which China and ASEAN states are moving towards and which “foreign countries” stand in the way of them accomplishing.
Table 6.3: Statements of similarity between China and Southeast Asian nations in People’s Daily articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>article_170727_8</td>
<td>推进“亲诚惠容”的周边外交政策。中国为菲打击毒品犯罪和恐怖主义提供援助。基础设施建设是“杜特尔特经济学”的重要支柱。杜特尔特在国情咨文中特别感谢中国为菲基础设施建设提供帮助</td>
<td>Promote the neighbouring foreign policy of &quot;friendship, sincerity, benefit and tolerance&quot;. China provides assistance to the Philippines in its fight against drug crimes and terrorism. Infrastructure construction is an important pillar of &quot;Duterte Economics.&quot; In the State of the Union, Duterte expressed his gratitude to China for its assistance in infrastructure construction in the Philippines.</td>
<td>The statement presents similarity between China and the Philippines. They share a “friendship”, seek to help each other, and have similar domestic development issues.</td>
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<p>| article_170727_8 | 菲外长卡亚塔诺表达出对南海合作前景的期待，相信双方有智慧找到合适的方式共同开发自然资源，造福两国人民 | The Philippine Foreign Minister expressed his expectation for the prospects of cooperation in the South China Sea and believes that both parties have the wisdom to find a suitable way to jointly develop natural resources and benefit the people of the two countries | The statement suggests that China and the Philippines have a shared identity and interests, they are both wise and have similar concerns. It suggests the Philippines recognises China’s identity. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article Code</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150409_204</td>
<td>The traditional friendship between China and Vietnam is led by Chairman Mao Zedong and Ho Chi Minh. It is a valuable asset of the two parties, the two countries and the people of the two countries, and should be cherished and maintained.</td>
<td>The statement presents similarity between China and Vietnam. The two countries share a “traditional friendship”, and it is implied their values are similar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161008_781</td>
<td>After taking office as President, Duterte's anti-drug campaign led to accusations from Western countries on the &quot;human rights&quot; and &quot;rule of law&quot;. He immediately &quot;turned his face&quot; from the traditional ally, the United States, and issued a strong argument, in his speech on the 4th, he said that US President Barack Obama should &quot;go to hell.&quot;</td>
<td>The statement presents the Philippines as being against western powers and on the receiving end of their interference. This is particularly the US. It implies similarity between China and the Philippines in this respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151102_419</td>
<td>Second, compete for regional dominance. In the first years of the new century, the relationship between China and ASEAN advanced by leaps and bounds. According to the words of the American media at the time, it was China's “charm offensive” against Southeast Asian countries, and the two were in a honeymoon period. In contrast, the United States was a traditional ally in the region.</td>
<td>The statement presents similarity between China and ASEAN, describing how they engage in extensive cooperation. This collective identity is constructed through contrast with the US as Other. ASEAN countries are also presented to recognise China’s identity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article Code</td>
<td>Text Content</td>
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<tr>
<td>article_160310_425</td>
<td>States is deeply trapped in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the war on terrorism. Suddenly, China has risen and is playing an increasingly important role in the Asia-Pacific region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>article_160807_763</td>
<td>Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has emphasized that regional countries hope to avoid having to choose to support or oppose a large country. Unlike the Cold War, which bears the burden of ideology, this is not a zero-sum game. China has been making various efforts for the peace and stability of the South China Sea. <strong>China has the trust</strong>, the determination and the ability to communicate with ASEAN countries to ensure the peaceful development of the South China Sea. If someone insists on messing up the South China Sea and messing up Asia, China will not agree, and most countries in the region will not allow it.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_160807_763</td>
<td>Abe and the Japanese government are following a path that goes against history and the people. They do their own &quot;routines&quot; to deceive, China and Asian countries are presented as having a shared grievance with Japan. Asian countries and the international community are similar</td>
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<th>Chinese Text</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
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<tr>
<td>恐战争，蓦然回首，中国已崛起并在亚太地区发挥着越来越重要的作用。</td>
<td>States is deeply trapped in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the war on terrorism. Suddenly, China has risen and is playing an increasingly important role in the Asia-Pacific region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>新加坡总理李显龙就曾强调，地区国家希望避免不得不选择支持或反对一个大国的事情发生，与承载着意识形态负担的冷战不同，这里关系到的不是一场零和游戏。中国一直在为南海和平稳定做出各种努力，中国有信心、有定力也完全有能力与东盟国家一道，确保南海的和平发展大局。如果有人执意想把南海搅浑，把亚洲搞乱，中国不 会答应，本地区绝大多数国家也不会允许。</td>
<td>Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has emphasized that regional countries hope to avoid having to choose to support or oppose a large country. Unlike the Cold War, which bears the burden of ideology, this is not a zero-sum game. China has been making various efforts for the peace and stability of the South China Sea. <strong>China has the trust</strong>, the determination and the ability to communicate with ASEAN countries to ensure the peaceful development of the South China Sea. If someone insists on messing up the South China Sea and messing up Asia, China will not agree, and most countries in the region will not allow it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>安倍和日本政府，踏往的是一条逆历史、违民心的道路。他们言</td>
<td>Abe and the Japanese government are following a path that goes against history and the people. They do their own &quot;routines&quot; to deceive, China and Asian countries are presented as having a shared grievance with Japan. Asian countries and the international community are similar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_161008_781</td>
<td>杜特尔特先前还表示，美国应撤出在菲律宾南部的特种部队士兵。美国2002年开始向菲南部派驻特种兵，帮助菲政府军打击反政府武装，美军人数最多时达到大约600人。</td>
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<tr>
<td>article_161118_233</td>
<td>耿爽说，不久前，菲律宾总统杜特尔特和马来西亚总理纳吉布先后访华，两国领导人也都同中方领导人就南海问题交换了意见，中方对东盟的态度有自己的判断。</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article ID</td>
<td>Chinese Content</td>
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<tr>
<td>article_170421_287</td>
<td>菲外交部发言人波利瓦19日在记者会上说，“东盟与北京之间的互信已有提升，我们对于‘南海行为准则’框架能在2017年年内出炉，抱有很高期望。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_170526_282</td>
<td>特别是由于历史原因，日本在军事安全领域有关动向一直受到亚洲邻国和国际社会的密切关注，日本在反导问题上应该慎重行事。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_170301_229</td>
<td>双方应为共建“一带一路”加强合作，共同推进区域一体化进程，加强中国—东盟更加<strong>紧密的****命运共同体</strong>建设。王毅强调，中方坚定不移奉行周边睦邻友好政策，愿与东盟国家<strong>共同维护</strong>南海地区和平稳定。希望新方发挥好中国—东盟关系协调国的建设性作用，</td>
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<td>Article</td>
<td>Text Content</td>
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<tr>
<td>article 170724_161</td>
<td>中方愿坚定奉行对泰友好政策，继续做泰国亲如一家的好兄弟和经济腾飞和转型升级的好伙伴。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article 171019_211</td>
<td>这不仅符合两国人民的根本利益，也是亚太地区国家和国际社会的普遍期待。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article 180122_414</td>
<td>她表示，中国同东盟国家建立的信任弥足珍贵，稳定南海局势的成果来之不易。中方愿继续与有关各方一道，以全面、有效落实《南海各方行为宣言》。</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<p>|  | China Sea. It is hoped that Singapore will play a constructive role as a coordinator of China-ASEAN relations. |
|  | China is willing to firmly pursue a friendly policy towards Thailand and continue to be Thailand's good brother and a good partner for economic growth and transformation and upgrading. |
|  | China and Thailand are described as being similar, having a shared interest in economic growth. |
|  | This is not only in line with the fundamental interests of the two countries, but also the general expectation of countries in the Asia-Pacific region and the international community. |
|  | The statement presents China and Southeast Asian countries as having the same “fundamental interests” and therefore as having similar identities. |
|  | She said that the trust built between China and ASEAN countries is precious and the results of stabilizing the situation in the South China Sea are not easy to come by. China hopes to continue to work with all relevant parties to fully and effectively implement the &quot;Code of Conduct for South China Sea&quot;. |
|  | This presents China and ASEAN as having shared interests and engaging in cooperation. It suggests that their views regarding the South China Sea are generally aligned. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article ID</th>
<th>Text Content</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>article_180510_295</td>
<td>China will provide all-weather tsunami monitoring and early warning services for countries around the South China Sea, such as Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Singapore, and China. It will “stand guard” for regional countries and organise regional training, publicity and education, and other activities.</td>
<td>This passage constructs an identity for the Chinese Self as a provider of public goods to the region. It presents China and Southeast Asian states as having a shared interest in the governance of the South China Sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_181115_296</td>
<td>Asian countries have maintained an overall good situation of peace and stability, have withstood the baptism and test of the international financial crisis.</td>
<td>The statement presents China and Asian countries to have shared interests and suggests commonality in the way they experienced the Asian Financial Crisis together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_181115_296</td>
<td>Always insist on mutual tolerance and mutual learning. East Asia has unique characteristics. Different ethnic groups, religions, and cultures have coexisted for a long time, forming a historical cultural tradition of &quot;harmony and difference&quot; in this region.</td>
<td>The passage suggests a shared overarching cultural and historical identity amongst Asian states.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_180413_156</td>
<td>This year marks the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the <strong>strategic partnership</strong> between China and ASEAN. China -ASEAN relations are moving from a period of rapid development to a <strong>mature period</strong> of upgrading. The statement constructs a collective identity of China – ASEAN closeness and describes how the two share a history together.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_180413_156</td>
<td>According to Shen Xiaoming, Governor of Hainan Province, Hainan and the ASEAN region are geographically close to each other and they blend folk customs. They have a long history of economic and trade exchanges and a good foundation for cooperation. The passage presents China and ASEAN as sharing a history and cultural identity. This shared identity allows them to effectively cooperate with each other.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_140618_83</td>
<td>He stated that the containment strategy which enabled the United States to win during the Cold War cannot be successful today. It is politically, economically, and operationally impossible to sever relations with China, or to ask China's neighbours to do so. Failure in this competition will put the safety and interests of the United States and its allies at unacceptable risk. China and its neighbours are described to share interests in common, to the extent that the US cannot divide them. A collective identity for China and its neighbours is constructed in contrast to the US.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_140915_273</td>
<td>中国同东盟国家地理邻近，是东盟最大的贸易伙伴，在政治、地区、海上等层面也均具有广阔的合作空间，宜进一步深化同东盟各领域务实合作，以合作扩大共同利益，实现中国和东盟地区的共同繁荣和发展。</td>
<td>China is geographically close to ASEAN countries. ASEAN’s largest trading partner also has ample space for cooperation at the political, regional, and maritime levels. It is advisable to make further progress. China and ASEAN will cooperate practically in various fields so as to expand <strong>common interests</strong> through cooperation and realise the <strong>common prosperity and development</strong> of China and the ASEAN region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_150920_326</td>
<td>新加坡及绝大部分东南亚国家都不希望在全球经济中选边站，所以我们非常乐于看到习主席访美能促成中美两国达成战略共识，美国和中国作为全球第一大和第二大经济体，两国间的经贸合作也十分令人期待。</td>
<td>Singapore and most of the Southeast Asian countries do not want to choose between China and the United States. Therefore, &quot;We are very happy to see that President Xi’s visit to the United States can help China and the United States reach a strategic consensus. The United States and China are the world’s largest peacekeepers. For the second largest economy, the economic and trade cooperation between the two countries is also highly anticipated.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article _161112_93</td>
<td>...common efforts of ASEAN countries, including the Philippines, have helped the situation in the South China Sea to significantly cool down and return to an approach of managing and resolving differences through direct negotiation, on the right track.</td>
<td>China and ASEAN are presented as engaging in cooperation, sharing common interests and making “common efforts” – a phrase frequently used to suggest commonality between them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article _160505_856</td>
<td>China supports Laos as the rotating chair of ASEAN in 2016, and is willing to cooperate with Laos in hosting a series of meetings of leaders of East Asian cooperation. We hope to cooperate in organising the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the China-ASEAN dialogue, so as to promote the continuous development of China-ASEAN relations.</td>
<td>The statement suggests similarity and alignment of interests between China and Laos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article _160505_856</td>
<td>Both parties believe that maintaining peace, stability, cooperation and development in the South China Sea are in the common interests of countries in the region. They call on the parties concerned to peacefully resolve disputes through negotiations and consultations and fully and</td>
<td>The passage describes China and Southeast Asian states as having shared interests and sharing views and interests in “common”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article ID</td>
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<tr>
<td>article_160715_359</td>
<td>协商一致的基础上，争取早日达成“南海行为准则”（COC）。</td>
<td>effectively implement the declaration on a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. China is committed to peace and cooperation. As early as 2002, China and ASEAN countries reached and signed the &quot;Proclamation on a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea&quot;. Since then, they have been directly committed to the &quot;South China Sea Action Guidelines&quot;. In 2013, China even put forward the &quot;21st Century Maritime Silk Road&quot; initiative that will benefit ASEAN countries extensively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>article_170222_292</td>
<td>当前南海形势正在向好的和稳定的方向发展。希望域外国家切实尊重地区国家的努力，多做有利于维护地区和平稳定的事。</td>
<td>The current situation in the South China Sea is developing in a positive and stable direction. It is hoped that countries outside the region will truly respect the efforts of countries in the region and do more things that are conducive to maintaining regional peace and stability.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The statement constructs a Chinese Self that is a leader of cooperation through the BRI. It presents China and ASEAN as sharing interests in common and engaging in cooperation. The passage presents China and Southeast Asian cooperation as extensive and strong. This identity is constructed against countries “outside the region”, which are presented as an Other which obstructs this cooperation.
In the recent period, the frequent dispatch of warships and military aircraft to neighbouring countries in the South China Sea under the banner of the so-called “Freedom of Navigation” has indeed posed a threat to the sovereignty and security interests of the countries in this region. We hope that there will be no such threats in the future.

Regional countries are presented to share interests in security and sovereignty in common with China. This common identity is constructed against outsiders, and the implied role of the US, which is presented as threatening it.

This reflects China’s active and sincere intention to jointly maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea with ASEAN countries willing. She said that the trust built between China and ASEAN countries is precious and stable. The results of the situation in the South China Sea were hard-won.

The passage presents China and ASEAN cooperation. It implies shared interests between them.
The “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse in the Weibo posts

Posts within the sample from Weibo similarly construct an identity for the Chinese Self as connected to Southeast Asian regional states and sharing interests with these. In this discourse, it was noticeable that a greater proportion of the Weibo posts were from media outlets or were reposts of parts of news articles. Two examples are posts from 13 June 2016[^43] and 19 August 2016[^44] (my italics highlighting key phrases):

To resolve the South China Sea issue, we believe that “the virtuous man cannot be alone, but there must be neighbours”. In handling the South China Sea dispute with the Philippines, China has suffered from all kinds of resistance and endured a lot of distortions and even demonisation, but the Chinese believe, “Virtue is not alone, there must be neighbours”. As long as we always adhere to justice and fairness, we believe that the forces supporting China’s position will become stronger and stronger, and that China and its neighbours are the right masters to resolve territorial and demarcation issues through negotiation and consultation... [13/06/16]

Ramos from the Philippines has just left, Aung San Suu Kyi has come again, China and ASEAN’s top officials are establishing a diplomatic hotline and pushing forwards the South China Sea Code of Conduct. These indicate that China is increasingly taking the initiative in the South China Sea issue. After experiencing the South China Sea arbitration farce, ASEAN countries recognized that the US is too far away from them, and China is close. The US just has a big stick, but China also has a carrot. The stick cannot provide food to eat, and you have to be careful that the stick does not come back to hurt you. Eating is the most pressing need... [19/08/16]

The first of these posts seems to draw on Chinese philosophy and constructs a shared Asian identity for China and the other Southeast Asian states. In describing how “China and its neighbours are the right masters” it implicitly constructs this collective identity as one of independence, or self-governance, in contrast with the interference of outside powers. The Other is not stated very explicitly here, but it seems to be the US and other “outside” powers, which are presented as interfering in the region. As part of the identity for the Chinese Self that is constructed, there appears to be an emphasis on “justice” and “fairness” as defining qualities. This is presented with an implicit Other, which again appears to be outside states, that engage in “distortions” and “demonisation”.

The second post more explicitly constructs an identity for the Chinese Self as cooperative and connected to Asia through the presentation

[^43]: See Appendix B2: South China Sea Weibo posts [#4]
[^44]: See Appendix B2: South China Sea Weibo posts [#5]
of the US as Other. China’s identity as a state that is close to, and essentially a part of, the region is juxtaposed with the US which is described as “too far away”. Then the post also describes how “the US just has a big stick, but China also has a carrot” and uses the contrast to present an identity for China as peaceful and benevolent. Unlike the posts discussed above as examples of the first identity discourse, where Southeast Asian states were presented as being very different from China, here they are instead presented as being similar.
Table 6.4: Statements of similarity between China and Southeast Asian nations in Weibo posts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document name</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCS39 (17/01/17)</td>
<td>安倍首相主动提出向菲律宾提供导弹，但被菲律宾总统杜特尔特拒绝。外交部发言人华春莹回应说：在中国和有关东盟国家的共同努力下，南海局势正趋稳向好，已经重回谈判协商解决的...</td>
<td>Prime Minister Abe offered to provide missiles to the Philippines, but was rejected by the Philippine President Duterte. Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hua Chunying, responded: With the joint efforts of China and relevant ASEAN countries, the situation in the South China Sea is stabilising and improving, and it has returned to negotiation and settlement...</td>
<td>The post presents China and Southeast Asian nations as being similar. The Philippines is presented as like China in being opposed to Japan and Abe, rejecting his diplomatic moves. ASEAN and China are described to be engaging in cooperation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS40 (17/05/01)</td>
<td>就舆论高度关注的南海问题，本次主席声明未提及南海主权争端，重申了增进相互信任和信心的重要性</td>
<td>Regarding the South China Sea issue, which is of great concern to the public, this presidential statement did not mention the sovereignty dispute in the South China Sea, and reiterated the importance of enhancing mutual trust and confidence.</td>
<td>The statement presents China and ASEAN as having shared interests. It describes how ASEAN does not interfere with China and implies that it recognises China’s importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS41 (17/05/02)</td>
<td>中国支持东盟在国际地区事务中发挥更大作用，愿与东盟国家一道，共同维护</td>
<td>China supports ASEAN in playing a greater role in international and regional affairs, and is willing to work with ASEAN countries. They will jointly safeguard [...]</td>
<td>The statement presents China and ASEAN as having shared interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS42  (17/06/16)</td>
<td>美方在南海进行所谓“航行自由”行为对中国和东盟各国的共同努力的不尊重</td>
<td>The so-called &quot;freedom of navigation&quot; by the US in the South China Sea does not respect the joint efforts of China and ASEAN countries</td>
<td>The post presents a collective identity for China and ASEAN, which together engage in “joint efforts”. This is constructed against the US as an Other.</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS43  (17/08/08)</td>
<td>一年前风高浪急，一年后云淡风轻。尽管美国还不死心，时不时还派军舰来巡航一遍，结果除了丢掉一名水兵外，一无所获。南海问题降温，中菲开始蜜月，南海签订行为准则框架</td>
<td>One year ago, the wind was high and the waves were violent, but a year later, the clouds are light and the wind is gentle. Although the United States does not give up, and from time to time it sends warships to cruise again, but in the end it has lost a sailor and gained nothing. The South China Sea issue has cooled down. China and the Philippines have begun their honeymoon and signed a code of conduct framework on the South China Sea</td>
<td>The post presents a shared identity for China and Southeast Asian countries, particular the Philippines which is described as China’s partner. This shared identity is being constructed against the US as an Other from outside the region which tries to obstruct it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS44  (17/11/14)</td>
<td>东盟了解中国的立场，因此对美国试图让这些国家与中国”相撞” 的主意极为警惕</td>
<td>ASEAN understands China's position and is therefore extremely alert to the United States' attempt to &quot;collide&quot; these countries with China.</td>
<td>The statement presents a shared identity between ASEAN and China, where the former “understands” China and so recognises its position and identity. This collective identity is constructed against the presentation of the US as an Other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS45 (16/09/12)</td>
<td>#2016东博会#</td>
<td>[Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen: Resolutely Oppose Extraterritorial Forces Interfering in Regional Issues] Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen said here that he resolutely opposes forces from outside of the territory interfering in regional issues, especially the South China Sea issue. Small issues must not be allowed to undermine the relationship between ASEAN and China. This is an important foundation for regional peace.</td>
<td>The post presents a collective identity for China and Southeast Asian nations. These are described to share common interests. ASEAN countries recognise the importance of China. This shared identity is constructed against “outside” forces that interfere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS46 (16/10/22)</td>
<td>外交部敦促日方停止借南海问题离间中菲关系—[…]“太不识相、不能度德量力，一个小小岛国总想搅局亚太闹全球。”</td>
<td>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs urges the Japanese side to stop using the South China Sea issue to divide China-Philippine relations — […] They are too ignorant and unable to weigh their strengths. A small island country that always wants to disrupt the situation.</td>
<td>The post presents cooperation between China and the Philippines, and suggests similarity between them. This identity is constructed against the presentation of Japan as an Other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS47 (16/07/26)</td>
<td>【东盟声明不提仲裁，闹剧在徐徐落幕】东盟外长25日顺利发表联合声明，声明对南海仲裁案只字未提，也没有公开批评中国。声明虽多处提到南海，但都是笼统的原则阐述</td>
<td>[ASEAN statement does not mention arbitration, the farce ends slowly] ASEAN foreign ministers issued a joint statement on the 25th, stating that they did not mention anything about the South China Sea arbitration case, nor did they publicly criticise China. Although the statement mentions the South China Sea in many places, these parts are all expounding general principles.</td>
<td>The post presents ASEAN states as being aligned with China. These states do not criticise it in their meeting. It therefore suggests that these states recognise a particular identity presented by China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS48  (17/01/13)</td>
<td>中國外交部新聞發言人陸慷13日在例行記者會上表示，美國在南海問題上的做法越来越被孤立</td>
<td>Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lu Kang said at a regular press conference on the 13th that the US's approach to the South China Sea issue is becoming more and more isolated.</td>
<td>The post presents the US as “isolated” and therefore makes it into an Other which is different from the cooperation between China and ASEAN.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS49  (17/08/08)</td>
<td>这符合东盟的利益，没必要跟在美国战车上；当然，这也显示了中国的主导作用。</td>
<td>This is in the interests of ASEAN, and there is no need to follow the Americans; of course, this also shows China's leading role.</td>
<td>The post presents China and ASEAN as having shared interests. ASEAN countries are presented as recognising that they are better supporting China than the US. The collective identity for China and ASEAN is constructed through contrast with the US approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS50  (16/08/07)</td>
<td>[嘻嘻] :: 这是个亲中总统。搞不好哪天就被CIA给干掉了。且行且珍惜。南海问题是上一任总统阿基诺留下来的烂摊子。 : 趣趣挺 [哈哈][哈哈][哈哈]</td>
<td>[Hee hee]: This is a pro-China president. Maybe someday he will be killed by the CIA. Cherish what you have at the moment. The South China Sea issue is a mess left by the previous President Aquino.</td>
<td>The post presents China and Philippines as having shared interests or things in common. The president of the Philippines, Duterte, is described as being pro-China. This is constructed against the US as Other, with the suggestion that the US would not approve of this identity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of the qualitative analysis

In the samples of *People’s Daily* articles and the samples of *Weibo* posts, articulations of China’s identity were found to fall into two main groups. These constructed different identities for the Chinese Self, often through a contrast with the presentation of various Others. First, there were those that constructed an identity for China as a great power which had risen on its own and was strong and independent, able to dominate over the region around it. This identity is constructed with the presentation of the Southeast Asian states, as well as the US, as Others. Second, there were those that constructed an identity for China where, while it is still a major power, it is instead a leader of international cooperation. This identity focuses more on China’s economic activity, particularly its trade with other nations and its role launching the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China is presented as a peaceful regional leader that cooperates with Southeast Asian states which share its interests. This more collective identity is constructed through contrast with the US and states from outside. In this identity construction, rather than China’s rise, the economic development of the past decades is often presented as being the rise of Asia as a whole.

These were taken as the main identity discourses which structured debates within the material. I labelled them the “Great Power” discourse and “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse. Their key features are depicted in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse 1 “Great Power”</th>
<th>Discourse 2 “Peaceful Asian Leader”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent / China’s Rise</td>
<td>China’s Rise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Asian states / ASEAN Different</td>
<td>Southeast Asian States / ASEAN Similar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Different</td>
<td>United States Different</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.5: Framework of the main identity discourses found through the qualitative analysis

The US is presented as an Other that is different from China in both identity discourses, but it functions in different ways in each of them. In the first discourse, the way that Southeast Asian states are connected with the
US works to emphasise their difference from China. In the second discourse, the US as an Other creates a collective identity for China and the Southeast Asian nations. In their treatment of the regional states, the articles and posts do not necessarily consistently place all regional states in the same way. It is possible, for example, to encounter a post that presents the Philippines as being similar to China and also presents Vietnam as being very different. However, while China does engage with different states in the region separately, it often decides policies regarding the South China Sea as a whole.

The “Great Power” Discourse

In the first discourse, which I labelled the “Great Power Discourse”, the Chinese Self is presented as rising and being increasingly powerful, acting as a responsible major power. It is described as being very different from Southeast Asian nations which are presented (more explicitly in the Weibo posts) as being small countries. These Southeast Asian nations are presented as acting in illegal ways in contrast to the construction of China as following the rules. They can sometimes be described with words connected to irrationality and as acting in reckless ways, as well as using words suggesting dishonesty (such as 不守信) although it is unclear how commonly these words are used. The Southeast Asian nations are depicted as pursuing different interests which challenge China’s identity as the dominant power in the region. They are described as attacking China (sometimes phrased differently), as acting to provoke and compete with China in the South China Sea, and as refusing to recognise China’s position of dominance in the region. These Southeast Asian states challenge China’s identity as dominant, and

85 See for example: People’s Daily article from 31 July 2014.
86 See for example: People’s Daily article from 15 July 2016; People’s Daily article from 31 July 2014
87 See for example: People’s Daily article 15 June 2015
88 See for example: Weibo post from 19 October 2016
89 See for example: People’s Daily articles 6 June 2014 and 16 July 2014.
90 See for example: People’s Daily article 10 March 2016
91 See for example: People’s Daily article 15 June 2015
92 See for example: People’s Daily article 10 March 2016
93 See for example: People’s Daily article 1 April 2014; Weibo posts from 19 October 2016, 20 May 2015
94 See for example: Weibo post from 19 May 2015
95 See for example: Weibo post from 9 July 2015
in comfortable control of claimed territory in the South China Sea, by invading / occupying岛屿 by invading / occupying islands claimed by China and by carrying out patrols巡逻 to assert their own control. They also are presented as challenging or infringing侵犯China’s rights and interests in the region.

These Southeast Asian nations are also presented as being different from China because of the way in which they cooperate with China’s traditional enemies from outside of the region. They are described as allies盟友 of the US or presented as cooperating with / relying on仰仗 the US in different ways. They are described as seeking to draw in拉拢 the US and Japan and get them involved in the region. Together with the US and Japan, the Southeast Asian nations are presented as an Other which seeks a different kind of regional order from that where China is dominant. They therefore seek to obstruct China from achieving its identity as strong, acting to put pressure on China压, to contain遏制 /牵制 or encircle围堵 it, and to support the US in maintaining its hegemony. In this way, these nations are described as being generally anti-China反华. They are also presented as challenging China’s identity within the international community. They are presented as seeking to internationalise the South China Sea issue, to confuse混淆 public opinion about China, to smear / slander抹黑 its identity within the international community, and to promote the ‘China Threat’ theory中国威胁论.

The “Peaceful Asian Leader” Discourse

I have labelled the second main identity discourse the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse. In this discourse, China is presented as being an important trading nation in the world大贸易伙伴 and a leader of international cooperation, particularly through its role launching the BRI initiative一带一路倡议. China is described as pushing forwards推动 /

96 See for example: People’s Daily article 4 June 2015
97 See for example: People’s Daily article 9 April 2016
98 See for example: People’s Daily article 27 May 2014
99 See for example: People’s Daily article from 7 April 2014
100 See for example: People’s Daily article 7 December 2014
101 See for example: People’s Daily article 6 June 2016
102 See for example: Weibo post from 16 April 2015
103 See for example: People’s Daily article 4 June 2015
104 See for example: People’s Daily article 15 June 2015
105 See for example: People’s Daily article 1 March 2017
raising 提出 cooperation 中国提出的合作\(^{108}\) between different countries. It is described as seeking win-win 共赢 relations with different countries around the world and a community of common destiny 命运共同体\(^{109}\).

Instead of describing Southeast Asian nations as different from China, in this discourse they are presented as being similar. China and Southeast Asian countries are described to share mutual trust 互信\(^{110}\) and common interests 共同利益. They are presented as having friendly relations 睦邻 or being closely connected with each other 山水相连\(^{111}\). China and ASEAN are presented as (strategic) partners (战略)伙伴\(^{112}\). They are presented as cooperating closely 紧密\(^{113}\) with each other and making a joint effort 共同努力\(^{114}\) to reduce tensions 降温 and to collectively maintain South China Sea peace and stability 共同维护南海和平稳定\(^{115}\). The articles and posts therefore construct a collective identity for China and ASEAN together.

This second main identity discourse constructs an identity for the Chinese Self as a leader of a mutually beneficial cooperation. This is constructed partly through contrast with an Other in the form of “foreign” 域外\(^{116}\) nations or those from outside of the region, particularly the US but also other Western powers and Japan. The type of cooperation that is associated with the Chinese Self is given meaning through presentation of these Others. They are described to engage in a very different kind of hegemonic relations 霸道主义\(^{117}\) and have a Cold War mentality 冷战\(^{118}\). The broader Other, which consists of all Western powers, is describes as taking a colonial 帝国 approach to relations with other countries (in contrast with a Chinese form of cooperation). Chinese win-win economic relations are also contrasted with Western capitalism 资本主义. In contrast with

\(^{108}\) See for example: People’s Daily article 1 May 2017
\(^{109}\) See for example: People’s Daily article 1 March 2017
\(^{110}\) See for example: People’s Daily articles from 1 May 2017; Weibo post from 1 May 2017
\(^{111}\) See for example: People’s Daily article 1 March 2017
\(^{112}\) See for example: People’s Daily article from 18 August 2016
\(^{113}\) See for example: People’s Daily article from 1 May 2017
\(^{114}\) See for example: People’s Daily article 1 March 2017.
\(^{115}\) See for example: Weibo post from 17 January 2017.
\(^{116}\) See for example: People’s Daily article from 18 January 2017
\(^{117}\) See for example: People’s Daily article from 22 February 2017; Weibo post from 18 September 2016
\(^{118}\) See for example: People’s Daily article from 1 March 2017
\(^{119}\) See for example: People’s Daily article from 10 March 2016
China’s attempts to foster cooperation in Southeast Asia, these foreign nations are presented as interfering 干涉\textsuperscript{120}. The presentation of China’s efforts to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea is contrasted with the way in which these foreign nations act to \textit{increase tensions} \textsuperscript{121} and \textit{mess up} the South China Sea 把南海搅浑\textsuperscript{122}. States from outside the region therefore function as Others against which China’s identity as a leader of cooperation with the BRI is established.

**Conclusions of Qualitative Analysis**

Discourse analysis of the samples taken from the \textit{People’s Daily} articles and \textit{Weibo} posts showed that there were two main identity discourses being expressed in this material – the “Great Power” discourse and the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse. The “Great Power” discourse presented a Chinese Self that was strong and dominant in the region, and exercised control and maintained sovereignty that was unchallenged. This identity was constructed through presentation of regional states, particularly the Philippines and Vietnam, as well as the US, as different Others which tried to challenge China. The “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourses in contrast constructed a Chinese self that was an important leader of cooperation, particularly through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and shared interests in common with the Southeast Asian states. This identity was constructed through difference from states outside of the region.

The analysis suggested that there was some debate between these two main identity discourses, and that the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse took over as much more dominant after the middle of the period analysed. However, because this analysis only looked at relatively small samples of the total material, it was not possible to draw any strong conclusions about the changing dominance of the two discourses. This motivates the next step of the analysis, where quantitative methods are used to look at how the constructed identity discourses and the dominance of the two main discourses is changing during the time period studied.

\textsuperscript{120} See for example: \textit{Weibo} post from 12 September 2016
\textsuperscript{121} See for example: \textit{People’s Daily} article 1 March 2017
\textsuperscript{122} See for example: \textit{People’s Daily} article 10 March 2017
6.4.2 STEP 2: Quantitative Analysis

In the first step, discourse analysis found the different ways in which China’s identity was being constructed in relation to the South China Sea and how these articulations clustered around two main identity discourses (the “Great Power” discourse and “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse). I then wanted to know how this construction of China’s identity was changing and in particular the change in dominance of these two main identity discourses. Although the discourse analysis indicated that the dominant identity discourse was changing, because this only looked at samples of articles and posts it was not possible to draw broader conclusions. In this second step of the analysis, I therefore used quantitative computer assisted text analysis methods (as described in full in Chapter 4) to analyse the entire corpora of articles and posts. This step sought to answer two analytical questions:

- How is the construction of China’s identity in relation to the issue of the South China Sea changing?
- Which main identity discourses, and parts of these identity discourses, are becoming more and less dominant?

This step began with “co-occurrence analysis” (Step 2a) which counted the changing frequency with which particular terms were used in association with the word “China” as well as the names of other states in the two types of material. After this, it used dictionary-based analysis for measuring the changing dominance of the main identity discourses. In both sections, the keywords focused on were those identified as associated with the main identity discourses during the discourse analysis.

STEP 2a: Co-occurrence analysis

This stage of the analysis looked at the frequency with which different words were associated with “China” as well as several main Others (ASEAN, the Philippines, and Vietnam) in all of the posts and articles. This way, I could examine the changing ways in which the identity of the Chinese Self and these Others were being constructed during the period 2014-2018. The findings of this analysis show a change in the way in which China itself was being portrayed in the material from the autumn of 2016 onwards, as well as a related change in the way in which these Others
were being portrayed, with less emphasis on their difference from China during the later period.

For the results that are presented in the following pages, it is useful to be aware of some of the main events which occurred during the period. Most significant was the Hague Tribunal’s South China Sea Ruling, made in July 2016. This legal case, taken to The Hague by the Philippines, asked for rulings on certain decisions regarding the South China Sea. It led to a huge increase in the number of Weibo posts overall and affects the counts of co-occurring words significantly. Other relevant events in the period might be the G20 Summit held in Hangzhou in September 2016, and the meeting between the then US President and the then Vietnamese Prime Minister in 2017. The results that are presented here should be viewed in the context of a shifting number of overall articles and posts at different points in time.

The presentation of these results that follows starts with the frequency keywords co-occur with China, then details the frequency words appear alongside the names of other states. I present the co-occurrence in a 5-word window either side of the state name of each keyword shown in the caption, first in the Weibo posts and then in the People’s Daily articles.
China

I first focused on descriptions of China itself in the two types of material. The discourse analysis indicated that the “Great Power” discourse emphasised China’s identity as rising and becoming more powerful. I therefore looked at the changing frequency with which the word “rise” 峙起 was associated with China. In the early period (until Q3 2016), this word is used a lot alongside China in both kinds of material. However, after this there appears to be less emphasis on China’s rise and its growing power, particularly in the official discourse from People’s Daily.

Figure 6.1: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "rise" 峙起

Weibo:

![Weibo chart showing frequency of co-occurrence between China and "rise" over time]

People’s Daily:

![People’s Daily chart showing frequency of co-occurrence between China and "rise" over time]
In the discourse analysis, there also appeared to be an emphasis on China’s size (or power) and how it was becoming a “big power”. I therefore looked at how frequently “big country” 大国, also translated as “major power”, was used alongside China. The phrase is used with greater frequency in the earlier period until autumn 2016, after which it is used much less (with a spike in People’s Daily in Q3 2017). Notably, the phrase is used more frequently in People’s Daily which might reflect an attempt by official discourse to present China as strong after Xi Jinping became president.

Figure 6.2: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "big country" 大国

Weibo:

People’s Daily:
In the other main identity discourse, labelled the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse, China was described in terms of its international leadership and economic cooperation, especially in connection with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). I therefore looked how frequently “BRI” 一带一路 was used alongside China. In the Weibo posts, it is used relatively infrequently with no marked change. However, in People’s Daily it is used much more frequently and there is a marked increase in use from Q3 2016 through to Q3 2017.

Figure 6.3: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "BRI" 一带一路

Weibo:

![Weibo graph]

People’s Daily:

![People’s Daily graph]
Alongside being linked to the BRI, in this second discourse China appeared to be connected with (economic) cooperation more generally. I therefore looked how many times the word “trade” 贸易 was used alongside China in the two types of material. It is noticeable that "trade” was used in connection with China much more in People’s Daily than on Weibo during late 2014 and early 2015. Then there is an increase in the frequency that the word “trade” is used alongside China in both types of material from mid to late 2016 onwards. However, the increased frequency with which “trade” is used alongside China is not sustained through the later period. The spike in use in People’s Daily in Q4 2018 may be due to the “trade war” between China and the US at this time.

Figure 6.4: Frequency of co-occurrence between China and "trade" 贸易

![Graph showing frequency of co-occurrence between China and "trade" over time.](image-url)
The “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse used words which emphasised China’s cooperation with other states. I therefore looked at the frequency the word “partner” 伙伴 was used alongside China in the material. On Weibo, China is generally not described as a partner very frequently, although there is an increase in use at the start of 2018 (perhaps reflecting the fact that China and ASEAN jointly issued a Strategic Partnership Vision 2030 at this time). In People's Daily, there appears to be some increase in use after Q2 of 2016.
Southeast Asian States

The discourse analysis showed how identities for China were being constructed through differentiation from various Others. In the “Great Power” discourse, China’s identity is constructed through difference from the way in which Southeast Asian states are presented. In this identity discourse, these states are presented as being different from the Chinese Self in a range of ways and through their difference are described to challenge China’s identity.

Figure 6.6: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "illegal" 非法

Weibo:

People’s Daily:
Southeast Asian nations are described as acting “illegally” 在法律上有限可 挑战中国的合法性，挑战其地位。对于菲律宾，在 Weibo 上有一个巨大的峰值在 2016q3 当海牙法庭裁决宣布时。在 People’s Daily 上，变化不大，但与菲律宾的“非法”一词的使用量在 2016 年第三季度增加，然后在 Q3 2016 后期止。对于越南，在 Weibo 上有与“非法”一词的高关联直到 2016 年末，然后下降。在 People’s Daily 上，越南与“非法”关联非常少，几乎没有在 2016 年之后。
The discourse analysis also indicated that Southeast Asian nations were depicted as different from China because of how their claims to territory in the South China Sea infringed upon China’s rightful ownership or control over this territory. I therefore looked at the frequency the word “infringe” 侵犯 (or “violate”) was used alongside the Southeast Asian countries. For the Philippines, this term is not used so frequently on either Weibo or in People’s Daily, but there is some use in the early period and around the Hague Tribunal ruling.

Figure 6.8: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "violate" 侵犯

Weibo:

People’s Daily:
The word “violate / infringe” was not used in association with Vietnam in People’s Daily.

Figure 6.9: Frequency of co-occurrence between Vietnam and “violate” 侵犯

The word “violate/infringe” was used quite frequently in connection with Vietnam on Weibo, in periods throughout 2016. This suggests that Vietnam was being understood as an Other which was different to China during this time. However, after this, it is used much less frequently overall, indicating a change in understanding of Vietnam at this point. This keyword was not found to be being used at all alongside Vietnam in the People’s Daily articles. This could be because the official discourse did not seek to present Vietnam as different to China in this way. It might also be because, instead of “infringe”, other terms were used to convey the same meaning about Vietnam’s difference from China in the official discourse.
The discourse analysis also showed the material presented Southeast Asian nations as different from China by describing them as occupying Chinese territory in the South China Sea. I therefore looked at the frequency “occupy” (or invade) was used alongside these countries’ names. For the Philippines, the word is used a moderate amount in the early period with a rise on Weibo in mid 2015 and then a large spike around the Hague Tribunal. It is noticeable how, after 2016, the word is not used at all in People’s Daily, indicating a distinct shift in the way official discourse presents the country.

Figure 6.10: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "occupy"
For Vietnam, on Weibo the word “occupy” is used quite frequently in association with the country until the start of 2017 and then much less frequently after that. This suggests a decline in the presentation of the country as a different Other in Weibo posts. In People’s Daily, the word is used infrequently in connection with Vietnam throughout the period. This may be because the official discourse did not want to present Vietnam as being different from China. It might also be because in the official discourse other language is used to present the same idea.
Southeast Asian states were also found to be presented as different from China in how they provoked China and the South China Sea issue. They were presented as refusing to recognise China’s dominance. I therefore looked how frequently the word “provoke” was used alongside these countries’ names. The pattern is similar to other keywords conveying difference, with frequent use in the early period (particularly on Weibo) and then less frequent use after 2016.

Figure 6.12: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "provoke"
The word “provoke” was not used in association with Vietnam in People’s Daily.

Figure 6.13: Frequency of co-occurrence between Vietnam and "provoke" 挑衅

On Weibo, use of the word “provoke” alongside Vietnam is fairly infrequent throughout the period. In People’s Daily the word is not used at all alongside Vietnam during the period. This might again reflect the official discourse’s reluctance to portray Vietnam as being different from China in these terms and its attempt to maintain a particular kind of discourse about relations with the country.
One way that Southeast Asian nations were presented as being different from China was through their connection with different kinds of maritime patrols. I therefore looked at the number of times the verb “patrol” was used in connection with these countries. Here, the word may be used both to describe the state conducting patrols, as well as the need for China to patrol against it. The word “patrol” is used much more frequently in connection with the Philippines in the early period in both kinds of material.

*Figure 6.14: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "patrol"*
The word “patrol” is also used more frequently in the early period in connection with Vietnam. It does not appear at all in connection with Vietnam in People’s Daily after the start of 2017, but is used a small amount before this. The large spike in the usage on Weibo in Q2 2017 is likely due to the fact that the US carried out naval patrols of the South China Sea at this time, with Vietnam being mentioned in connection with this. In May 2017, then Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc met with former US President Donald Trump in the US and the two discussed cooperation on the South China Sea, with the naval patrols following this meeting.
The Southeast Asian countries also appeared to be presented as different from China because of their association with the US. I therefore looked at how frequently “the United States” is used alongside the names of these Southeast Asian states. For the Philippines, on Weibo there is frequent association of the country with the United State in the earlier period and a huge spike connected to the Hague Tribunal. People’s Daily follows roughly the same pattern, and there is hardly any association in the later period.

Figure 6.16: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and “the US” 品国

Weibo:

People’s Daily:
Vietnam is similarly associated much more with the US in the early period than after 2016, especially on Weibo. However, in People’s Daily there appears to be another rise in the connection between the country and the US in the middle of 2017, which may reflect the previously mentioned talks between the two countries going on at the time and the agreements to cooperate in the South China Sea that they made. Regardless of this, in People’s Daily there is generally limited discussion of Vietnam in connection with the US after the end of 2016.
While the words presenting these Southeast Asian nations as different from China are used quite frequently at times during the period analysed, keywords associated with similarity between China and these nations are much less frequent overall. Where these words are used in connection with the countries, it tends to be in the later period of the years analysed. I first looked at how frequently “cooperate” 合作 was used alongside these countries. For the Philippines, there is higher use of the word in connection with the states from the second half of 2016 onwards. This is especially sustained in People’s Daily. This may reflect a changed understanding of the Philippines and the presentation of it as a cooperative partner after this point.

Figure 6.18: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "cooperate" 合作
For Vietnam, there is more frequent use of “cooperate” on Weibo in connection with the state at certain points in the later period. However, interestingly the pattern in People’s Daily does not correspond with this, with Vietnam being associated with cooperation more in the earlier years of the period analysed. This might indicate that the official discourse was consistently trying to present Vietnam as having cooperative relations with China, despite pressure from the public to view it differently.
The “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse emphasises China’s economic identity and trade relations. I therefore looked at how frequently “trade” was also associated with the Southeast Asian nations. Just as China’s own identity as a trading nation was found to be expressed more in the later years (2017 and 2018), the Philippines was also discussed alongside “trade” more frequently during this period. The number of times the word is used in association with the Philippines is, however, relatively small. It is noticeable that until the middle of 2016, the word “trade” is not mentioned in connection to the Philippines at all in either material. However, the word is arguably used too few times to conclude anything specific from these results.

Figure 6.20: Frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "trade"

![Graph showing frequency of co-occurrence between the Philippines and "trade" in Weibo and People's Daily.](image)
The word “trade” is also not used in association with Vietnam very frequently in either type of material. This may be because China’s economic relations with Vietnam are discussed using other terms. However, there is a slight increase in use of “trade” in connection with Vietnam in the latter years of the period analysed. There is greater use of the word alongside Vietnam in Q3 2018 on Weibo and Q3 2017 in People’s Daily. But again, the word is arguably being used too few times in the material to conclude anything specific from these results.
The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

The articles and posts both discussed Southeast Asian states individually and also tended to discuss them together as ASEAN. The discourse analysis showed that in the “Great power” discourse, ASEAN was presented as an Other that was different from the Chinese Self and challenged its identity. Meanwhile, in the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse, similarities between China and ASEAN were emphasised in contrast with the US. I therefore examined the frequency with which words were used in connection with ASEAN 东盟. I first analysed how often ASEAN was linked to the “United States” 美国. In both types of material, there is more frequent connection of ASEAN with the US in the early years.

Figure 6.22: Frequency of co-occurrence between ASEAN and "the US" 美国

![Weibo chart](chart1.png)

![People's Daily chart](chart2.png)
The discourse analysis had indicated that in the “Peaceful Asian Leader” identity discourse, China’s economic identity was emphasised, especially its role in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). I therefore looked at how frequently the “BRI” 一带一路 was mentioned alongside ASEAN. While the BRI is not discussed alongside ASEAN that much on Weibo, in the People’s Daily articles this is much greater, and there is a noticeable increase in the discussion of ASEAN in relation to the Initiative during parts of 2017 and 2018. This might indicate that the Chinese leadership increasingly understood, or sought to present, relations with ASEAN through the lens of the BRI.

**Figure 6.23: Frequency of co-occurrence between ASEAN and "BRI" 一带一路**

**Weibo:**

![Graph showing frequency of co-occurrence between ASEAN and "BRI" on Weibo](image)

**People’s Daily:**

![Graph showing frequency of co-occurrence between ASEAN and "BRI" in People’s Daily articles](image)
Along with the BRI, the discourse analysis showed other keywords used to present close relations and similarity between China and ASEAN in the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse. There was a tendency to present China and ASEAN as being a “collective” or doing things “collectively” 共同. I therefore looked at how many times the word “collective” was used alongside ASEAN in the two types of material. The phrase is used a lot more in People’s Daily articles than on Weibo, but the changing frequency of use does not show any definite pattern.

*Figure 6.24: Frequency of co-occurrence between ASEAN and "collective" (common) 共同*

Weibo:

![Weibo Frequency Chart]

People’s Daily:

![People’s Daily Frequency Chart]
Another keyword that the discourse analysis showed being used to convey cooperation between China and ASEAN was “effort” 努力. In the material, statements referred to the common “effort” made by China and ASEAN to deal with issues, particularly the South China Sea. The keyword is therefore an indicator of when articles/posts present China and ASEAN as having shared interests.

![Weibo](image1.png)

![People's Daily](image2.png)

**Figure 6.25: Frequency of co-occurrence between ASEAN and "effort" 努力**

The keyword is used more frequently in connection with ASEAN in the *People’s Daily* articles than the *Weibo* posts. There is an increase in use from the middle of 2016 through to the end of 2017, suggesting that these articles were presenting China and ASEAN as more similar during this period.
Conclusions from the co-occurrence analysis

The quantitative co-occurrence analysis showed how different elements of the two main discourses that had been found in the discourse analysis changed in dominance over time. Several main conclusions can be drawn from this analysis:

- **A decline in use of “Great Power” words alongside China and an increase in use of cooperative words and words related to integration.**
  First, the frequency with which certain words were used in connection with “China” showed the declining dominance of certain elements of the “Great Power” identity discourse. In both the *People’s Daily* articles and the *Weibo* posts, there is a decline in the frequency of the use of the word “rise” alongside China after the middle of 2016. There is also a fall in the frequency of the use of the phrase “big country” after this point, particularly in the *People’s Daily* articles. The frequency with which words were used alongside “China” also shows the growing dominance of certain elements of the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse. In the *People’s Daily* articles, there is a rise in the frequency that “partner” is used alongside China after the middle of 2016, with a smaller increase in frequency also seen on *Weibo*. There is also an increase in the frequency that “Belt and Road Initiative” is used alongside “China” after mid 2016 in the *People’s Daily* articles, but no similar increase is seen on *Weibo*. This might indicate that it was the state media behind the growing dominance of this element of the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse. The official media may have sought to cultivate this identity.

- **A decline in presentation of Southeast Asian states as different Others and an increase in presentation of them as similar to China.**
  Second, the changing frequency with which certain words were associated with Southeast Asian states shows the declining dominance of their presentation as a different Other in both kinds of material, but particularly on *Weibo* (and thus the decline in dominance of this element of the “Great Power” identity discourse). In both the *Weibo* posts and the *People’s Daily* articles, there is a large decline in the frequency with which both the Philippines and Vietnam, as well as ASEAN, are associated with the US. In both kinds of material, there is a decline in the use of words presenting the Philippines as an Other – “occupy / invade”, “violate”, “provoke”, “patrol” – after mid 2016. In the *Weibo posts*, there is also a decline in the use of several of these words – “occupy / invade”, “violate”, and “provoke” –
in connection with Vietnam. This might indicate the way in which the Chinese public lay behind dominance of the “Great Power” identity discourse in the early years and its presentation of all Southeast Asian regional states as Others.

Accompanying this decline in the use of words presenting these Southeast Asian regional states as an Other, in People’s Daily there is an increase in the frequency of words presenting them as similar to China. This indicates the growing dominance of elements of the “Peaceful Asian Leader” identity discourse. In the People’s Daily articles, after the autumn of 2016, there is an increase in the association of the Philippines and Vietnam with words suggesting positive relations – “cooperate”, “trade” - but no similar increase seen in the Weibo posts. In the People’s Daily articles, there is also an increase in the frequency that ASEAN is associated with words suggesting cooperation – “Belt and Road Initiative”, “Effort” – after the middle of 2016, but no similar increase on Weibo. There is therefore a notable increase in use of cooperative words in People’s Daily to describe regional states and organisations after the middle of 2016. This might indicate how the growing dominance of the “Peaceful Asian Leader” identity discourse was being driven more by the state media discourse than by that of the public.

This first part of the quantitative analysis looked at how these separate keywords, as elements of the two main discourses, moved individually. I also wanted to examine how they moved together as a whole. This meant measuring the changing dominance of the two main discourses based on these different keywords that are features of them grouped together. The next section of the analysis did this by forming groups of 35 keywords that are representative of the two main identity discourses – the “Great Power” and “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourses – and measuring how the dominance of these groups changed in the two types of material.
Step 2b: Measuring the changing dominance of the main identity discourses

To summarise the analytical steps taken so far: The qualitative discourse analysis of the articles and posts indicated that there were two main identity discourses present in the material. I labelled these as the “Great Power” discourse (Discourse 1) and “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse (Discourse 2). The analysis also indicated that the dominance of these discourses in the two types of material was changing over time, or that at different times articles and posts tended to express one or the other of these main identity discourses. Quantitative co-occurrence analysis then showed me more about how elements of these two discourses were changing in dominance over time. This analysis showed a declining presentation of the Chinese Self in terms of its power and dominance in the region, and an increasing presentation of it as integrated and engaging in cooperation. It indicated that there was a decline in the presentation of Southeast Asian regional states as Others that were different from China and an increase in the presentation of these as being similar to China.

I then wanted to measure accurately the changes in the overall dominance of the two main identity discourses during the period from 2014 to 2018. This forms the second part of the quantitative analysis (Step 2b). Here, I sought to answer the following question:

- Which main identity discourses are becoming more and less dominant in Chinese society?

To do this, I followed the same procedures used in the first case study. I used the Quanteda text analysis package and created two dictionaries each containing 35 keywords which had been found to be associated with the basic discourses when doing the quantitative analysis (for the lists of keywords see the Appendix B4). I then used the text analysis package to classify each of the 146,633 Weibo posts and 3069 People’s Daily articles as being either of “discourse 1” (the Great Power discourse) or “discourse 2” (the Peaceful Asian Leader discourse) based on whether they contained more of the keywords from the former or latter type. I summed the number of posts of each discourse type within each month. The results of this analysis are shown on the following pages:
Figure 6.26: The changing dominance of the “Great Power” (Discourse 1) and “Peaceful Asian Leader” (Discourse 2) discourses in the Weibo posts between October 2014 and December 2018.
Figure 6.27: The changing dominance of the “Great Power” (Discourse 1) and “Peaceful Asian Leader” (Discourse 2) discourses in the People’s Daily articles between October 2014 and December 2018
This section of the analysis sought to measure the changing dominance of the two main identity discourses – the “Great Power” discourse and “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse – in the two types of material. The changing height of the pairs of bars in the figures presented above represents the total number of posts or articles of each discourse type per month. This changes considerably, because in some months there were more articles or posts being published than in others. Whilst this is useful information, representing the intensity with which the topic was being discussed, it is not the main focus of the analysis here. Instead, this is the relative balance between the bars side by side, or between the numbers of articles or posts categorized as each discourse type.

To begin with the results for the Weibo posts (Figure 6.26), the balance between the two discourse types is overall quite even here. However, during the early part of the period studied there are several periods where the number of posts from the “Great Power” discourse (coloured red) is greater than the number from the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse (coloured blue). These are from May through until July 2015, from October 2015 through until March 2016, then in May 2016 and July 2016. This indicates that the “Great Power” identity discourse was generally more dominant amongst the Weibo posts, or in the public’s online discussions on this platform, in this period through until the middle of 2016. After the middle of 2016, there is a marked change and the number of posts of the “Peaceful Asian Leader” identity discourse (coloured blue) is greater than the number for the “Great Power” discourse (red) for most of the later period, through until October 2018, with the number of posts of this discourse type sometimes far outstripping the number of posts of the other type. This appears to indicate a shift in the dominance of the two identity discourses on Weibo.

Moving on to examine the results from the People’s Daily articles (Figure 6.27), here there are consistently more articles of the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse (coloured blue) throughout the entire period. This result perhaps might not be so surprising, because the kind of diplomatic language used in state media articles generally fits better with the cooperative tone of this discourse. However, this may also indicate the way in which the state media has throughout the period sought to maintain a discourse that facilitates good relations with other regional states. It is still possible to look at the changing numbers of articles classed as being the “Great Power” identity discourse (coloured red), even if these are always outnumbered. Here it can be seen that in the early period, there are
higher numbers of articles expressing the “Great Power” discourse at several different times, notably from May 2015 to October 2015 and then from February 2016 to July 2016. This might possibly indicate that the official discourse in state media is reflecting the greater dominance of this discourse in the public discussions during these times. After the middle of 2016, the number of articles of the “Great Power” discourse then declines, with several months where there were no articles classified as being of this discourse type.

The overall picture is of a change between the dominance in Chinese society of these two main identity discourses, which occurred in mid-to-late 2016. This change in dominance was more pronounced on Weibo than in the People’s Daily articles, which throughout the period analysed had continued to express the “Peaceful Asian Leader” identity discourse more prominently.
6.4.3 STEP 3: Lacanian analysis to explain the dominance of the main identity discourses

The qualitative analysis revealed that there were two main identity discourses being expressed within the material, which I labelled as the “Great Power” discourse and “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse respectively. The quantitative analysis then showed that the relative resonance (or dominance) of these main identity discourses changed over the period of time being analysed between 2014 and 2018. While in the initial years of this period, the “Great Power” discourse appeared to be resonant in Chinese society, in the later period the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse instead became much more resonant and somewhat overshadowed the former discourse.

This section of the analysis aimed to explain why these two discourses resonated in Chinese society in the way they did at different times. In this section, I therefore sought to answer the following question:

- How can we explain the dominance of different identity discourses?

To do this, my analysis drew on Lacanian theory about the psychological reasons why people invest in particular discourses, as I have discussed in detail in the theory chapter (Chapter 3). To summarise, this theory sees individual subjects as desiring a full identity which can never ultimately be achieved. To try to gain this full identity, they invest in discourses which appear to offer identities to them. These discourses produce fantasies that channel people’s desire for a full identity, offering master signifiers that give the promise of regaining a full identity that is felt to be lost, while at the same time deploying Others to cover over the ultimate lack of this kind of full identity. Those identity discourses which effectively produce such fantasies and channel our desires are the ones that are most likely to resonate. This means that we can explain the resonance of particular identity discourses by close reading of texts that articulate these discourses, looking at the way in which fantasies are being produced by their features.

The following section presents Lacanian analysis of four articles that I have taken to be representative of the two main identity discourses STEP 1 found being produced in relation to the issue of China and the South China Sea (two articles for the “Great Power” discourse and two for the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse). This close analysis of a small
number of texts was considered sufficient to find how these identity discourses are producing fantasies to channel desire for a full identity. When selecting the representative articles for analysis, I chose articles deemed to be rich in language related to China’s identity and therefore likely to yield findings when analysed. This meant that I did not use the Weibo posts, because these were considered too short for this kind of analysis.

In the presentation of the analysis of each article, I follow the same structure to describe the elements of the fantasy produced: Initially, I attempt to categorise the article based on Lacan’s four ideal-typical discourse types (See Chapter 4); Then I describe the way in which the article uses master signifiers to present a promised identity for China, and after this I describe how it presents Others to explain the fact that this full identity being promised has not yet been achieved. The analysis of each article is preceded by a translation of the article. This text is marked to show its Lacanian features, with master signifiers used to promise an identity highlighted (in grey) and Others that are offered to explain why this has not been achieved underlined. I begin with analysis of the “Great Power” identity discourse, asking why this was so resonant in Chinese society in the early period from 2014 through to the middle of 2016


The quantitative analysis indicated that in the early years of the time period analysed, from 2014 through to the middle 2016, the “Great Power” discourse resonated considerably within Chinese society. I would suggest that this discourse had already begun to resonate with the public in the years before this and there was continued strong resonance until the end of 2016, when this discourse began to lose ground to a different identity discourse which instead gained much greater resonance. To analyse why this discourse resonated so much with Chinese society at this time, I will here provide a close analysis of several articles that can be seen as representative of this discourse, looking at the ways in which these articles construct a fantasy that channels desires for a full identity. The articles can be seen to express the “Great Power” discourse in slightly different ways. The method of analysis employed has been described in more detail in the methods chapter (Chapter 4).
Article 1: The Space Parties Have to Provoke China in the South China Sea is Narrowing

The first article chosen as representative of the “Great Power” discourse was published in the state-owned tabloid *Global Times* on 29 March, 2013\textsuperscript{123}. Although this article was published slightly before the period focused on in this thesis, it is a representation of the same kind of “Great Power” discourse that was found to be resonant during the early years of this period. This text is marked to show its Lacanian features, with master signifiers used to promise an identity highlighted (in grey) and statements presenting Others underlined:

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\textsuperscript{123} 各方南海挑衅中国空间在收窄, The Space Parties have to Provoke China in the South China Sea is Narrowing, *Global Times*, 29/03/13 (Appendix B5.1)
The Space Parties Have to Provoke China in the South China Sea is Narrowing

In recent days, China’s navy fleet patrolled near the James Shoal, the southernmost territory of China in the South China Sea, the personnel onboard the vessels declaring their resolve to safeguard the territory. Previously, Chinese ships fired warning flares on Vietnamese fishing boats illegally entering Chinese waters near the Paracel Islands. These actions both show China’s resolute attitude that it will not retreat in the territorial disputes.

The US state department twice declared its position on the Chinese naval movements, using light and heavy words, maintaining the posture that the US can at any time enter into the South China Sea.

The personal aggressive style of the US’s new secretary of state, Hilary, is fading. But the United States is still the United States, and its squeeze on China in the South China Sea will not change in the opposite direction. China clearly has frictions with the Philippines and Vietnam, but in fact it is involved in a contest with the US in the South China Sea. This kind of complicated nature and feeling of tension will not go away.

After four years of Hilary’s clever diplomacy in the South China Sea, and after the Philippines and Vietnam’s multiple frictions towards China, the South China Sea’s various risks have flooded to the surface. Each party is more familiar with, and clearer about, the other’s strength and resolve.

China has adopted powerful countermeasures against the Philippine and Vietnamese provocation, changing from being passive to active. China has all along been extremely worried that frictions in the South China Sea will worsen its surrounding environment, and will harm China’s period of strategic opportunity. This round of contest has helped China to get rid of a big part of its doubts, and tempered China’s understanding of the frictions.

The Scarborough Shoal crisis pierced the paper window between China and the Philippines: After all, this is a contest between countries with extremely disparate levels of power. If the South China Sea issue turns into a confrontation of strength, the Philippines and Vietnam cannot bear it, and there is no hope of victory.

China’s position and attitude regarding the South China Sea has not changed. For example, China has no plan to recapture all the islands that the Philippines and Vietnam and others have illegally captured. But regarding the Philippines and Vietnam’s provocations, China’s countermeasures have changed to be being resolute and China has changed to become “tough”. Furthermore, the situation in the South China Sea has generally adapted to China’s “toughness”.

China’s ability to control the South China Sea issue has increased, the deep reason for this being that Chinese national power has steadily developed. Its confidence in resisting US involvement in the South China Sea is growing stronger, and the resources that it can use are increasing. The space in which the Philippines and Vietnam can confront China in the South China Sea is constantly narrowing and US policies in the South China Sea are becoming more constrained.

As long as China continues to maintain the continuity of the basic South China Sea policy, then it will unceasingly increase the strategic comfort that it enjoys in this region, gradually expanding its initiatives in the South China Sea. As the Philippines and Vietnam learn a lesson, they will become more fearful of making big moves. If they dare to mess things up again, the public opinion risk of China’s response to provocation will be less.

China needs to make a realistic summary of the South China Sea. China’s score proves that we don’t need to wait for peace in front of any forces, but it also should not cause us to indulge ourselves and get the impression that everything we long for will appear.

Regarding the South China Sea issues, China has “tolerated” others’ actions. In a position of being “at the end of one’s forbearance” [having tolerated as much as one can], China has taken countermeasures against the Philippines and Vietnam. China’s countermeasures were not strategically out of the ordinary, so the Philippines and Vietnam’s making a fuss, and the US vocal support also died away. China’s countermeasures are gradual in nature. The Philippines Vietnam, and others’ fierce confrontation of China is more troublesome than accepting the lessons China has taught them.

From now on, China should operate an uncompromising strategy in the South China Sea, dare to take steps but also leave room for the situation to adapt. China’s rise continues to accumulate power that is not angry but of self-prestige. China needs to follow the natural proliferation of this power to adjust its actions.

China is committed to peaceful development, but we dare to take resolute measures to uphold core interests. China’s response to the rights and wrongs of friction in foreign affairs generally shapes the outside world’s knowledge of us. We from the outset should make sure the outside world doesn’t misjudge us. This is important for China’s long term strategic environment.

As I discussed in the previous case study, some texts more clearly fit with one of Lacan’s four discourses, while others seem to be a combination of more than one of the types of discourse. This article is arguably mostly an example of the Lacanian “Master’s Discourse” presenting a particular
identity for China as being the objective truth that is recognised by all. However, at times it also seems to acknowledge the impossibility of achieving a full identity in a way that seems to resemble the “Hysteric’s Discourse” more closely. The article is quite abundant in master signifiers offering a particular identity for China. An identity of Chinese strength is presented throughout with a sense of certainty, as though this is a generally recognised fact about the world. Throughout the article there are statements describing how the circumstances “show” [line 9] or an event “proves” [line 67] a particular identity for China in a way which emphasises this idea of certainty, of a concrete identity.

The Promised Identity – A Strong China

The article presents a promise of an identity that China is close to regaining: that of a powerful, confident nation which dominates in the South China Sea region. It does this through the deployment of particular master signifiers. I have highlighted these in grey in the text. These master signifiers present China as increasingly powerful in different ways. China is described as having “strength” [line 26], as being “powerful” [line 28], having “ability” [line 50] and “national power” [line 51]. Alongside these, China is also depicted as powerful through the labelling of it as being “tough” [line 47] and showing “toughness” [line 48], where the article puts these words in quotation marks as if acknowledging that they are subjective terms. This power and strength of China is described to be increasing all the time, with China “growing stronger” [line 53] and continuing to “accumulate power” [line 83]. All of these words together provide a promise of a China that is close to once again becoming a strong and powerful nation in the world.

This promised Chinese Self within the article is repeatedly associated with “resolve” [line 6, line 26] and being “resolute” [line 9, line 46], master signifiers that seem to present a particular characteristic at the core of China’s identity. Then as well as presenting China to be becoming strong and resolute in this way, there are also master signifiers which present a promise of a Chinese Self that is again becoming dominant in the region, achieving a position of “strategic comfort” [line 59] where it is not threatened by other nations. There is an interesting tension between this projection of getting close to achieving comfort and dominance and also an acknowledgement that this identity is not yet fully realised and remains uncertain (with the US still threatening), as I shall return to in the discus-
sion below. In connection with this promise of China achieving dominance, the identity for the Chinese Self that is presented is one of “confidence” [line 52] and “self-prestige” [line 84].

This promised identity for China as strong and dominant in the region is framed in a way that links it to certain policy actions. Solomon (2015) described how the identities promised in Lacanian fantasies are typically presented in this fashion: “True justice will be achieved if…” (Solomon 2015, p.48). Here, the promised identity is presented to be one that China will achieve if only it takes certain actions. The article suggests that the promised identity of strength and dominance will be achieved if only China continues to “operate an uncompromising strategy in the South China Sea” [lines 81 and 82]. It must “follow the natural proliferation of this power to adjust its actions”. Or in other words, it must recognise the fact that it has already become more powerful and act accordingly. In this way, the promised full identity offered by the Lacanian fantasy within the article is directly linked to particular policies.

Presenting Others to Cover the Lack – The US and Regional States

All of the master signifiers listed above that are used in the article to promise a “lost” identity that China is close to regaining are essentially ambiguous in nature. It is not clear exactly what is meant by Chinese “power” or “strength” or “toughness” and therefore the full identity which is being promised is essentially incomplete. The article on one level appears to be trying to fill these words with meaning through differentiation from a range of Others. The meaning of Chinese “strength” is created through contrast with the relative weakness of Vietnam or the Philippines: “After all, this is a contest between countries with extremely disparate levels of power” [lines 37 and 38].

However, alongside this construction of China’s identity as strong through difference from various Others, the article’s use of these Others can also be analysed through Lacanian theory and the way in which the Others function to cover over the underlying sense of a lack of a full identity. Because the master signifiers offered to describe this promised identity are essentially ambiguous, they also summon a sense of lack of a full identity. The article is interesting in this sense, in that it almost seems to directly acknowledge this lack at one point, describing how we should not “indulge ourselves and get the impression that everything we long for will appear” [lines 68 and 69] and appearing to refer to the fact that the full identity is not entirely achievable.
Together with offering a compelling promise of an identity for the Chinese Self to be regained, the fantasy produced by the discourse also needs to present Others which offer reasons why this promised identity has not yet been achieved. I have underlined those sections of the article where it is doing this. In this, the main Other used by the article is the US which is presented as “stealing” China’s enjoyment of a full identity where it is dominant in the region. The US is described as “maintaining the posture that the US can enter at any time into the South China Sea” [lines 13 and 14] and so persistently challenging China’s dominance over the region. It is suggested that the US produces a “feeling of tension” that “will not go away” [line 21] and so it essentially steals China’s enjoyment of the kind of “strategic comfort” that it is promised it can achieve. In a broader sense, the US is also made the reason why China has not yet become as strong as it otherwise would, because it puts a “squeeze” on China in the region or seeks to contain it in a way that inhibits its power.

The articles both present the US as an Other which blocks China from achieving the promised identity of dominance and strategic comfort. They also offer the Southeast Asian states of Vietnam and the Philippines as Others that similarly get in the way of China’s enjoyment of this identity. However, these states appear to be presented as increasingly limited in their challenge to China’s identity. The article states, for instance, that “the space in which the Philippines and Vietnam can confront China in the South China Sea is constantly narrowing” [lines 54 and 55]. This both reinforces the promise of a soon to be achieved identity where China is entirely dominant in the region and also presents the two Southeast Asian states as acting to prevent this identity. The spatial metaphor, which is used throughout the article, is an interesting way of presenting these dynamics. The identity being promised for China appears to be one where it has complete control over the space around it and where there is no space for other nations to act against it.

**Article 2: Using actions to demarcate clear boundaries on the sea**

The second article analysed appeared at around the same time as the article discussed above, published in *People’s Daily* on 28 March 2013\(^\text{124}\). It is a good example of how the same “Great Power” discourse might appear in a slightly different form. This article is much more argumentative, placing

\(^{124}\) 用行动在海上划一条清晰的线, Using Actions to Demarcate Clear Boundaries on the Sea, *People’s Daily*, 28/03/13 (Appendix B5.2)
emphasis on how China needs to behave if it going to achieve the identity being promised to it. The article abounds in statements about how China should act, supported by an underlying identity discourse. As with the previous article, this text is marked to show its Lacanian features, with master signifiers used to promise an identity highlighted (in grey) and statements presenting Others that are offered to explain why this has not been achieved underlined:
Using Actions to Demarcate Clear Boundaries on the Sea.

Currently, the East China Sea and the South China Sea areas involving our sea territory are undergoing a trend of fundamental change. China is taking actions on the sea to delimit clearer boundary lines, lines that protect China's territorial sovereignty and oceanic rights, and lines that one is not permitted to cross. This has mainly involved doing two things in the past period, and especially last year:

One is producing a new mode for protecting oceanic sovereignty

Last year, the Philippines, Vietnam and Japan separately provoked situations in the South China Sea and East China Sea. Our side was pressed to hit with a “combined fist”. As a late comer to controlling others, changing from passive to active, it realised the normalisation and exclusive "physical control" of the waters of Scarborough Shoal, established Nansha City and security area, launched bidding for oil and gas blocks on the Chinese side of the Nine-Dash Line near Vietnam, announced the baselines of the territorial waters of the Diaoyu Islands and its affiliated islands, and broke Japan’s imagined, so-called unilateral “actual control” of the Diaoyu Islands in one fell swoop.

In recent months, our country has dispatched multiple rounds of maritime surveillance and fishery administration ships to South China Sea territories such as the Paracel Islands, Huang Yan Dao, Mischief Reef etc. In the Diaoyu Islands territory, it has carried out fishermen protection patrols, strengthening the normalisation of governance. The joint mobile formation of the Chinese Navy's South China Sea Fleet has arrived in the South China Sea, carrying out training in marine action battles, on sea protection of sovereignty and distance sea protection of ships, rapid response and support.

Second is to create new tools for protection of sovereignty

Regarding hardware, our country has formulated plans for the construction of large maritime rights enforcement ships, equipment updates, and team additions. A group of advanced maritime surveillance and fishery law enforcement ships has been launched successively to perform patrols in the Diaoyu Islands, Scarborough Shoal and Nansha. Even more important is software, [it has] reorganised the national oceanic office, which will combine different departments. The maritime surveillance, oceanic enforcement, fishing governance, and anti-smuggling and other law enforcement teams have seen their responsibilities integrated. In addition, the ocean council has been established, which carries out coordination of related departments, thus forming a clenched fist.

Our country’s ocean sovereignty covers over 300 square kilometres of territory, in which more than a half is disputed with bordering countries. The rising trend of maritime disputes is clear. The task of protecting sovereignty, rights protection, and law enforcement is extremely difficult and
complicated. From now on, regarding ocean rights questions, we must focus on the following:

First, straightforwardly insist that maritime questions involve China’s core interests. In 2011, the Chinese government published a white paper about “China’s Peaceful Development”, clearly defining that Chinese sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national security are China’s core interests. When China talks about the way in which the South China Sea problems involve China’s core interests, this should not be something that is seen as not fit to be revealed, and there is not a need to be coy about it, but we must express our side’s position with a loud voice.

Second, it should be without hesitation that we defend our country’s sovereignty over islands and maritime rights. In recent months, Vietnam falsely claimed China’s navy “shot at” Vietnamese fishing boats, and the incident was raging. The Chinese side clarified in a timely manner, and declared that it was necessary for us to expel Vietnamese fishing boats that entered our country’s waters around the Paracel Islands to carry out illegal operations. Regarding behaviour that encroaches on Chinese sovereignty and ocean rights, China should not worry about the other state’s protests, entanglement, spreading rumours and troubles. We must investigate violations of the law and enforce strict law enforcement to form new practices and allow relevant countries to adapt, ensuring that the provocation and encroachment of these parties does not pay, and ultimately that they dare not act rashly.

Thirdly, we should pursue dialogue with perseverance to resolve disputes and create a cooperative, win-win environment. Seeing things from a dialectical perspective and in terms of long-term results, the protection of our maritime sovereignty and the preservation of stability are two hands that we should use simultaneously. From this foundation, we should continue to insist on using dialogue to peacefully resolve disputes, and should have a battle of wits but not a quarrel. Regarding those obstinate opponent politicians, we should not be overly warm and friendly. At the same time, we should keep disputes restrained within limits, and continue to use appropriate opportunities to positively create bilateral ties, advance the region’s coming together, and create a completely beneficial environment for our country.

The article might be considered to fit with the structure of the Lacanian “University Discourse” in the way that it uses a system of signification, or a wide-ranging discourse with many signifiers, that is underpinned by some master signifiers to present China’s identity. These statements about China’s identity produce a sense of the split subject, or draw attention to the fact that its identity and claims in the South China Sea are undefined or subject to contestation. As a result of this, the discourse needs to present
compelling Others in order to cover over the lack generated and explain away the fragility of China’s identity.

The Promised Identity – Unchallenged Sovereignty of the South China Sea

The article promises an identity that China is close to regaining: that of having unchallenged sovereignty over territory in the South China Sea. It does this through the presentation of a range of master signifiers and statements underpinned by these. I have highlighted these in grey within the text above. There are repeated references to China’s territory, with the article mentioning “our sea territory” (line 4), then “China’s territorial sovereignty” (line 6), the “territorial waters” (line 18), “our country’s ocean sovereignty” (line 45), “our country’s sovereignty” (lines 61 and 62), “Chinese sovereignty” (lines 67 and 68), and “our maritime sovereignty” (line 78). These repeated references to China’s claimed territory – none of which actually mean anything concrete – appear as an attempt to reify this idea, to present China’s identity as closely associated with a certain expanse of territory in the South China Sea.

The article then promises that China is getting close to defining this territory and controlling it in such a way that it cannot be challenged by others. It describes how “China is taking actions on the sea to delimit clearer boundary lines, lines that protect China’s territorial sovereignty and oceanic rights, and lines that one is not permitted to cross” (lines 6 and 7, my italics). This presents China’s identity as associated with defined and unbreachable territorial boundaries. It presents a process. China is moving towards achieving this identity being promised. Later on, the article similarly states that the Chinese government has produced a white paper “clearly defining” (line 54) its territory. China is presented as achieving the “normalisation” (line 14) and “strengthening the normalisation” (line 26) of its control over the region. The promised identity is one where it is considered normal, or all other states accept, that China has control over territories in the South China Sea. It is presented as achieving the “exclusive ‘physical control’” (lines 14 and 15) over the South China Sea territory.

As part of this promised identity that China is described as getting closer to achieving, the article presents it as becoming stronger and better able to enforce its rights in the region. China is presented as a state that is increasingly capable of “controlling others” (lines 13 and 14) and is “changing from passive to active” (line 14). The article describes how China “has formulated plans for the construction of large maritime rights
enforcement ships” (lines 33 and 24), suggesting that it is increasing its capacity for the enforcement of its rights. In a particularly emphatic image, it describes how China is becoming a “clenched fist” (line 43) and ascribes to it an identity of strength that means it can more effectively deal with challenges to its sovereignty in the South China Sea.

In this way, the article presents a promise of a China that is strong and has clearly defined sovereignty over territory in the South China Sea that it can effectively prevent others from challenging. While the article does not explicitly convey this, it is implied that this absolute Chinese sovereignty over the region is the natural way of things and so China is regaining an identity that it has “lost” in the past. The fantasy that is produced by the discourse in the article channels desire for a full identity, offering a glimpse of enjoyment in the vision of the full identity where China has absolute and unbreachable sovereignty and control over the region. In this way, the promised identity in this article is comparable to the “strategic comfort” that was promised for China in the first article analysed above.

Presenting an Other to Cover the Lack – Regional States

However, as already mentioned, many of the master signifiers used to express this identity that China is gaining – “sovereignty”, “normalisation”, “rights” – are ambiguous and open to different interpretations. They therefore produce a sense of lack or an awareness of the impossibility of the full identity. In order to cover over this kind of lack, the fantasy being produced by the discourse also presents Others. These Others are posited as the reasons why China has not yet achieved the full identity being promised, why it still does not have complete sovereignty over territory in the South China Sea and why this is still being contested. In the text above, I have underlined these statements that present Others as reasons why China has not achieved the full identity being promised to it.

The article describes how “last year, the Philippines, Vietnam and Japan separately provoked situations in the South China Sea and East China Sea” (lines 11 and 12) and presents these countries as failing to recognise China’s sovereignty and control, so challenging its assumption of an identity as sovereign over the region. It particularly presents Japan as an Other which stands in the way of it achieving this identity, because it has tried to establish “imagined, so-called unilateral ‘actual control’ of the Diaoyu Islands” (line 19 and 20). The language used here is notable, with the words “imagined” and “so-called” drawing attention to the way
in which Japan provides a different definition of things from that being presented by China, thus working to challenge the identity which China seeks to present.

These Others are also presented as challenging aspects of China’s identity in other ways. The article describes how “Vietnam falsely claimed China’s navy ‘shot at’ Vietnamese fishing boats” (lines 62 to 64) and presents this regional state as seeking to falsely depict China as the aggressor in the region. Similarly presenting them as offering a contrasting set of meanings to those promoted by China, the article refers to “other states’ protests, entanglement, spreading rumours and troubles” (lines 68 and 69). In a range of ways, therefore, these Others are described as embodying and presenting identities which conflict with those promised to China.

When these two articles are analysed in this way, it becomes clear why the “Great Power” discourse was so resonant within Chinese society. The discourse produced a fantasy that effectively channelled desire for a full identity and the accompanying frustration about the fact that this was not yet fulfilled. This fantasy promised that China was close to regaining an identity as a strong and powerful state, which enjoyed a high level of strategic comfort and freedom from fear of interference, and which had complete sovereignty over territory in the South China Sea. To cover over the feeling of lack that accompanied this promise, or the fact that China had not yet completely achieved this full identity (and ultimately never would), the fantasy also presented different Others as scapegoats, stealing China enjoyment of this full identity, and providing a compelling justification for why it had not been achieved.

Given that this discourse resonated in this way, the question is then why the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse was able to overtake it and become more resonant within society in the later years of the period analysed. The next section of this chapter conducts close analysis of articles representative of the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse to try to answer this question. It argues that this discourse produced a fantasy that channelled people’s desire for a full identity in a different way, offering them instead the promise of an identity for China as a leader of international cooperation, particularly through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The Resonance of the Peaceful Asian Leader Discourse – 2016 to 2018

The quantitative analysis in STEP 2 showed that after the middle of 2016, this “Great Power” discourse became less resonant and was then some-
what overshadowed by a “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse which resonated considerably within Chinese society at this time. Although this identity discourse which presented China as engaging in cooperation with other states had been present previously, it appeared to be given new force with the presentation of China as the main power behind the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the years after this massive programme was first announced in 2013. In this way, the “Peaceful Asian Leader” identity discourse might be seen as an existing cooperative identity discourse appearing in a new form at this time. To analyse why this “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse resonated so much with Chinese society at this time, I have closely analysed several articles, again focusing on the way in which these texts construct fantasies and channel desires for a full identity.

Article 1: BRI Heralds a New Security System

The first article chosen was published in the opinion section of People’s Daily on 1 March 2017\(^{125}\). The article presents an identity for China which is very broad in scope, as the leader of international cooperation across the world through its BRI project. However, this identity discourse is still linked to the depiction of a particular identity for China in relation to the South China Sea. The text is marked to show its Lacanian features, with master signifiers highlighted (in grey) and statements presenting Others underlined:

\(^{125}\) 中青报:“一带一路”呼唤新的国际安全体系, BRI Heralds A New Security System, People’s Daily, 01/03/17 (Appendix B5.3)
BRI Heralds a New Security System

In today’s world where the western supported capitalist global security order is disintegrating, this emerging new security system is becoming an important tool for maintaining regional stability and safeguarding world peace.

With the “Belt and Road” summit approaching, the establishment and advancement of the “BRI” is becoming one of the focuses of society. While rejoicing that the "Belt and Road" initiative has achieved many great achievements in the past three years, we have discovered and analysed the main difficulties faced in the practice of the “Belt and Road” initiative, and found corresponding solutions. The “BRI” has already become a task that must be completed. Looking at the current “BRI” proposal’s implementation situation and the future advancement trends, BRI’s security risks will attract more attention.

The security risks can be roughly summarised into four aspects

First, some countries along the BRI, because of various reasons, have grim domestic security situations. In the practice of recent years, some countries have seen security risks such as political instability, ethnic disputes, terrorism, and separatism, or centre – regional conflict etc. which over the course of time have limited the advancement of “BRI” projects, even leading to some projects being halted.

Second, some important areas of the “BRI” such as Ukraine and Russia, Pakistan and India have regional conflicts or tensions between countries, which limits the “BRI” from advancing regional integration.

Third, some great powers from outside of the region have deliberately created a tense atmosphere in countries along the BRI, which has limited the BRI proposal’s advance. For example, a series of actions taken by the United States on the South China Sea issue have a strong purpose of containing the “Belt and Road” initiative.

Fourth, following the Trump administration’s “anti-globalization” track’s gradual emergence, future international security trends have a high likelihood of worsening a step, and a portion of countries along the BRI have a possibility of being deeply affected.

Even though China’s BRI proposal is primarily an economic one, economic development must rely on ensured security order. In order to protect China’s overseas interests, which are rapidly increasing along with the advancement of the “Belt and Road” initiative, as well as the property and life safety of a large number of Chinese companies and personnel,
building a new international security system around the “Belt and Road” has become an unavoidable historical mission for China.

Frankly, the rise of any major power, is always accompanied by a reorganisation of the international security order. In the history of western society, this reorganisation is usually accomplished through the struggle for hegemony of major powers, the rise of empires, and even world-wide wars. This is also the reason for some countries’ worries about China’s rise. But China, which has inherited the spirit of the great harmony of the whole world, lacks interest in the selfish hegemony through the order of the world in terms of cultural basis. This is also because, in history, Chinese Empires, and the East Asian order surrounding this imperial nation, were very different from the empire represented by conquest and colonisation.

In the course of advancing the BRI, China prefers to coordinate and cooperate with countries along the route, to build mutual trust and an equal security order. No matter whether it is China and Central Asian nations’ Shanghai Cooperation organization, or China and ASEAN’s security cooperation, they are both completely different from NATO, which is centred on US hegemony, and the looming US, Japan, and South Korea military alliance. In today’s world where the western supported capitalist global security order is disintegrating, this emerging new security system is becoming an important tool for maintaining regional stability and safeguarding world peace.

To this day, out of fear of possible misunderstandings in some countries, China still maintains a low-key and cautious international cooperation in the military and security fields, but following the advancement of “BRI”, Chinese society will eventually find that it provides a security order as a public good to countries along the “Belt and Road”. Not only will China be an important responsible major power, but also states will collectively hope to gain peace, stability and prosperity from the BRI.

The discourse in this article arguably most closely resembles the Lacanian “Master’s Discourse” in its presentation of a particular identity for China as the universally accepted truth. It deploys a range of master signifiers in order to present this identity for China, with this presented as the way things are, while the ultimate ambiguity of these terms used to convey China’s identity is strongly repressed within the article.

*The Promised Identity – An Important Leader of Global Cooperation*

The article presents a promise of an identity that China is close to regaining, as an important leader of the world that facilities cooperation between
other states and which they look towards to provide order. It does this through the use of master signifiers, highlighted in grey in the text, which in different ways present China as becoming increasingly important and a leader in the world. The identity is most emphatically presented in the final paragraph of the article, which promises an identity for China as an “important”, “responsible”, “major power” (all line 78). There is first the promise that China is becoming increasingly powerful, or becoming a “major power” (lines 50 and 78), with the description of “China’s rise” (lines 54 and 55) and the reference to the “rise of any major power” (line 50) that makes it clear that this is a reference to China’s identity.

Then, in association with this, the article suggests that because China is becoming more powerful it is also becoming increasingly “important” (line 78) in the world. The idea of China’s global importance is repeated throughout the article, with the descriptions of how the BRI, and by extension China as the creator of this, are becoming an increasingly “important tool” (lines 5 and 70) in the maintenance of order. To further convey this importance of China, the article also contains interesting statements around the theme of ‘looking’ – where other countries are in different ways presented as looking towards China, with BRI “becoming one of the focuses of society” (line 9). It describes how other states “collectively hope” (lines 78 and 79) to gain from the BRI. In this way, China is spatially made the centre of attention, reinforcing these master signifiers in their depiction of China as globally important.

Another phrase connected to the presentation of China as important in the world may be the statement that China has “inherited the spirit of the great harmony of the whole world” (lines 55 and 56). This is a reference to Chinese philosophy and the traditional belief that China was the centre of the world, and the leader of “all under heaven” which works to bring peace and harmony to everybody. China is presented as continuing to have this identity today. The language use is interesting, with the word “inherited” indicating that contemporary China is continuing to sustain this historical identity as centrally important in the world. In this way, the identity that is being promised for China in the article, that of an important leader of international cooperation, is very much presented as one which it had before and is on its way to regaining. The final lines of this paragraph refer to “the East Asian order surrounding this imperial nation” (lines 58 and 59) and evoke this historical identity, where the labelling of China as an “imperial nation” seems to refer to both the past as well as what it is once again becoming in the present.
I would also argue that “BRI” (line 13) and “emerging new security system” (line 4) function a lot like master signifiers in the article to present a particular identity for China in the world. China is closely associated with BRI such that it becomes a part of its identity, or the identity being promised for it (for example, in line 42 “China’s BRI”), in the same way that within the article the West is associated with “capitalism” as a part of its identity. Within the article, the “emerging new security system” is presented as being closely associated with China and its role in the world. Both of these concepts function as part of the promise of the identity that China is on its way to achieving, an identity which it is presented as having “lost” but is close to regaining. In this respect, it is interesting to note in relation to the association of BRI with China’s identity that when this concept was first launched it was referred to as the “New Silk Road”, a name which further emphasises its connection to a historic Chinese identity.

As Solomon (2015) suggested is typically the case, the identity that is being promised for China is framed as one which it can achieve if it takes certain actions. The article describes how “the ‘BRI’ has already become a task that must be completed” (lines 13 and 14) and “the ‘BRI’ has become an unavoidable historical mission for China” (lines 47 and 48). In this way, the article is like a lot of Chinese government discourse in ascribing as part of China’s identity a particular quest that needs to be accomplished (for example the Road to Revival discourse). The identity being promised and the actions needed to achieve this identity are closely bound together, so that the promised identity becomes very closely linked to policies. Here, the identity promised, of a China that is important and influential in the world, can be achieved if the public continue to support the BRI and the policies connected to this, and indirectly if they continue to support the Chinese Communist Party which is the originator of this project.

Throughout the article, the promised identity for China is presented through master signifiers around the theme of cooperation. It is promised that China is realising a cooperative identity. China is associated with “regional integration” (line 29). Then later, the article states that “China prefers to coordinate and cooperate” (line 62), and it is associated with “cooperation” (line 65) and then “security cooperation” (line 66). All of these master signifiers used in connection with China function to present an identity for it as cooperative and working with the other nations in the region and across the world. These words play a central part in delineating...
the identity that the article presents China as increasingly close to achieving.

*Presenting an Other to Cover the Lack – Multiple Others and the US*

All of these master signifiers used to make a promise of an identity for China are ambiguous or slippery in their meaning. We might ask: What does it mean that China is a “major power” or is “important” in the world? What is the substance of the “BRI” or the “new security system” associated with China? And what is the nature of Chinese led “cooperation” being presented? In this respect, the article appears to be doing a lot of work to try to define these labels and fill them with meaning, largely through differentiation of these terms applied to the Chinese Self with terms applied to a range of Others. For example, the “new security system” is given meaning by the statement that it is “completely different from NATO” (line 66). Meanwhile, China’s growing importance in the world is set against the importance of western states, and particularly perhaps the US, which is described as “disintegrating” (line 69). However, even with such attempts to give them definition, there remains a sense of ambiguity or a lack about these master signifiers. They do not provide the kind of enjoyment of a full identity which is being desired, and the identity being promised by them always therefore remains unrealised.

In order to cover over this sense of lack produced by these master signifiers, it is necessary for the fantasy being produced by the discourse to propose Others which explain why its promised identity has not yet been achieved. In this way, the article seems to devote quite a lot of space to discussing why China’s BRI project has not yet fully been achieved, also suggesting that these are reasons why China has not yet realised its position as leader of the world. The first statement doing this describes the “political instability, ethnic disputes, terrorism, and separatism, or centre – regional conflict etc. which over the course of time have limited the advancement of ‘BRI’ projects” (lines 22 to 24). Here, these wide-ranging Others are presented as “stealing” China’s enjoyment of the successful completion of the BRI and of regaining of its position as provider of international order. They stand in the way of the full identity which is being promised for China. It is interesting that these Others, presented as the barriers to the BRI in different foreign countries, are also the Others which the CCP typically presents as standing in the way of domestic harmony within China. This might indicate how closely linked China’s BRI identity is to its domestic identity.
The article also presents a second Other as being the reason why China’s promised identity as “Peaceful Asian Leader” has not yet been fully achieved, in a way that links the discourse more directly to the South China Sea. It describes how “some great powers from outside of the region have deliberately created a tense atmosphere in countries along the BRI, which has limited the BRI proposal’s advance” (lines 32 and 33). The article then gives the example of how “a series of actions taken by the United States on the South China Sea issue have a strong purpose of containing the “Belt and Road” initiative” (lines 33 to 35). Here, the US is presented as standing in the way of China’s achievement of a peaceful leadership role in the Southeast Asian region. The US blocks China from becoming a state to which other regional countries look as a provider of order. The US “steals” China and other regional states’ enjoyment of this full identity, which they should have under the framework of the BRI. If it were not for the US’s interference in the region, China and regional states would have been able to realise this harmonious cooperation. In this way, the fact that the US continues to intervene in the South China Sea provides a justification for the fact China has not yet achieved the identity promised.

Having analysed how the discourse presented in this article constructs a fantasy that promises China is close to regaining a full identity as an important leading state and deploys Others to explain why it has not yet achieved this, I now want to turn to an article which expresses this same discourse in relation to the South China Sea issue and China’s relations with Southeast Asian nations.

**Article 2: BRI Becomes a New Opportunity for China–Philippines Cooperation**

This second article was published in *People’s Daily* on the 1 March 2017. It is an expression of the same “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse as the first article, however this article constructs an identity more specifically for China in the Southeast Asian region and more directly implies policies for China’s relations with states within the region. While the article is perhaps a less good example of how this identity discourse produces a Lacanian fantasy that channels our desire, it still contains many elements of this, and was chosen for analysis alongside the first article because of its direct relevance to the South China Sea issue. The article shares many

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126 “一带一路”成中菲合作新机遇, BRI Becomes a New Opportunity for China – Philippines Cooperation, *People’s Daily*, 01/03/17 (Appendix B5.4)
things in common with the first article, similarly depicting the BRI as being closely associated with China’s identity and conveying China’s growing importance in the world through the attention given to it by other states. In the same way as the other articles, this text is marked to show its Lacanian features, with master signifiers highlighted (in grey) and statements presenting Others underlined:
BRI Becomes a New Opportunity for China-Philippine Cooperation

Recently, the 30th ASEAN summit was held in the Philippines. After the summit, the Philippine president Duterte confirmed during a press conference that he will go to Beijing to attend the “Belt and Road” International Cooperation Summit Forum in May. He also made positive comments on the “Belt and Road” initiative.

The basis for China and the Philippines to discuss the “Belt and Road” cooperation is that the two countries are effectively managing differences. During the Aquino III government period, the Philippines unceasingly provoked the South China Sea dispute, seriously harming bilateral relations. After Duterte was appointed president, he has improved the approach towards China. The two countries have reached an important mutual understanding, and agreed that cooperation should be focused, disputes should be put aside, and the South China Sea issue should be brought back to the track of bilateral negotiation and settlement.

The Philippine side several times has made clear that the so-called "South China Sea Arbitration" award will not be the subject of discussion at the ASEAN meeting, emphasising that it will advance bilateral contact with the Chinese side and there is no need to raise the conflict at the ASEAN level. This ASEAN summit, the chairperson’s declaration involving the South China Sea issue displayed restraint, and it also showed that ASEAN and China are interacting with each other on maritime issues. It is very clear, as the ASEAN chairman, the Philippines is not only unwilling to allow the South China Sea issue to interfere with the overall situation of China-Philippine cooperation, but also tries to avoid kidnap- ping ASEAN.

In the background of improving China–Philippine relations, the “BRI” proposal is inevitably attracting the Philippine’s attention.

First, the Philippines recognises China’s development achievements and hopes to learn from China’s development experience. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, China has promoted in-depth reforms and economic transformation internally, adhered to the concept of openness and cooperation externally, and played an important role in global governance. President Duterte will take the initiative to research the Chinese economic development theory of the BRI, to take advantage of related cooperation to take the express train of China’s economic development.

Also, the Philippines has praised the cooperation concept raised by China. In recent years, malicious interpretations have been frequently directed at the BRI. However, more and more countries, including the Philippines, have gradually recognised the Chinese proposal, believing that China upholds the principles of extensive consultation, co-construction,
and sharing in the process of promoting cooperation, respects differences between countries, does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, and truly promotes win-win cooperation.

Finally, the Philippines looks with weight on the results of the cooperation promoted by China. Since Chairman Xi Jinping in 2013 raised the BRI proposal, the proposal has rapidly established itself. In a short period of a few years, China has already signed BRI agreements and MoU with over 40 countries. ASEAN countries pay a great deal of attention to the BRI, and apart from Duterte, Indonesian President Joko, Laotian President Bounnhang, Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib, and Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi will also participate in the “Belt and Road” International Cooperation Summit Forum. The Philippine President focused on domestic infrastructure construction and launched a large-scale infrastructure investment plan in April this year. As of June 2016, Chinese state-owned enterprises had undertaken 38 large-scale transportation infrastructure projects in 26 countries along the “Belt and Road”. Many people in the Philippines believe that China and the Philippines have great potential for cooperation in infrastructure and other fields.

Suffering the disturbance of the South China Sea disputes, China and the Philippines once missed a good opportunity for cooperation. In the changes occurring to the two countries relations, the opportunities surrounding the BRI cannot be lost. It is hoped that the Philippine side grasps this opportunity, letting the BRI become a new light in the cooperation between China and the Philippines.

The article, in a similar way to the first article analysed above, presents a promise of an identity that China is close to achieving, as a model of successful economic development and a leader that fosters cooperation between different countries. It does this through the presentation of a range of master signifiers that label China’s identity. I have highlighted these in grey within the text above. The first group of these seek to present China as offering an example of successful economic growth to other states, referring to “China’s development achievements” (line 34) and “the express train of China’s economic development” (line 40). They therefore associate China’s identity, in a quite particular way, with the master signifier of “development” as a defining characteristic. Along with “development”, the identity presented for China also appears to be one related to effective change, with China described as having carried out successful “reforms” and “transformation” (both line 37). Together, these words serve to construct a particular economic identity that China has, or is coming close to achieving. In the first line of this paragraph, it is notable the way in which
the article emphasises the fact that the “Philippines recognises” China’s identity. This described recognition functions as a way of confirming that the presented identity is the way that things really are, or the objective ‘truth’ about the world.

The article then not only seeks to promise an identity for China as a state that has achieved successful development but also as one that is a model for other states around the world. It describes “China’s development experience” (line 35) and “the Chinese economic development theory of the BRI” (line 40) and presents China as an example or model that others seek to research and learn from. In the second of these phrases it is notable how, like in the first article discussed above, China’s identity is made to be synonymous with the BRI. The BRI becomes a part of China’s identity of development and a model for others to follow in the world. Again, this BRI identity for China is given solidity by the article’s description of how “more and more countries, including the Philippines, have gradually recognised the Chinese proposal” (lines 46 to 48). The identity that is being promised for China is made to seem real by the fact that other states around the world all recognise it as having this identity.

As well as promising an identity for China as a model for development, the article also presents China as becoming an influential leader in the world in other ways. The article presents an identity for China as a state that is “promoting cooperation” (line 49) and “truly promotes win-win cooperation” (line 51) and appears to be promising an identity for China as a particular kind of leader of relations between states, where the use of the word “truly” is interesting in the way that it seems to try to make this identity appear objective and universally accepted. In addition to this, the article describes how China has “played an important role in global governance” (lines 38 and 39), using the same master signifier as the first article to present an identity of leadership for China. The final line of the article is also interesting with regard to this promise of a leadership identity, describing how soon people will see the “BRI become a new bright spot [light] in the cooperation between China and the Philippines” (line 75). The image here is almost of a beacon, and the statement suggests that the BRI, which is synonymous with China’s identity, is going to become a beacon of cooperation. The statement appears to promise that China itself will become a bright spot, or a leader, of cooperation in the region and contribute to the presentation of this promised identity.
In this article, the promised identity is not so explicitly linked to the need to take particular policy actions. Towards the end, the article describes how “China and the Philippines once missed a good opportunity for cooperation” and continues that “in the changes occurring to the two countries relations, the opportunities surrounding the BRI cannot be lost” (lines 72 to 74). This somewhat links the identity being promised to the need for certain actions, suggesting that China needs to continue to pursue good relations with the Philippines. However, following this the article then suggests that responsibility for this lies on the Philippine side, and that it is necessary that the “Philippine side grasps this opportunity” (lines 74 and 75). This appears to acknowledge the Philippines’ role as an Other which can influence whether or not China successfully achieves the identity being promised. In this way, the article continues to make the Philippines a scapegoat for the frustrations of identity.

*Presenting Others to Cover the Lack – Various Others*

The master signifiers used to express the identity being promised for China in the article are ambiguous in meaning, with words such as “important” (line 38) and the meaning of “the ‘BRI’ proposal” (line 55) open to being defined in different ways. For this reason, when these master signifiers are used to define China’s identity then they also produce a sense of lack or a feeling about the impossibility of achieving a full identity. The fantasy produced in the discourse therefore also needs to provide something to cover over this sense of lack, offering reasons why the full identity being promised has not yet been achieved.

In this article there are a small number of statements that function in this way, underlined within the text. These statements present Others as a reason why China has not yet fully obtained its identity as a leader of cooperation through BRI. The article states that “in recent years, malicious interpretations have been frequently directed at the BRI” (lines 45 and 46) and presents this unnamed Other as a force which is working to prevent China from realising the BRI identity. This Other is presented as giving a different, negative meaning to the master signifier of BRI and therefore challenging China’s presentation of this initiative as a model of cooperation between nations. The Other challenges the master signifier at the heart of China’s identity.

Alongside this, the article describes how China’s cooperation with the Philippines (and by extension its cooperation more generally) had been “suffering the disturbance of the South China Sea disputes” (line 71). This
statement arguably makes these disputes themselves into an Other that has stood in the way of China achieving the cooperative identity promised. In doing so, it presents China as not being responsible for these disputes. Instead, these disputes are presented as something that is being imposed on China and the Philippines and hindering good relations between them. I would argue that the actor implied to be imposing these disputes is the US. The article therefore implies that the US is challenging China’s achievement of the cooperative identity, something which is made more explicit in other examples of the “Peaceful Asian Leader” identity discourse.

A final Other being presented in the article as a reason why China has not achieved its promised cooperative identity, so as a scapegoat for the frustrations of identity, is the previous Philippine administration. The article describes how “during the Aquino III government, the Philippines unceasingly provoked the South China Sea dispute, seriously harming bilateral relations” (lines 11 to 13). Here, the article presents the former Philippine government as a reason why China has not yet achieved its full identity, as well as presenting the new Philippine administration as a part of the promise that this identity is close to being grasped. The Philippines therefore functions as a key Other within the fantasy produced by the discourse within the article.

**Conclusions of Lacanian Analysis**

In the early years of the period analysed, the Chinese public’s desire for a full identity for themselves and China led them to invest in a “Great Power” discourse which promised that China was becoming increasingly powerful and that, provided it followed certain policies, it would soon regain dominance of the region. The resonance of this discourse within Chinese society likely resulted in great pressure on the Chinese government to pursue particular foreign policies in its relations with other Southeast Asian states and in handling the South China Sea issue.

However, in the later years of the period analysed, after the middle of 2016, the BRI and an identity discourse connected with this was instead able to offer the Chinese public a different promised identity to channel their desires. This promise - that instead of becoming great and dominant over others through power alone, China would become a peaceful leader of cooperation between states and provider of international order through the BRI - channelled the public’s desires for a full identity in a different way. This promised identity, produced by the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse, therefore gained significant resonance amongst Chinese society
in these later years. It took away the pressure on the Chinese government to act in ways which proved its power and dominance over the other Southeast Asian states and made possible the pursuit of more cooperative foreign policies.

In this case study, I would therefore argue that both main identity discourses were very resonant within Chinese society, but during the latter period the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse redirected some of the energy away from the other discourse and was able to become more dominant in a way which overshadowed it. In the early period examined until the middle of 2016, and likely even before this, the “Great Power” discourse clearly resonated strongly within Chinese society. My Lacanian analysis showed that this identity discourse did this because of the fantasy it offered. This fantasy promised China was becoming dominant in Asia and the only reason China had not yet achieved this dominance was because of the interference of particular regional states and the US. This analysis supports other studies which have also pointed to the emotional forces behind the aggressive foreign policies which China adopted in the South China Sea during this period (Wirth, 2020). My analysis shows that Chinese policies, such as increased patrols and a programme of artificial island building, were made possible by the Chinese public’s strong emotional or psychological desire to see China achieve a full identity as strong and dominant.

However, after this the “Peaceful Asian Leader” identity discourse instead became more dominant, overtaking this first discourse. I would argue that there were a number of different reasons for this, closely connected with the fantasy this discourse produced and the way this related to developments occurring in the world at the time. First, the fantasy produced by this discourse promised that China was becoming an important and influential member of international society, which acted as a leader of cooperation. During this period, this element of the fantasy was able to connect with the broader discourse surrounding China’s launch of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and it most likely became more compelling because of this.

Secondly, the fantasy offered the US as a main Other which was standing in the way of China achieving the identity it promised. In the period from the end of 2016 onwards, developments in the US saw the Trump administration take power. This development, and the increasingly competitive rhetoric presented by the US after this – much of which was directed at China’s role as a leader of economic cooperation – is likely to
have helped to make the fantasy in this discourse more compelling to members of the Chinese public. I would also suggest that the amount of propaganda surrounding the BRI and the US as an Other produced by the Chinese government may have helped to amplify the resonance of this discourse. Together, these elements of the fantasy produced by the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse and the way they interacted with developments taking place in the world arguably helped this discourse to become very resonant from the middle of 2016 onwards.
6.5 Case Study Conclusions

This chapter has examined short-term changes in China’s foreign policy for the South China Sea and in relation to Southeast Asian regional states. It aimed to make sense of the changes in China’s foreign policies towards the region which saw it embark on more conflictual actions between 2012 and 2016, as well as the switch in policy in the middle of 2016 towards more cooperative policies in relation to regional states. I shall begin by summarising how the analysis made sense of these changes overall and then discuss the findings made in each step of the analysis in more detail.

The analysis found that the changes in China’s foreign policy corresponded to changes in the dominance of different main identity discourses. A “Great Power” identity discourse was found to be very dominant in Chinese society, and particularly in the public discussions on Weibo, during the early period when China was adopting more confrontational policies towards the region. It can be argued that the dominance of this “Great Power” identity discourse, which occurred largely because of the “bottom up” production of this discourse by the public, made possible the confrontational policies displayed by China during this earlier period including increased maritime patrols and a programme of artificial island building.

Then from the middle of 2016, a “Peaceful Asian Leader” identity discourse instead became more dominant in Chinese society, particularly when expressed in terms of China’s role as the proponent of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This dominant “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse, which was being produced more by the state media in People’s Daily, arguably relieved the pressure that had been placed on the Chinese government to act aggressively and instead made possible the more cooperative foreign policies taken at this time.

The first step involved discourse analysis of samples of People’s Daily articles and Weibo posts. This revealed that there were two main identity discourses present within these materials, which I labelled as the “Great Power” and “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse. The “Great Power” identity discourse presented China as an increasingly powerful, rising state, seeking dominance in the region and unchallenged sovereignty over territory in the South China Sea. This identity for the Chinese Self was constructed through differentiation from Others including both Southeast Asian states and other Asian states, as well as the US. Mean-
while, the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse presented China as an important leader of international cooperation and economic exchange, particularly through its BRI. In this discourse, Southeast Asian states and ASEAN were presented as being very similar to China. This identity for the Chinese Self was constructed through differentiation from “outside” states and especially the US.

It should be reiterated here that these two main identity discourses were essentially timeless, ideal-typical analytical constructs, where actually the two main discourses were found to evolve over time. In the “Great Power” discourse, Japan became a more prominent Other, while in the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse, the idea of China as leader of BRI became more prominent. The analysis showed that these two discourses were in competition with each other in both types of material during the period analysed, although the debate between them was not as intense as that found between discourses in the first case study.

In the second step of the analysis, I used quantitative text analysis to examine the changing dominance of these two main identity discourses, as well as parts of these discourses, in the entire datasets of the People’s Daily articles and Weibo posts. In the People’s Daily articles, or the official discourse, the “Peaceful Asian Leader” identity discourse was more dominant throughout the period I analysed. This might indicate that there was a sustained attempt by state media to construct an identity conducive to peaceful relations with other regional states. However, from 2014 through to the summer of 2016, the “Great Power” identity discourse also appeared in many People’s Daily articles. This might show how the state media was reflecting public sentiment and the broader dominance of this discourse at the time.

In the Weibo posts, the “Great Power” identity discourse was found to be more dominant at several points during the early period from 2014 to 2016. After the middle of 2016, this discourse lost ground. Instead, from then onwards the “Peaceful Asian Leader” identity discourse became very dominant. Overall, this part of the analysis found a shift in the dominant identity discourse within Chinese society. The results showed the decline of the “Great Power” identity discourse and the rise of the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse after the middle of 2016 in both types of material. This change in dominant identity discourses arguably made possible China’s observed switch to more cooperative policies regarding the South China Sea at this point in time.
Looking at the shifting dominance of individual elements of these two discourses gave a more detailed picture. When the “Great Power” identity discourse was dominant during the early years of the period studied from 2014 to 2016, words that were part of this discourse and presented Southeast Asian states as different Others were particularly frequently used in the public discussions on Weibo. The official discourse in People’s Daily generally did not share this frequent use of “othering” language that condemned Southeast Asian states and presented them as different. This means that it was largely the “bottom up” influence of the Chinese public making this “Great Power” discourse dominant at the time.

In contrast, when the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse became more dominant, I found that language suggesting China was similar to Southeast Asian states and ASEAN was used more frequently in the official discourse from People’s Daily. This means that it was largely the state that was responsible for making the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse dominant in Chinese society. The dominance of the two identity discourses at different times, where first the “Great Power” discourse dominated and then the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse took over, might therefore be associated with the Chinese public and with the state, and with “bottom up” and “top down” forces respectively. In summary, the early period analysed showed the ongoing societal dominance of the “Great Power” discourse, whilst in the later period after this the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse took over as more dominant.

My analysis then used Lacanian theory to explain why these two identity discourses became so dominant in Chinese society and particularly why they resonated with the Chinese public. The “Great Power” discourse was found to have resonated amongst the public during the early years of the period analysed because it produced a compelling fantasy to channel the public’s desire for a full identity and frustration at the impossibility of ever obtaining this. This identity discourse produced a fantasy that promised China was once again becoming a mighty nation and was close to regaining its position of dominance in Asia, when it would enjoy “strategic comfort” and unchallenged sovereignty over a wide expanse of territory including the South China Sea. The fantasy also offered a range of Others in the form of regional states and the US as the reasons why this full identity had not yet been achieved. It presented these others as “interfering” with China’s affairs and trying to prevent its rise, stopping it from becoming the strongest power in the region.
The “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse which became more dominant after the middle of 2016 was found to also produce a very compelling fantasy that channelled the public’s desire for full identity. This fantasy also promised that China was regaining an important position in the world, but in a different way. This fantasy promised that China, in part through the BRI, was becoming an important leader of cooperation. It promised that China was becoming increasingly influential in international society and was increasingly a nation that other countries saw as a role model. The fantasy also presented states from outside the region, particularly the US, as the reason why China had not yet achieved this identity. In doing so, it effectively covered over the frustration of the impossibility of achieving a full identity.

In this case study, both the “Great Power” and “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourses were compelling and resonated with the public, but at different times. The “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse arguably became more resonant during this later period for a number of reasons. This discourse shared with the first discourse the use of the US as an Other, but rather than only presenting the US as a threat, it presented it as more specifically challenging China’s identity as a leader of international cooperation. The presentation arguably aligned with developments in US—China relations in this period, which saw the Trump administration embark on greater economic competition with China, in a way that helped the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse seem compelling. In addition to this, the fact that this identity discourse was closely connected to China’s identity as the promotor of BRI, and the broader discourse surrounding this, may also have helped the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse to resonate more at this time.

As I have already discussed, the “Peaceful Asian Leader” and especially its use of words describing similarities between China and ASEAN was found to be expressed much more frequently in the People’s Daily articles than the Weibo posts, suggesting that the state lay behind the dominance of this discourse in the later years of the period analysed. The Chinese government appears to have used a narrative surrounding the BRI to redirect the public’s desire for China to achieve an identity as important in the world. It moved this away from the “Great Power” discourse, and the pressure this produced for aggressive conflictual policies, and instead towards a different identity as an important major power that is a leader of global cooperation.
Understanding China’s foreign policy in the South China Sea

My analysis provides a different understanding of China’s changing policies in the South China Sea from that offered by other recent studies. Many of these studies have argued that China’s South China Sea policies in the last decade have been driven primarily by its pursuit of hegemony and control over the region (Le Thu, 2019; Tkacik, 2018). They suggest that the switch from aggressive policies towards those aimed at furthering economic integration in 2016 was essentially a change tactics to achieve this aim, moving from coercion towards economic inducement (Le Thu, 2019). However, these accounts do not appear to effectively explain the extent of the shift in approach at this time. If China was simply switching to using economic influence to have its way in the region, then why had it not done this prior to this point and why did it move to such extensive cooperation at the same time as ceasing many of the more aggressive policies it had previously pursued? My findings indicate that both the previous confrontational policies, and also the more cooperative approach to relations with Southeast Asian states after mid-2016, were not simply different strategies in pursuit of control but represented a broader shift in approach made possible by changing identity discourses within China.

Other studies have also similarly argued that China’s recent change in policies regarding the South China Sea reflects changing domestic dynamics. For instance, a recent study described how China’s changing policies in the region reflect an ongoing attempt by the CCP to achieve a balance between maintaining stability and pursuing rights (F. Zhang, 2019). It argues that between 2013 and 2016, different domestic interest groups made the pursuit of rights more prominent, which resulted in more aggressive policies, while after this the Chinese state was able to restore a balance between these two objectives. My analysis supports this broader argument, but shows that the shift in balance between pursuit of rights and stability was actually a shift in the dominance of two identity discourses being produced in Chinese society.

My findings contribute to other research which has used identity to explain China’s behaviour in the South China Sea. They support those studies that have argued that emotionally charged discourses lie behind the more conflictual policies China adopted during the period between 2012 and 2016 (Loher, 2016; Wirth, 2020), showing in more detail the specific identity discourse that worked to make possible these policies as well as the psychological forces which made this discourse resonate. In addition, my analysis supports those studies that have suggested there is
ongoing societal debate in China about policies towards the South China Sea (Nie, 2018), uncovering the main identity discourses that underpin this debate and the shifting dominance between them.

The findings from my analysis not only help to make sense of the foreign policy changes seen in the period focused on in this chapter, but can also help with understanding the longer-term evolution of China’s foreign policy regarding the South China Sea and relations with Southeast Asian states. The “Great Power” and “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourses might be expected to continue to compete with each other within discussion regarding the South China Sea, with shifts in the dominance of these two identity discourses making possible further changes in foreign policy. While China’s BRI identity is still being forcefully promoted by state media, and the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse continues to dominate as part of this, it can be expected that China will continue to adopt more cooperative and constructive policies regarding the South China Sea and relations with regional states. However, the growing dominance of the “Great Power” identity discourse again would likely create renewed pressure for further aggressive policies or demonstrations of strength.

In the introduction to this thesis, I also argued that the short-term changes in China’s foreign policy might be understood as setting the context for subsequent changes that occur. I presented China’s relations with the Philippines as one example where this has been observed to be the case (Chong & Hall, 2017). It was suggested that multiple, unresolved clashes with the Philippines in the South China Sea might lead to an accumulation of grievances, with foreign policy actions setting the context for those that follow afterwards. In this way, the foreign policies China adopted in the South China Sea during the period I have studied may shape the context for subsequent policies. The findings I have made about the underlying psychological dynamics behind these changes can help us to understand how these policies shape context in this way.

The way in which the Chinese public has emotionally invested in different identity discourses may play a part in forming the context for future changes. In the middle of 2016, the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse resonated with the public because its fantasy made the promise that China was becoming an important leader of cooperation. If events after this period do not seem to present evidence supporting this fantasy, then this might lead to frustration and the questioning of the identity. This is arguably what happened around 2018, when various Southeast Asian States began to question elements of BRI cooperation. The dominance of
the “Peaceful Asian Leader” identity discourse appeared increasingly threatened, which may have contributed to the return to more aggressive policies in the South China Sea that was observed around this time (Pearson & Vu, 2019).

In conclusion, this chapter has shown that the short-term changes in China’s foreign policy regarding the South China Sea and relations with regional states can be understood by looking at the changes to identity discourses underpinning this foreign policy and the ways in which dominant discourses are being produced by both state and the Chinese public, with either one of these having more influence on the specific discourses that dominate at any particular time. There is therefore good reason to continue to look at the discursive production of China’s identity as we seek to make sense of the evolution in China’s foreign policy regarding the South China Sea.
Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

“Let China sleep, for when she wakes, she will shake the world,” so goes an oft-cited quote, usually attributed to Napoleon. Now China has awoken, and is shaking the world in a range of ways, both positive and negative. In the past four decades, China has seen staggering economic growth and a corresponding increase in its material power. These developments have produced several interlinked debates about how we should understand China’s rise. My research has sought to contribute to these debates by taking a critical constructivist approach and analysing identity discourses to make sense of the short-term foreign policy changes China has displayed. In two cases studies, I have focused on China’s changing foreign policy in relation to security issues. This concluding chapter will first summarise the main findings from these two cases studies, then discuss how these findings can contribute to academic and public debates about our understanding of China’s rise.

7.2 China and North Korea

China and North Korea is an important case of the evolving ways China relates to other regional states, its role in the East Asian region, and also how it cooperates with the United Nations and international community regarding a security issue of increasing international concern. China’s foreign policy regarding North Korea has shown considerable short-term change over the past two decades. China has moved between support of North Korea, including reluctance to punish it, and cooperation with the international community to constrain North Korea’s provocative behaviour.

In the period from 2014 to 2018, China’s North Korea policy presents examples of this kind of short-term change. China shifted to a much greater willingness to cooperate in sanctioning North Korea during 2016 and 2017. This change in China’s North Korea policy is puzzling because it occurred concurrently with the US increasing its material power in the region. Most realist IR theories would expect China to increase its support for North Korea in response. I therefore sought to make sense of what made possible this puzzling recent change in China’s policies towards
North Korea. In doing so, I also aimed to gain a broader understanding of the dynamics shaping China’s policy towards North Korea.

The analysis found that the short-term changes to China’s North Korea policy in 2016 and 2017 could be explained by changes in the dominant identity discourses that formed the basis for this foreign policy. China’s move to greater cooperation with the international community against North Korea was made possible by the dominance of a “Stakeholder” identity discourse in Chinese society at this time. This “Stakeholder” discourse presented North Korea as an Other that was “cruel” and “threatening” and therefore very different to a Chinese Self which was described in terms that made it similar to international society.

Many of these terms in this identity discourse were used much more frequently by the public in Weibo posts than by the People’s Daily articles, suggesting that this identity discourse was largely being produced by the public. I found that the way the public made this discourse dominant produced “bottom up” pressure on the Chinese government to cooperate with international society in sanctioning North Korea. This adds to other research arguing that Chinese public discourse challenges official narratives about North Korea (Scobell et al., 2019; Shen, 2012). Analysis of why this “Stakeholder” discourse resonated with the Chinese public found that this was because it produced a compelling fantasy to channel desire for a full identity and frustration about the impossibility of ultimately achieving this. This fantasy offered a promise that China was close to becoming an important, accepted, and responsible part of international society. It told the Chinese public they were close to achieving their desires for renewed national prestige and a comfortable world in which China interacted harmoniously with other states. It then also offered North Korea as a reason why this had not yet been entirely achieved.

These findings about what made possible the short-term changes in China’s North Korea policy in 2016 and 2017 might also help us make sense of the way in which this foreign policy is evolving more broadly. The identity discourses found in this period are likely to continue to compete with each other within Chinese society, with shifts in their dominance resulting in further change. The short-term changes in foreign policy seen in the period from 2016 to late 2017 may create the context for this subsequent foreign policy change. The public invested in a “Stakeholder” discourse because it promised that China was becoming an influential and
accepted participant in international society. This understanding of the investment that they have in the identity discourse can help us to understand how it might function as the context for further changes.

If in the future it really seems as though China is obtaining this identity and other states are recognising it as such, then the public will be likely to continue to invest in this discourse, making possible subsequent short-term changes in a cooperative direction. However, if the promised identity offered by the “Stakeholder” discourse does not seem to be emerging, then a sense of disillusionment could lead to collapse of this discourse. I would argue that this latter process may have been what happened when further changes were seen in China’s North Korea policy in 2018 and after this, where it appeared that China began to re-establish ties with North Korea. Because, under the Trump administration, China did not appear to be being recognised as an important and accepted member of the international community, the “Stakeholder” discourse may have lost dominance amongst the Chinese public. This allowed the Chinese government once again to push a much older identity discourse about close ties with North Korea. Together, this took away some of the pressure on the government to cooperate with the international community and UN sanctions.

7.3 China and the South China Sea

China’s foreign policy regarding the South China Sea is another important issue, concerning both its relations to other regional states, its approach to ASEAN, and its relations with the US. China has demonstrated extensive short-term foreign policy change during the past four decades, moving between cooperation with Southeast Asian states and more conflictual foreign policies involving aggressive pursuit of territorial claims. These short-term changes are puzzling because they do not correspond to changes in the balance of power and also do not all reflect growing interdependence. In the period focused on, from 2014 to 2018, China showed similar short-term change, adopting confrontational policies to assert its territorial claims between 2014 and the middle of 2016, then shifting to more cooperative policies for a period after this. My analysis sought to make sense of these changes.

The analysis found that these changes could be explained by changes in the dominant identity discourses that formed the foundation for these policies. The dominance of a “Great Power” discourse in the period
between 2014 and 2016, which was particularly being produced by the Chinese public, appears to have driven the confrontational policies adopted by China in the South China Sea at this time, including the increasing number of patrols and the programme of artificial island building. I argue that the dominance of this “Great Power” discourse amongst the online public created a “bottom up” pressure on the Chinese government to act on this identity in the South China Sea. This supports other research which has similarly argued that certain discourses explain China’s conflictual policies at this time (Wirth, 2020). After this, the rise to dominance of a “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse between 2016 and 2018 made possible more cooperative policies. This second discourse appears to have been particularly pushed by the CCP and its propaganda organs, in connection with a broader discourse about the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). However, it was also taken up by the Chinese public and able to become dominant in society.

Analysis of why these two identity discourses resonated with the public at different times found that the “Great Power” discourse gained resonance in the early period because it produced a compelling fantasy, channelling desire for a full identity and the ultimate impossibility of achieving this. This fantasy promised that China was getting ever stronger and was close to once again regaining its dominant position in Asia. It promised an identity where, to use the phrase found in one of the articles studied, China enjoyed “strategic comfort” and its sovereignty over a wide expanse of territory was unchallenged. It also offered the actions of states in the region such as the Philippines and Vietnam, and also the US, as a justification for why this identity had not yet been completely achieved, effectively covering over the frustration felt because of the underlying lack of a full identity.

Whilst this fantasy helped the “Great Power” discourse to dominate for some time, it was then overshadowed by the greater resonance of the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse. This discourse also produced a fantasy to channel desire, promising that China, with its BRI, was close to becoming an important leader of the international system and that it had not managed to achieve this yet, only because certain outsider states, and especially the US, were standing in its way. Because elements of this fantasy, namely its use of the US as Other and its connection to China’s BRI, aligned with developments in the world at the time, it was able to resonate to an even greater extent with the Chinese public during 2016.
While both identity discourses offered appealing fantasies that resonated with the public, the connection of the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse with the BRI in the later period made it even more compelling. This was possibly also helped by the start of President Trump’s term in office, which would have reinforced those ideas about China’s global leadership, constructed against US decline, central to this identity discourse. The “Peaceful Asian Leader” identity discourse, particularly when expressing ideas about the BRI, was more frequently being produced by state media. This indicates that the state and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) were more responsible for the dominance of this identity discourse in the later period than the public’s spontaneous production of aspects of the discourse. Although the public did also quite frequently produce some aspects of this discourse, they appeared to be doing so in response to its promulgation in state media. I would therefore argue the Chinese state successfully used a narrative around the BRI to redirect the public’s desire for China to become globally important. By producing aspects of this identity discourse, they moved public desire for China to become important away from a vision of dominance and displays of strength in the South China Sea and instead towards an idea that it was important because of its leadership of international cooperation.

These findings regarding the short-term foreign policy changes seen in relation to the South China Sea between 2014 and 2018 may help us to understand longer term evolution in China’s approach towards the issue, the reasons for which are extensively debated by researchers (Chubb, 2021; F. Zhang, 2019). I would argue that there is an ongoing competition between the two identity discourses that my analysis found. Changes in their relative dominance will therefore likely produce further shifts in China’s foreign policies towards the region. Those foreign policy changes observed during the period analysed may also form the context for subsequent changes, with the Chinese public’s investments in particular identity discourses playing into this.

Even though the Chinese public has invested in a discourse promising that China is becoming a leader of cooperation through the BRI, if this identity does not seem to be emerging or is challenged in some way, then the public may become disenchanted with it. In such a situation, they might then fall back on their previous investment in a discourse promising national strength and dominance, once again calling for China to demonstrate its superiority in the South China Sea. I would argue that this began
to happen after 2018, when various Southeast Asian nations started to express doubts about BRI cooperation (Bing, 2021) and there were signs of China again switching to more conflictual behaviour in the South China Sea (Pearson & Vu, 2019). The ongoing struggle between different identity discourses, and the Chinese public’s investment in them, continues to drive different postures towards relations with other regional states.

7.4 Discussion: Engaging with the debates about China’s rise

This research contributes in several ways to the academic debates about how to understand China’s rise. In the introduction, I argued that there are three main, interconnected debates about how we should understand China’s rise. The findings of my analysis relate to all three of these debates, as I have summarised in the table below (Table 7.1). They chiefly speak to the debate about what determines China’s foreign policy as it rises (Debate 1), providing considerable evidence to show that, rather than only a power-shift, the policies taken at different times and in relation to different issues are made possible by identity constructed in discourse by both the state and also members of the Chinese public. This also contributes to debate about how to interpret evidence of how China is changing so far (Debate 2), suggesting that China should not be understood as becoming comprehensively more “assertive” across all issues. Instead, China is changing foreign policy in a range of ways, as a result of ongoing evolution in identity discourses.

The understanding that China’s foreign policy is being made possible by discursively constructed identity also means that the findings contribute to the third debate about whether or not China’s rise will be peaceful (Debate 3). The findings indicate that this is contingent on ongoing shifts in China’s identity and the short-term foreign policy changes which these make possible. These short-term changes will then set the context for subsequent changes. In the following section, I will discuss the ways my findings contribute to these three debates in more detail.
Table 7.1: An overview of how the findings from the two case studies relate to the three main debates about understanding China’s rise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debates about China’s Rise</th>
<th>Relevant findings</th>
<th>How do the findings contribute to the debate?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D1: What determines China’s foreign policy as it rises?</td>
<td>Dominant identity discourses made possible short-term changes in China’s foreign policy seen at the same time.</td>
<td>The way changing discourses were found to make possible short-term foreign policy change in each case study shows the importance of identity as constructed in discourse to China’s foreign policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1a: Does identity play a role in foreign policy? If so, how?</td>
<td>Changes in dominant identity discourses within Chinese society corresponded to short-term changes in foreign policy poorly explained by shifts in balance of power. Identity discourses dominant at different times in the two case studies shared overlapping features. Both the “Stakeholder” and “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourses in Case Study 1 and Case Study 2 respectively, were about China’s importance and leadership in international society.</td>
<td>Both case studies provided evidence to challenge arguments that China’s foreign policy is only driven by system-level factors such as balance of power and interdependence, and to support broader arguments that identity matters for China’s foreign policy. They suggested that broader identity changes may be being filtered down into the identity discourses in relation to specific issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1b: Does the Chinese public have a “bottom up” influence?</td>
<td>In Case Study 1 (relations with North Korea), the Chinese public was found to be behind the dominance of the “Stakeholder” discourse which made possible a short-term foreign policy change to cooperation with the international community. In Case Study 2 (South China Sea), the Chinese public was found to be behind the dominance of “Great Power” discourse</td>
<td>In both case studies, the public was found to be responsible for producing dominant identity discourses which made possible changes to conflictual / cooperative policies at different times. Therefore, evidence indicated the public has a “bottom up” influence on foreign policy by making identity discourses dominant but suggested this influence may have varied results.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
which made possible conflictual actions in the early period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D2: How should we understand evidence of how China, and its foreign policy, are changing?</th>
<th>China was found not only to adopt increasingly assertive foreign policies, but also to make short-term foreign policy shifts to more cooperation.</th>
<th>This challenges the arguments that China’s foreign policy is only moving in one direction and suggests that there is a more complex picture of varied change.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>- D2a: Is China becoming universally more assertive across all issues?</strong> In Case Study 2 (South China Sea), China showed a short-term shift from more conflictual to more cooperative foreign policies towards Southeast Asian states. However, these latter foreign policies were also seen to be about competition with the US. In Case Study 1 (relations with North Korea), China showed short-term change from more conflictual to greater cooperation with international society, including the US.</td>
<td>This challenges the idea that China is becoming more “assertive” in its foreign policy across all issues, showing that, in some issues, instead changes in identity might be leading to short-term changes to more cooperative action. However, it problematises the definition of an “assertive” foreign policy, showing some cooperative actions (e.g., relations with ASEAN) are actually framed as competition.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>- D2b: Is China aligning with international norms?</strong> In Case Study 1 (relations with North Korea), the “Stakeholder” discourse showed signs that China is adopting certain international norms, particularly non-nuclear proliferation, responsible statehood, and ideas about good governance.</td>
<td>These findings supported those arguments that suggest that, through its interactions with international society, China is increasingly being “socialised” and its norms and values are aligning.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3: Will China’s rise be peaceful or not? In both case studies, China’s foreign policy changed between conflict and cooperation as the result of shifts in dominant identity discourses.</td>
<td>This indicates that the course of China’s rise is contingent on the evolution of China’s identity produced in discourse, with this making possible short-term foreign policy changes, which</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- D3a: Will China engage in cooperation or conflict with the United States?

In case study 1 (relations with North Korea), the rise to dominance of a “Stakeholder” identity discourse produced primarily by the Chinese public with North Korea as an Other made possible foreign policies of greater cooperation with the US and international community. This challenges arguments that China, as its relative power grows, will only engage in increasing conflict with the US, suggesting this depends on identity changes. It indicates that increased China-US needs the presence of an identity discourse where a larger Other overshadows US difference from China.

- D3b: How will China relate to the existing international order and its institutions?

In Case Study 1 (relations with North Korea), China was found to increasingly cooperate with the UN as a result of “bottom up” pressure from dominant discourses. In both case studies, discourses showed China positioning itself as an international leader. These findings challenged arguments that China will not cooperate with international society and supported arguments that identity is important to such cooperation (particularly its participation in the UN). They challenged arguments that China is reluctant about a global leadership role.
7.4.1 The debate about what determines China’s foreign policy

My research contributes to the debates about what determines China’s foreign policy as it rises, indicating that identity plays a significant role in this. It therefore challenges the literature that argues China’s foreign policy is principally, or solely, being driven by changes in system-level factors such as international anarchy and shifts in the balance of power, or is being driven by interdependence between China and other nations. It provides evidence to support the broader constructivist contention that identity is playing a key role in shaping China’s foreign policies as it rises (Callahan, 2009; Legro, 2007). In addition, the findings help to clarify the particular ways in which identity is making possible China’s foreign policy towards different issues.

A main contribution made by my findings is to the debate about whether or not the Chinese public has a “bottom up” influence on foreign policy. Based on my findings from the two case studies, I would argue there is strong evidence that the public does have an influence on China’s foreign policy. It does not influence this directly, as some have tried to show (Chubb, 2021; Fewsmith & Rosen, 2001; Weiss & Dafoe, 2019), but by helping to make particular identity discourses dominant within society. Both case studies supported this idea of public influence, but suggested that the influence may manifest itself in different ways. In the first case study, the online public was found to be behind the growing dominance of the “Stakeholder” discourse which created pressure on the Chinese government to adopt a policy of cooperation with the international community in taking action against North Korea. In contrast, in the second case study, the online public contributed to the dominance of the “Great Power” discourse which led to pressure that pushed the Chinese government to demonstrate China’s strength by acting in confrontational and aggressive ways in the South China Sea.

In both cases studies, many words connected with these dominant identity discourses were found to be used more frequently by the Chinese public on Weibo than in the state media articles. This indicates that the dominance of these identity discourses is the result of their spontaneous production by the Chinese public, rather than the government steering public opinion. If the latter had been the case, then the state media articles in People’s Daily would also have been found to be frequently using these words at the times when these discourses became dominant. But rather
than the Chinese public echoing or responding to official discourse, instead I found the public were themselves producing and making dominant distinctive identity discourses in relation to the two issues studied. This corroborates other studies which have also found that the Chinese public’s online discourse challenges official narratives about international issues and puts pressure on the Chinese government’s foreign policy making (X. Li et al., 2003; Scobell et al., 2019).

It is also notable that the identity discourses made dominant by the public in the two case studies made possible contrasting foreign policies. The “Stakeholder” discourse resulted in greater cooperation with the international community, while the “Great Power” discourse resulted in more conflictual foreign policies in the South China Sea towards Southeast Asian states. This indicates that the pressure from dominant identity discourses produced by the Chinese public may result in a range of foreign policy choices in connection with different issues.

These findings about the importance of the Chinese public in foreign policy making are arguably extremely significant for our understandings of China’s rise. They suggest that the Chinese public may play a key role in delineating the nature of the foreign policies which the nation adopts towards different issues as it rises.

It might be assumed that in a similar way to that found for these two issues, the public could also impact on policies for other issues important in China’s rise, such as its approach to Taiwan, its ongoing handling of restive regions such as Xinjiang and Hong Kong, and the central question of China’s evolving relations with the US. The fact that very different identity discourses were made dominant by the Chinese public in the two case studies, including but not limited to nationalistic discourses, also lends support to those arguments that it is not only popular nationalism that matters (Carlson, 2011). A whole variety of different types of identity discourses, being brought to dominance by the Chinese public, might impact on its foreign policies for different issues.

The findings suggest that in studying aspects of China’s foreign policy as it continues to rise, we need to pay much more attention to the ways issues are being discussed by the Chinese public and the particular identity discourses they are producing, because these discourses may matter for the approach that China takes to such issues. In short, it might matter how the Chinese public talks about the Middle East, or about political developments in Japan. Even public discussions about other topical issues, less directly related to international affairs, may be significant. For example,
if members of the Chinese public engage in discussions about the “school climate strikes” that have recently taken place around the world, this could be influential in identity formation that shapes China’s participation in international climate cooperation. If the public discusses popular culture in South Korea, this could affect overall perceptions of the country in a way that is significant for bilateral relations. Meanwhile, discussions of gun crime and policing in the US might impact views of this key Other more broadly and therefore help to make possible particular foreign policies towards it. They might also play a role in the Chinese society’s understanding of different normative values, such as the norms of “democracy”, “human rights”, and “good governance” (O’Connor, 2021).

In the first case study, public pressure was seen to influence China’s approach towards cooperation with the UN regarding North Korea. This indicates that it may be beneficial to look at public discussions around China’s cooperation with the UN more generally because the public discourse can potentially make a difference to how it participates in the organisation. It suggests that it is incorrect to assume that the Chinese government is unconstrained in its policies towards the UN and that, on the contrary, it may have to answer to domestic audiences regarding policies that it adopts. It is therefore valuable to study in detail the identity discourses being produced by Chinese society regarding its cooperation in international organisations. This can help to further resolve the ongoing debate about to what extent China is going to participate and show leadership in international society.

In this respect, an additional contribution of my research is to the ongoing academic conversation about how much plurality there is in online discussions in China. Some have argued that the Chinese Internet contains a diversity of ideas and shows signs of developing a kind of “public sphere” (Huang et al., 2019; Rauchfleisch & Schäfer, 2015), while others have suggested that there is a limited range of voices present online and emphasised the Chinese government’s ability to control the medium (J. C.-E. Liu & Zhao, 2017; Schneider, 2018). My analysis found that for both issues, although more so for North Korea than the South China Sea, there was online debate and a range of views on the topics were being expressed. The Chinese government and state-media did not entirely dominate the discussion, although they played a part in it. The analysis therefore provided more evidence of the complex ways in which the CCP and state-media interact with the Chinese public together to construct national
identity within discourses. This supports arguments made that the Chinese state and public are “co-producing” identity (Callahan, 2009).

**Issue-based identity change and broader changes in identity**

This research has also helped to further clarify how identity works to produce China’s behaviour, showing the ways in which different identity discourses make possible the foreign policies it displays in different areas. It showed how the identity discourses related to specific issues may also be connected to wider changes in China’s identity. In the two case studies, the identity discourses which became dominant in Chinese society during 2016 (the “Stakeholder” and “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourses) shared many features in common. Both of these identity discourses presented China as being integrated into international society and becoming an increasingly important, influential, responsible member of the international community, acting in some ways in the role of a leader within this.

The findings in the two cases studies therefore point in the same direction. They both show thematically similar identity discourses becoming more dominant in Chinese society at the same time. The fact that both these dominant identity discourses shared ideas about influence, leadership, and responsibility may indicate a wider discursive shift in the construction of China’s identity. This can contribute to the discussions about how Chinese identity discourses, and the way China positions itself in the world, might be changing (Lams, 2018; Nordin & Weissmann, 2018; Pu, 2017; Shih & Yin, 2013). The findings support those who have argued that China’s identity discourse has changed more broadly in recent years, with the new narratives of the “China Dream” and “BRI” being employed (Lams, 2018; Nordin & Weissmann, 2018). They also help to define the ways in which China’s discursively constructed identity has changed.

The overlap in findings of the two case studies suggests that identity discourses are increasingly presenting China as an important international leader. This corresponds to how this new role for China has been displayed in Xi Jinping’s speeches at the Paris Climate Change Conference in 2015 and the Davos Forum in 2017, and in the way it hosted the G20 summit during the autumn of 2016. I would argue, therefore, that both case studies present evidence to suggest a broader change in China’s identity discourses taking place at this time, with China increasingly being conceived as an important, integrated member of international society which is influential and exercises leadership. Other studies also have observed the way in which China is positioning itself as a leader in its discourses (Zhao,
2020), but have questioned the extent to which this “rhetoric” relates to actual actions which China takes. In this regard, my findings indicate that there is a connection between China’s use of a discourse of international leadership and its foreign policies, at least in some specific areas of its international relations.

The findings suggested that such broader identity shifts then are filtered into specific issues in particular ways. The “Stakeholder” discourse and the “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourse found in the two case studies provide examples of how elements of this broader identity change appear differently in the discourses related to specific foreign policy issues. In connection with the North Korea issue, the broader discourse surrounding leadership and international responsibility became one which presented North Korea as a very different Other. It therefore translated into cooperation on security and peacekeeping between China and the United Nations. Meanwhile in connection with the South China Sea, the broader discourse became about commonalities between China and other regional states and China’s provision of public goods.

However, the analysis also showed how other broader discourses, aside from this international leadership discourse, also feed into the foreign policies towards specific issues. Research has described the existence of broader historical discourses about the Mao-era in China (Veg, 2019), as well as the presence of more contemporary discourses related to issues such as the US-China “trade war” (Hong Wang & Ge, 2020). In both of the case studies that I analysed, there were signs of these discourses being incorporated within the more issue specific identity discourses. In this way, I would argue that we can see an interplay between broader shifts in Chinese identity expressed in much larger identity discourses, and the more specific identity discourses that are being produced in relation to particular issues. When looking at how identity discourses work to produce China’s foreign policy, it is necessary to take into account both kinds of discourse (the more “macro” and the issue specific). There is also strong inter-connection between different issues. So we might expect frictions in the economic relationship between China and the US to then emerge in discourses about relations with North Korea, or discourses about the Belt and Road Initiative to make their way into those concerning the South China Sea.
A quest for acceptance, a quest for status

My research also contributes to debates surrounding how identity shapes China’s foreign policy, by showing more clearly the dynamics at work, as well as the emotional reasons why particular identity discourses dominate in Chinese society. The identity discourses which became dominant in the two case studies during 2016 (the “Stakeholder” and “Peaceful Asian Leader” discourses) shared features in common. It was interesting how both these identity discourses revolved around China becoming an accepted, integrated member of international society, or offered a promise that it was close to achieving this. This supports research on China’s identity which has shown the importance of ideas about international acceptance and marginalisation to its international behaviour (Suzuki, 2007). This research has linked China’s understanding that it is not accepted by the international community with its “Othering” of foreign states such as Japan, and the conflictual foreign policies that result. My research indicates the sense of marginalisation from international society in China may in some ways be evolving, but that underlying different identity discourses produced, there is always a strong desire for greater acceptance.

My analysis using Lacanian theory showed how particular identity discourses might resonate with the public because they produce compelling fantasies that offer promises about “lost” identities China is close to regaining. My findings showed that a notable thematic overlap between all the identity discourses was that the promises they made revolved around a sense of regained status. Based on this, I would argue a key part of the emotional force driving the Chinese public to invest in particular identity discourses is a desire for China to regain its status in the world. This can contribute to debates about the nature of popular nationalism in China and how this impacts on foreign policy (Zhao, 2013).

It can help us to understand why China responds in the way it does to particular international issues. This finding, about the importance of restored status to the Chinese public, may explain why China routinely makes shows of force in the South China Sea and in the airspace around Taiwan. Also, why the CCP places so much emphasis on demonstrating to a domestic public its leadership in international society. It can also help to explain why China responds so angrily to those situations where other states “hurt the feelings of the Chinese people” and to speeches by US politicians seen to “interfere” in China’s affairs (Gustafsson & Hall, 2021). All of these actions, by China or the CCP, can be understood as
being either attempts to demonstrate China’s status within the world, or responses to situations where it appears that China’s status is not being recognised by other states. They are all therefore forms of status seeking behaviour, manifestations of China’s intense desire for regained international status, as seen in its identity discourses.

7.4.2 Is China becoming more assertive and is it adopting international norms?

The findings of the analysis contribute to the debate regarding how China and its foreign policy are changing. This debate is closely connected to discussions about what is determining China’s foreign policy. This is because those who argue that different factors, such as power or economic interdependence, determine China’s foreign policy, do so by pointing to particular empirical evidence of how its behaviour is changing.

My analysis challenges the argument that China’s foreign policy is increasingly “assertive” across all issues (Friedberg, 2014; Liao, 2016), suggesting that instead policy/behaviour shows much more variation. There is variation between conflictual and cooperative policies, the identity discourses underlying these, between different issues, and between different time periods. This is not presenting a rosy picture where China’s foreign policy change is only in a cooperative direction across all issues either. In some issues, and some periods, identity discourses dominant in Chinese society make possible more conflictual and aggressive actions which may have implications for the long-term trajectory of its rise. However, I am arguing that China’s short-term foreign policy change is more complex than the popular narrative of increased “assertiveness” (Liao, 2016) generally suggests.

In the South China Sea case study, rather than becoming more conflictual during the period studied, in a way that fits with the “assertive” China narrative, China instead appeared to become more cooperative as a result of a decline in public pressure on the government to demonstrate Chinese strength. This challenges a simplistic linear narrative about growing Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea (Yahuda, 2013), and supports those who argue that China is not becoming universally more “assertive” in foreign policies (Johnston, 2013). However, making the picture even more complex is the fact that China’s cooperation with other regional states might also be recognised as a different kind of assertiveness, with identity discourses framing this as a way for China to compete
with the US for influence. This further complicates our understanding of what might be seen as conflictual and cooperative actions from China. It suggests that, in examining foreign policy changes made by China as evidence of a larger change, we need to look closely at how these changes are being framed in Chinese discourses.

The North Korea case study further challenges the arguments that China is becoming uniformly more “assertive” because it showed foreign policy changes towards greater cooperation with the US and international community during the period being studied. This increased cooperation appears to have come about as a result of pressure from the Chinese public and the dominant identity discourses they produced. This indicates that it is necessary to rethink the assumption that China’s foreign policy is becoming steadily more “assertive” across all areas (Friedberg, 2014), and also the idea that pressure from the public can only contribute to foreign policy change in this direction. Instead, it appears that public pressure, through the production of dominant identity discourses, can produce foreign policy change in different directions in relation to different issues. We therefore should not assume that pressure from the Chinese public will only result in more aggressive actions from China, but instead be open to the possibility that the public can also place pressure for greater cooperation on certain issues as well. Particularly on issues like China-US relations, one might argue that there is an equal possibility for the Chinese public to produce pressures for less conflictual foreign policies at certain times. This could be the case because the public are perhaps more likely to recognise a range of benefits from cooperation with the US than the CCP, which has leveraged competition with the US to increase its legitimacy.

My analysis also speaks to questions about the extent to which China is aligning with and adopting international norms that then impact on its international behaviour. In the North Korea case study, the identity discourses showed evidence to suggest that China is adopting some of the international norms regarding state behaviour. These discourses presented signs that China is increasingly accepting norms about state responsibility and nuclear non-proliferation, as well as ideas about human rights and good governance, and that it recognises North Korea to be violating these norms. The growing willingness of China to comply with the international community’s efforts to take actions against North Korea appeared to be closely tied to its, at least partial, adoption of these normative values. This
evidence lends support to those arguments that China’s increasing international interactions are making it more normatively aligned with international society (Foot & Walter, 2010), suggesting that this process might to some extent involve the wider Chinese public and their increasing understanding of shared values. The fact that China does seem, at least partially, to be absorbing these normative values might be seen as an argument for continued engagement with it through different channels.

7.4.3 The debate about China’s peaceful rise

The research conducted in this thesis also contributes to the broader debate about whether or not China’s rise will be peaceful. It challenges those arguments that China’s growing material power will necessarily lead to large-scale conflict (Mearsheimer, 2001), and also the arguments that interaction and integration will constrain its behaviour (Ikenberry, 2008). Instead, it provides evidence to support arguments which emphasise contingency in China’s rise: the lack of a pre-determined answer to whether this rise results in conflictual or cooperative foreign policies towards different issues (Buzan, 2010; Legro, 2008). It suggests the extent to which China engages in cooperation or conflict for specific issues depends on the ongoing ways in which Chinese society makes sense of these issues in identity discourses. This arguably has implications for policies from other states towards China. It suggests that the path of China’s rise is not set in stone and there is potential for this to change through various kinds of changes in its identity.

I therefore argue that when seeking to understand China’s rise and what its impact will be, we should pay much greater attention to the contingent way that its foreign policy is produced for specific issues. We should look at how China’s foreign policies for these issues at specific points in time are made possible by different competing discourses, and then how changes set the context for subsequent policies. In short, China’s foreign policy should be treated as something that can continually change direction as a result of ongoing discursive contests taking place within Chinese society, where the changes at any particular time create a kind of forward momentum, propelling the policy forwards. It also should be recognised that these discussions shaping identity in China do not take place in isolation, or in a sealed bubble cut off from the rest of the world, but respond to and interact with developments outside of the country.
The findings of my analysis also contribute to the discussions, as part of the peaceful rise debate, about the potential for conflict and cooperation between China and the US. They challenge those arguments which suggest that China can only increasingly engage in conflict with the US as it becomes more powerful, providing evidence to suggest that cooperation between the two states is also possible. The analysis suggests that even though a power shift is bringing the two states into competition over relative material power, China and the US may still experience an alignment of interests about particular issues, such as North Korea.

My analysis indicated that there is a fairly consistent presentation, in Chinese identity discourses, of the US as an Other that is different and threatening. However, this conception of the US as Other can at times be weakened by the emergence of an issue, shared in common, that presents a greater sense of difference. North Korea became this during the period from 2016 to late 2017. My analysis showed that the understanding that China and the US shared a common interest, or a common “enemy” in North Korea (as an Other), was particularly produced by the Chinese public. It was the public much more than the Chinese government that echoed the US understanding of North Korea as a threatening Other. In this way, my analysis provides a “bottom up”, identity-based explanation for why the US and China may be able to cooperate despite competition between them.

My findings might contribute to other identity-based studies of China–US relations (Gries, 2004; Hao & Su, 2005; Morris, 2012). Generally, this research tends to look at cases of conflict between the two states and to make conclusions about the considerable mutual “Othering” and the way in which this exacerbates tensions. By instead looking at a case where China and the US did cooperate to some degree, my research can help show how these conflicting identities might be overcome. Research has examined China’s more limited cooperation with the US in drafting sanctions against North Korea in 2009 (Morris, 2012), arguing that the US and China were able to compartmentalise identity in pursuit of common interests. In this account, China’s more pressing security interests allowed the “identity factor” shaping China – US relations to be overcome (Morris, 2012, p.160). My analysis instead shows that changes to the dominant identity discourses within society can make possible this kind of cooperation, despite an ongoing understanding of the US as an Other. It indicates that what may be necessary for this is the emergence of a more compelling Other, against which this new identity discourse can be formed.
This has relevance for the potential for China and the US to cooperate on other issues. It suggests that there will be much greater potential for the two sides to cooperate when Chinese society as a whole, and particularly the Chinese public, recognizes a threatening Other that can overshadow a longstanding understanding of the US as different. Issues such as terrorism or climate change may potentially present such an Other in the eyes of the Chinese public. If these issues were to become a salient enough threat within Chinese identity discourses, then this could lead to a reduced sense of US difference and enable greater cooperation between the two states. I would argue therefore that in trying to foster cooperation between China and the US, it is necessary to convince the Chinese public that they share common interests, or are threatened by the same things, as the US.

The research also speaks to the debate about the potential for China to cooperate with international society and international organisations. The North Korea case study indicated that there is considerable potential for China to cooperate in a significant way with the UN on issues of international concern such as the Korean Peninsula. The findings of this case study contribute to the growing amount of research showing that identity is important in shaping the way in which China participates with the UN (Fung, 2019; Gegout & Suzuki, 2020), suggesting it is not only China’s identity as recognised by other states in the international system but as seen by the domestic public that is important.

My analysis revealed that identity discourses are being produced by the Chinese public which create pressure for China to cooperate in this way. These discourses indicated that China is to some extent adopting international norms in a way conducive to its greater participation in international society. The discourses also suggested that China somewhat separates the question of participation in the UN from its bilateral cooperation with the US. They presented China’s cooperation in the UN as something that it could maintain whilst still being in competition with the US. This finding reflects other research which has also found that Chinese official discourses have presented it as cooperating extensively in the UN institutions whilst simultaneously being in conflict with the US (Hagström & Gustafsson, 2021). These findings therefore all usefully contribute to our understanding of how China approaches this foundational peacekeeping institution.
These findings have relevance for our understanding of China’s changing approach to international organisations more generally, speaking to the considerable discussion on this topic (Breslin, 2010; Buzan, 2010; Pu, 2018). They might suggest that there is reason to be optimistic about China’s approach to these organisations, in part because there is growing public pressure in China for it to participate in international society and global governance. However, they also indicate that China’s increased participation in organisations such as the UN does not necessarily mean it is integrating into the existing US-led international order as a “status quo” power. In some cases, China’s participation in the UN and other international organisations may be being framed in identity discourses as something separate to its cooperation with the US, or even as a way of challenging US influence in these organisations.

In relation to this, my research can also speak to the question of whether China will not only participate in international society, but be willing to take on a role of global leadership (Kirton & Wang, 2021; Pu, 2018). The analysis of identity discourses provided evidence to suggest that there is a strong desire, and a public pressure, for China to display its status in the world by taking on more of a role as an international leader. The discourses examined in my analysis presented evidence that China is in some ways constructing its identity as an important, influential player and a leader within international society. This challenges recent arguments that Chinese identity discourses show it is only prepared to take on a regional role and remains “reluctant” about global leadership (Pu, 2018).

However, my analysis of identity discourses also indicated that this leadership role in international society may also be connected to ideas about competition with the US in a way that places it within more pessimistic understandings of China’s rise. Although the findings of my analysis suggest that we may well see China trying to show leadership within international society, this leadership does not necessarily indicate that China is peacefully rising and may be accompanied by more conflictual and revisionist policies. This seems to be particularly the case with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), something which identity discourses on the one hand presented as a way for China to show leadership in the international community, but on the other hand also presented as a way for it to compete with the US for influence in Asia.
7.5 Reflections on Approach and Method

This concluding chapter has described how using critical constructivist IR theory and Lacanian theory has allowed me to effectively make sense of specific puzzling short-term changes in China’s foreign policy in connection with North Korea and the South China sea. In the section that follows, I reflect more on the benefits of using this theory to study China’s foreign policy and on the adoption of a discourse-based approach to studying foreign policy more generally. I then discuss some of the limitations of my study and the potential for further research.

7.5.1 The study of China’s changing foreign policy as it rises

Through its two case studies, this thesis has shown that the examination of identity discourses can be an effective way of making sense of short-term changes in China’s foreign policy. However, the research also highlighted the need for context-specific analysis of identity discourses. The ways in which the identity discourses found in the two case studies differ from each other, and then make possible different kinds of foreign policies, means that when using an identity-based approach to study China’s foreign policy it is necessary to look at the identity discourses that are being produced in relation to different issues separately.

If we want to understand China’s changing foreign policy as it rises, then we should not just study this foreign policy as a whole. It is necessary to split this foreign policy up and look at foreign policy regarding different issues. We need to study how the foreign policy in relation to each issue is being made possible through a specific identity discourse that is constructed by actors within Chinese society. For different issues, various actors may be more influential in shaping the nature of the identity discourse which becomes dominant. It is necessary to pay close attention to the particularities of these context specific discourses. At the same time, however, we can also look for the ways in which broader changes in China’s identity appear in the discourses specific to these issues.

7.5.2 A discourse approach to studying foreign policy

This thesis has also contributed to the development of theory and methods for studying foreign policy.
First, in terms of theory, it has applied critical constructivist theory about foreign policy and identity to an Asian, non-democratic state. It has demonstrated that the critical constructivist approach, which has typically been used to examine changing identity discourses and their relation to foreign policy in western democracies, may also be applied to making sense of the changing foreign policy in a different kind of state like China. It has produced findings which indicate that, even though in this kind of state the government has much greater control over the production of identity discourses, the public still continues to play a role in which discourses become dominant.

My research has used critical constructivist theory in a particular way, focusing on the discursive construction of identity taking place online. Previously, while critical constructivist IR researchers had pointed to how identity discourses might be being constructed in a wide range of different types of material, they had only given the Internet limited attention as a site for identity construction. The analysis I have carried out has helped to highlight how, at least in a state like China, the Internet plays a key role in the ways in which different members of society construct national identity within discourse. In the analysis, the Chinese Internet was found to be an important platform on which members of the Chinese public and the state media collectively produced identity discourses that made possible foreign policies, engaging in *intertextuality* with the production, exchange, and reproduction of texts. The analysis suggested that there is extensive interaction between the public and the state-media taking place on the Chinese Internet.

My research indicated that there are several benefits to analysing Internet-based material in this way. Looking at Internet-based material may produce findings which challenge those made by analyses which only examines offline discourses. For example, research of China’s relations with North Korea that looks at offline discourse tends to assume that, although there are some dissenting voices, debate is limited and a particular CCP narrative remains dominant (D. Kim & Lee, 2018). Looking at online discourses reveals greater diversity in the debate taking place and shows ongoing changes in perceptions of North Korea. Many studies of China’s behaviour in the South China Sea looking at offline material similarly conclude there is little debate about this, while examination of online discourses shows a wider range of perspectives. Identity-based research looking at offline discourses also tends to conclude that those conflictual foreign policies recently displayed by China in the South China Sea were the
result of discourses produced by the state (Loher, 2016; Wirth, 2020). Examination of online material challenges this, showing a broader public discourse exists.

An additional benefit of using online material, in the current environment, is the fact that it provides access to data about Chinese identity and opinions, at a time when fieldwork is either difficult or impossible. However, one issue presented by this approach is the difficulty of obtaining data from the Chinese Internet, particularly data from social media platforms such as Weibo and Wechat.

The thesis has also contributed to developing methods through which we might study how identity is being constructed in (online) discourse. First, I have explored how best to study identity construction in the massive amounts of textual data that is being produced online. My development of methods here contributes to other researchers rethinking about how best to study identity (Abdelal et al., 2009; Carlson, 2011; Hopf & Allan, 2016). The analysis has shown that it is possible to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, whilst still remaining true to a poststructuralist ontology that sees meaning as being constructed through the relationship between language within texts. This can be achieved by employing discourse analysis in the first step to provide keywords that are then used in a second step of computer assisted text analysis which serves to reinforce findings about how words are functioning to construct identity. In this second step, I have explored the ways in which a range of computer assisted text-analysis methods (such as co-occurrence analysis and dictionary-based frequency counts) can be used to obtain findings from large corpora of texts such as those often produced online. The use of the Quanteda text analysis package for R in this thesis has proved an effective way of analysing large amounts of Chinese-language textual data in this way.

Secondly, my research has explored how to theorise and analyse the emotional resonance of different identity discourses within society. To do this, it has adapted and made use of Lacanian theory as this has been developed and applied by Solomon (2015). It drew on the ways in which this Lacanian theory explains resonance of discourses and provides methods of analysing discourses to look at how they channel people’s desire for full identity. This theory was found to offer a powerful tool for studying the emotional resonance of identity discourses being produced within China. It produced a convincing account of why particular identity discourses might hold such sway amongst the Chinese public, showing how
their strong desire for a full identity and desire to see China in a position of status and comfort leads them to latch on to particular discourses that appear to offer this. Many of the identity discourses analysed were found to contain features which closely aligned with the elements that Lacanian theory pinpoints, containing both promises of “lost” identities that are close to being regained as well as the use of Others that are being used to cover over the frustrations of identities not yet achieved. The combination of this Lacanian analysis with quantitative methods to measure resonance proved particularly effective.

7.5.3 Limitations of this study and suggestions for future research

Overall, my research has shown that short term changes in China’s foreign policy in relation to different issues, which remain puzzling when accounted for by other main IR theories such as realism, liberalism, and mainstream constructivism, can be effectively accounted for by looking at the changes to underlying identity discourses which work to make these foreign policies possible. However, there are several limitations to the research carried out and the conclusions which can be drawn from it. These limitations also point to potential further research in the same area.

The first main limitation is that, while it has been shown that particular short-term foreign policy changes coincided with changes in dominant identity discourses being produced by the Chinese state and society, and that this is one way to make sense of these foreign policy changes, this does not preclude there being other reasons why these foreign policy changes occurred. It would be useful to go on to compare the identity discourse-based account of these short-term foreign policy changes with other explanations for the changes, or to develop counter factual arguments. However, this kind of theory testing was considered beyond the scope of this study which aimed to examine whether identity discourses offered one plausible explanation for puzzling short-term foreign policy changes.

A second limitation of the research in this thesis involves the amount of data analysed. Although the two case studies both used large corpora of state media articles from People’s Daily and social media posts from Weibo, this is still a relatively small amount of material for analysing the societal construction of identity discourses that can be seen as being produced in many texts, both online and offline. To further clarify the different identity discourses being produced by the Chinese state and public
in relation to the two issues studied, it would be useful to look at more material. It would be helpful to analyse material from a wider range of state media outlets, such as the widely read tabloid *Global Times* for example. It could also be useful to study other online discussion platforms alongside *Weibo*, such as posts on the *WeChat* platform or discussion forums. Future studies might also consider other kinds of texts including academic articles. Doing so would provide greater understanding of the different identity discourses which were found in this study and how pervasive these are across different sections of Chinese society.

A third limitation concerns the case selection. It would have been useful to analyse China’s changing foreign policy in relation to the two issues selected over a longer period than the four years covered, to capture multiple short-term changes in foreign policy seen over a longer timeframe. In the first case study, for example, there appears to have been more short-term changes to China’s North Korea policy at the end of 2018 and then during 2019. In addition, there were also changes in China’s approach to North Korea seen in 2013, after its third nuclear test. Examination of these changes and the identity discourse being produced at this time, alongside the changes focused on during 2016 and 2017, could have yielded further evidence about the way in which China’s evolving identity is related to foreign policy change.

Similarly, in the second case study, there were clearly many short-term changes in China’s foreign policy regarding the South China Sea during the period 2010 to 2014 that would also have been useful to analyse using the same identity-based approach. In this thesis, access to data for the public discussions on the Internet limited the time frame that was studied and prevented analysis of these other periods. However, these periods might perhaps also be analysed alongside the findings made here by looking at wider societal discourses, other than those produced on the Internet. In this way, further research might complement the initial findings made in this thesis about how different identity discourses make possible China’s foreign policy.

Another related limitation involves the issues analysed in this thesis and the possibilities for generalisation about China’s evolving foreign policy as it rises. This thesis studied two security issues, involving China’s relations with other Asian regional states. In these case studies, it found that changing identity discourses can offer an effective way to make sense of the short-term changes seen in China’s foreign policy as it rises. However, to make more general conclusions about how changes in China’s
discursively constructed identity are making possible short-term changes in its foreign policy it would be necessary to study a wider range of different foreign policy issues. In the preceding discussion, I have already flagged some of the issues that might potentially be studied to add to the analysis here.

In particular, it could be useful to study China’s relations with non-Asian states, such as its evolving policies towards relations with the US, to examine whether societal identity discourses work in the same way. It would also be useful to look at China’s evolving foreign policy with regards to non-security issues, such as climate change cooperation, to examine and compare whether identity discourses, and particularly the public’s construction of identity, plays a similar role. Another avenue that would be useful for further study would be to examine China’s evolving policies regarding its role in the UN, looking at its approach to issues other than North Korea and the way identity discourses affect these foreign policies.

7.6 Conclusion

In both its scale and speed, China’s re-emergence as a major global power has been unprecedented. This has led to extensive debate in the international relations field about what this “rise” means for the world - will China peacefully integrate into the international system, or will there be large-scale conflict? But the outcome of China’s rise is by no means predetermined. China’s foreign policy will continue to evolve in different ways in relation to particular issues as it continues, to borrow the phrase used by Deng Xiaoping in the nascent stages of its rise, “to cross the river by feeling the stones” (摸着石头过河 mozhe shitou guo he). China’s foreign policy will display a range of short-term changes that may then form the context for future foreign policy choices. This makes it important to understand these changes and what produces them. In issues such as China’s relations with North Korea and the South China Sea, as well as other issues such as its role in UN peacekeeping and environmental cooperation, China will be likely to continue to adapt its foreign policy as it works out what kind of behaviour is best, with the decisions that are made at a particular point in time then impacting on subsequent choices.

As this thesis has shown, underlying these evolutions in China’s foreign policy as it rises is an ongoing discussion between members of the Chinese public and the ruling Chinese Communist Party, about who they are, and what China is - an ongoing attempt to make sense of China’s
identity. This is done through discourse - the endless textual discussions where people consume and reproduce identity discourses, emotionally investing in those discourses that they see offering the promise of a full identity for themselves and their country. In contemporary Chinese society, these discussions are increasingly taking place online – on the websites of state media outlets, on the censored yet still lively social media platforms and discussion forums, and in the extensive interactions between these different media. This increasing digitalisation of Chinese society is not only a fascinating phenomenon in its own right but is also playing a key role in the discursive social construction of identity that can be understood to form the foundations of China’s foreign policy. Every day millions of Chinese people go online to read and comment on issues such as China’s involvement in the Middle East and its changing role in UN environmental cooperation, together contributing, along with the state, to the co-production of Chinese identity that creates a discursive context for different foreign policy decisions made. This thesis has shown how analysing these lively discussions taking place online can be an effective way of making sense of the ongoing evolution of China’s foreign policy as it rises.
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9 Appendix

APPENDIX A: China and North Korea Case Study

A1: People’s Daily articles quoted in STEP 1

A1.1

环球时报:新型大国关系，中美认知有差异
王义桅
2014年11月06日09:26 来源:人民网-环球时报 手机看新闻
原标题:王义桅:新型大国关系，中美认知有差异从历史经验和人类担当的角度看，不同于任何大国关系，中美关系可以不追求最好，但要防止最坏。没有新型大国关系引导，中美关系既无法追求最好，更无法避免最坏。换言之，中美新型大国关系是选项，而是必然要求。正如基辛格在新书《世界秩序》中指出，不管中美看法有多大不同，但“新型大国关系是避免历史悲剧的唯一之路”。然而，中美建立新型大国关系，存在认知差异:
一、内涵:中方强调“不冲突、不对抗”，美方无法承诺不冲突，且多是不必要的冲突与对抗，甚至这样的承诺都不便做出，生怕被套牢，失信于盟友——如美接受之，盟友会担心美国为中美新型大国关系牺牲自己利益，从而质疑美国霸主诚信。其实，中方强调的“是战略对抗，美方担心的是战术冲突。
二、目标:建立什么样的中美关系，决定21世纪国际政治走向。美方理解起来侧重“新型关系”，更多琢磨以新的方式延续对华接触政策，维持美国领导地位，担心中方强调的“相互尊重”让美国不能干涉中国内政，有悖于美国价值观外交;中方要的“尊重”是希望美国尊重其核心利益，渐而认可中国的“大国”身份。
三、性质:中方强调塑造中美新型大国关系的性质定位——以不冲突、不对抗、相互尊重的形式追求中美合作共赢，但美方将新型大国关系理解为成效累积的工作模式，如中方在朝鲜、伊朗核问题及阿富汗、“伊斯兰国”等问题上配合美国，将增强美方对建立新型大国关系信心。同时，美方认为当年“中美共治”(G2)遭到中国公开拒绝，如今中国以“合作共赢”引诱美国，目的在麻痹美国意志，实现不自觉赶超。
四、出发点:美方担心新型大国关系只是中方试图图而代之的过度安排，出发点在于动摇美国领导地位;而中方强调新型大国关系建设的出发点是减少战略互信，塑造战略共识，凝聚战略行动。这既对中国好，也对美国好，还对世界好。
五、担当:美国认为新型大国关系的担当在于管理好两国关系，而中国认为中美新型大国关系的担当在于成为制订世界秩序的基石。中方认为，中美关系是世界上最紧密的双边关系；美方则只承认，中美关系是世界上最重要的双边关系之一。与中方较具担当不同，美方越来越短视而敏感。

六、未来:如果建立不起来又怎样？美方对中美新型大国关系未来前景多指责，认为建立不起来并无大碍，而中方担心中美如不能建立其新型大国关系，很可能陷入历史上大国政治的悲剧。这些认识差异，阻止或推迟中美建立新型大国关系进程，亟须克服。

即将举行的第二次中美庄园会应努力消除这些认知差异，将中美新型大国关系从愿望一步步变成现实，使这一建设进程不可逆。▲(作者是中华人民大学国际事务研究所所长)

A1.2

环球时报:习奥会确定中美新型大国关系方向

苏格

2015年09月16日09:20 来源:人民网-环球时报 手机看新闻

标题:苏格:习奥会确定中美新型大国关系方向 习近平主席应奥巴马总统邀请，即将对美国进行国事访问。此访时机重要，意义重大，举世瞩目。人们常言:中美关系是当今世界上最复杂最重要的一组双边关系。而中美构建新型大国关系的几个层次，可以用铁路建设作比。一，通路。即路基碎石。“碎石”既有分力，又有合力；承担着重量，支撑着轨道和钢轨。联想到中美关系，其中千丝万缕的联系和方方面面的问题，犹如道砟一样，支撑着两国关系合作与竞争并存、挑战与机遇同在的特殊格局。中美国情各异，历史文化、社会制度和发展阶段不同，两国难免存在一些分歧和问题。中美关系正常化以来数十年，一直是在面对矛盾和解决问题的过程中得到发展的。进入21世纪以来，全球化、多极化深入发展，中美两国实力对比出现重大变化。一段时期，美国对华战略焦虑增强，自然会出现新的问题。美国全球战略重心东移，加推“亚太再平衡”战略，重点从反恐转向防范其他大国崛起的挑战。中美关系的外部环境更加复杂、多变，某些“第三方因素”干扰。大选等国内政治因素对两国关系的干扰增大，美国国内对华政策大辩论中主张防范和制衡的杂音增强。

我们审视中美关系，一要有战略高度，二要有全局性眼光，三要有举重若轻的坦然心态。像中美这两个重要国家，在太平洋彼岸的舆论中，出现不同的论调是正常的事情。中美之间问题固然不少，但关键是要有重大的共同利益。片面强调和夸大矛盾与分歧，只会导致对立的增加。关键是要不断扩大共同利益。妥善处理分歧，能通过沟通解决的就解决，一时解决不了也可搁置分歧，共谋合作大局。犹如钢轨可铺设在碎石上，中美关系也可建立在“求同存异”、和而不同的基础上。
二，轨枕。支承钢轨，同时还持钢轨的位置。其坚固且柔韧，承受并缓
冲压力。中美之间各层次和各方面也存在“轨枕”一样的联系渠道，使双方
可通过沟通和对话不断扩大共同利益，同时妥善处理有关矛盾和分歧。
近年来，中美两国领导人在双边和多边外交场合保持了频繁接触。双方除
元首、外长热线外，还建立有中美战略与经济对话、人文交流高层磋商、
商贸联委会、科技联委会等数十个对话磋商机制。形式多样的高端机制化
交流起到了增进共识、减少误解、扩大合作的重要作用。
中美两国交流与合作也有长足发展，建立了多个联系机制，包括中美国防
部防务磋商、工作会晤、海上军事安全磋商和中国防务直接通话等。
双方就重要和紧急问题进行对话和沟通，还开展了多层次、多形式的交流。
然而，两会关系时而受到一些问题的冲击和干扰。
在多极化背景下，中美两国经济利益荣损与共的交融格局持续深化。中美
已互为第二大贸易伙伴，贸易额超过5551亿美元，经贸往来已成为维系中
美关系的重要纽带。双向投资额超过1200亿美元，美国的资金和技术在中国
发展进程中起到重要作用，同时也获得丰收。
中美两国人民长期互相抱有朴实的友好感情，希望两国为友而非敌。70年
前反法西斯战争中中美协同作战，“飞虎队”在中国民间早已传为佳话。
而现时中美友好省州关系、姐妹城市、互派留学生、文化教育机构合作，
以及每年数千万的人员往来等等，更是逐步构建中美关系间剪不断的新
纽带，为双边关系综合与可持续发展提供了广泛的社会和民意基础。
三，钢轨。两条钢轨互为支撑，不离不弃，平行向前。用之形容中美之间
并行不悖、相互助力的国家利益颇为妥帖。
中美作为世界最大的发展中国家和最大的发达国家，同为联合国安理会常
任理事国，对维护地区和国际和平、安全与发展肩负着重大而独特责任。
今年是诺胜利70周年，当年正是中国与美国等共同创立了以联合国为
核心的国际秩序和国际体系。中美两国都应是当今国际体系的建设者和
维护者。同时，随着国际形势变化，也应与各方协调，为不断改革和完善
这一体系做出贡献，使之更加适应世界各国的共同愿望。在伊朗核问题之
后，可加强在朝鲜核、中东、反恐、阿富汗等国际地区问题上的协调配合，
为世界和平稳定继续发挥建设性作用。
在全球治理问题上加强协商，中美有共同的利益。在多极化和全球化的背
景下，任何人都难以独善其身，这就需要包容与合作。不断扩大、深化国
际协调合作是双方走新型大国关系之路的基本要求和重要助力。中方“一
带一路”、亚投行等倡议的提出，是对现有政治、经济秩序的补充和完善，
是不具排他性的公共产品。中美可共同探讨海洋合作、网络安全等，还可
在气候变化、金融危机、经贸关系、能源合作、司法合作、公共卫生以
及发展等领域开展互利合作。
双边关系涵盖多种领域。其中重要的是夯实中美关系的经济基础，稳定中
美关系航船的“压舱物”。建交以来，两国共同利益增多，合作基础扩大，
相互依存度不断加深。实践表明，健康稳定的中美经贸关系符合两国
的根本利益，须不断寻求并扩大利益汇合点，推动双边经贸关系在新的起
点上不断向前发展。中美存在一些经贸摩擦，实际上是利益互融加深的表
现，关键是要从战略高度和长远角度审视和处理中美经贸关系，并在发展进程中找到解决方法。争取促进中美经贸、金融、投资、基础设施建设合作，不断开拓新合作亮点。中美可加大双边投资协定力度，也希望美方放宽对华民用高新技术出口的限制。

四，方向。领导人登高望远，审时度势，确定中美关系的路径和方向。当前，中美关系又站在一个新的历史起点上。双方应该从两国人民根本利益出发，从人类发展进步着眼，共同推动构建“新型大国关系”。“新型大国关系”，言简意赅，寓意深刻。其不是一个标签，而是有着包容性内涵和可扩展的外延。时代不同了，两国要全力避免重蹈史上大国恶性争斗的覆辙。此并非选择性问题，而是符合两国根本利益和国际社会共同利益的必然选择。

一是增进战略互信。“和则两利，斗则俱伤”。中美双方应守住“不冲突、不对抗”底线。多些换位思考，对等照顾到对方关切。筑牢“相互尊重”基础，相互尊重，互不干涉彼此的内部事务，以伙伴关系精神处理有关问题。只要双方真正秉持平等原则，就可以找到利益汇合点，实现互利合作。“合作共赢”是两国处理彼此关系的最大公约数，也是奋斗的目标。

二是在亚太良性互动。“宽广的太平洋两岸有足够空间容纳中美两国”。亚太地区很多问题没有中美合作都难以解决。中方向来尊重美方在亚太的合理利益和关切，欢迎其为本地区和平、稳定与繁荣做出努力，同时也希望美方尊重中方的利益和关切，展现同中方合作的善意。中国无意把美排挤出亚洲，愿与美方在亚太实现良性互动和包容性协作。

三是切实管控分歧。择宽处行，谋长久之利。增进两军信任措施，以建设性方式处理分歧和敏感问题，不做损害对方核心利益的事。严防擦枪走火，防止热点问题升级为对抗。同时，妥为引导舆论并开展公共外交，增强中美关系的民意基础。

总之，习近平主席对美国的国事访问承上启下，继往开来，具有重大历史里程碑意义。两国领导人审时度势，为中美新型大国关系发展指明新的前进方向，不仅有利于两国，更将惠及亚太地区乃至全球。(作者是中国国际问题研究院院长)

A1.3

环球时报:重新认识朝鲜半岛的地缘价值
李敦球
2014年08月21日08:58 来源:人民网-环球时报 手机看新闻
原标题:李敦球:重新认识朝鲜半岛的地缘价值朝鲜半岛位于东北亚的中心，也犹如一块伸向海洋的跳板，历史上大陆势力与海洋势力多次在这里碰撞和较量。120年前甲午战争的战火正是在这里点燃，历史在此转折。纪念甲午战争，有必要重新认识朝鲜半岛在东亚地缘政治上的价值。
中日在朝鲜半岛第一次正式交锋发生在公元663年。第二次交锋在明朝万历年间，中朝联盟获胜，维护了东亚秩序的稳定，同时也暴露了“日本觊
觊觎中国大陆领土久矣”。明治维新后，1885年《脱亚论》发表，主张中国“天下”已经崩溃，日本应转向西洋文明，领衔建立亚洲的新秩序。怎样建立新秩序，日本只有在朝鲜半岛寻找机会。1894年，朝鲜东学党农民起义，日本看准机会，以保护侨民为由出兵朝鲜半岛，中日两军直接交锋，甲午战争由此引爆。这成为改写东亚地缘政治格局的分水岭，从此海洋势力取代大陆势力主导或规制东亚国际秩序。

接下来又是几场恶战。1904年日俄战争爆发，然后是抗日战争和朝鲜战争。不到60年时间里，以朝鲜半岛为中心爆发了4次大规模战争。对此，韩国前总统朴正熙感慨地说：“如果我们的历史是一部受难和外国入侵的历史，那么这是朝鲜半岛的地缘政治环境造成的。”这些战争本质上都是大陆势力与海洋势力的直接较量。

历史证明，当大陆与半岛联盟即朝中联盟强大的时候，也是半岛和东北亚地区国际秩序最稳定的时期。而自甲午战争至今120年间，由于海洋势力介入，直接导致朝鲜半岛动荡不定、战争频仍。如今战争未真正结束，还有余波激荡之势。

近些年来，不断有人质疑甚至否定朝鲜对中国的地缘战略价值，认为传统地缘政治观念已经过时。这些“人却无法解释为什么美国反而在强化美韩同盟和美日同盟。明眼人都知道，一旦朝鲜局势失控，敌国插手，足以经由东北之捷径，“直拊北京之背”。

今天的日本已不在决定中国前途和命运的战略位置上了。而今天的美国却在扮演日本当年的部分角色。美国实施所谓的亚太“再平衡”战略，目的就是要确保美国主导东亚国际秩序。不同于当年日本的是，美国对中国大陆没有领土野心。

中国经过百多年的演进，特别是改革开放的强国战略，终于使东亚秩序重新向它的传统格局螺旋式回归。在这个关键节点上，国人切莫在地缘政治的认识上产生混乱。孙中山曾说：“只有坚强的中国，才能保证韩国独立，也只有自由的韩国，才能屏障中国的安全。”他所说的韩国即当时未分裂的朝鲜半岛。这番话精辟地概括了中国与朝鲜半岛之间地缘政治的关系，仍具有重要的现实意义。

A1.4

环球时报：不能“放弃”朝鲜65年的伙伴
李敦球
2014年11月27日08:56 来源:人民网-环球时报 手机看新闻
原标题:李敦球:不能“放弃”朝鲜65年的伙伴

近年来中国不断出现否定朝韩关系的声音，“弃朝论”的呼声在中国舆论时而出现，它甚至成为一些中国战略学者的建议。可见，在朝中建交65年后的今天，就如何对待朝韩关系，不但分歧巨大，而且问题还异常严重。主张“弃朝论”的人主要有两个理由。一个是传统的地缘政治观念已过时，现代战争已不需要地缘屏障，朝鲜失去了充当中国战略屏障的作用。
假如这个理论成立，那么，为什么美国不但不从韩国和日本撤军，反而在
不断强化其军事存在。毋庸置疑，朝鲜半岛地缘价值依然存在。二是因为
中朝之间存在许多矛盾、摩擦和分歧。在国际事务上朝鲜有时不听中国的话，
成为中国的负资产，所以中国应“放弃”朝鲜。这个理由似乎更具有
煽动性。但这只是表层现象，根本经不起推敲。
首先，中朝是两个独立的主权国家，国家利益不可能完全相同，也不可能
所有事情都做到协调一致。即使同盟国之间也或多或少存在着矛盾和分歧。
问题是区分矛盾的性质，并管好矛盾。
其二，当前的中朝矛盾在性质上不同于中日矛盾，中日矛盾涉及领土领海
、历史认知和东亚地缘政治格局等问题，属于战略层次，是不可调和的矛盾。
中朝关系也不可能重蹈当年中苏关系破裂的覆辙。因为中国不是当年的
苏联，不想也不可能控制朝鲜。朝鲜也完全不具备中国当年对抗苏联的
力量，朝鲜是社会主义政治体制，它难有替代中国的地缘政治选择。中朝
友好是双方共同需要，不是中国一厢情愿。
其三，朝鲜问题本质上是冷战遗留问题，它是与朝鲜半岛冷战基石即《停
战协定》和“美韩同盟”绑在一起的。朝鲜为了自身生存和安全有时不得
不“单打独斗”。可以肯定，两个冷战基石不除，朝鲜问题也会长期存在，
中朝关系也必然受其影响。尽管如此，中朝两国在地缘政治上的根本利益
是一致的，至少在东北亚地缘政治格局没有发生根本性变化之前，中朝
两国的根本利益就不会改变。退一步来讲，如果中国真的“放弃朝鲜”，
则可能出现以下三种结果：第一种是朝鲜投入中国之外第三国的怀抱;第二种
是朝鲜在敌对各方在政治、经济和军事上共同围攻和压制下崩溃;第三种
是朝鲜孤立无援，决一死战，朝鲜半岛再燃战火。无论上述哪种结果都对
中国不利，还可能再次引来海洋势力控制整个朝鲜半岛，那就又犯历史上的
大忌。甲午战争的起因正是日本与清朝为争夺朝鲜半岛而引发的，其余
波尚存。当前美国取代日本作为海洋势力规制朝鲜半岛秩序，如果中国“
弃朝”，那么美国就可能重新获得当年在朝鲜战争中都没有得到的战略利
益。切忌因战略误判给美国送上大礼。主张“弃朝”的人真可谓是伤疤还
未好就忘了痛。
(作者为浙江大学韩国研究所客座研究员)

A1.5

环球社评:透过零乱传闻看朝鲜的逻辑
2014年10月08日09:06 来源:人民网-环球时报 手机看新闻
原标题:社评:透过零乱传闻看朝鲜的逻辑在过去的一段时间里，围绕朝鲜
出现大量传闻。由于金正恩未公开露面已达一个多月，从他“生病”到朝
鲜“政局不稳”的说法充斥了韩国及世界多国的媒体。朝鲜到底发生了什
么?看来只有时间才能给出答案。然而通过对一些事实和围绕朝鲜重大关
系的梳理，我们能大体框定朝鲜事态发生波动的范围，不至于被谣言牵着
鼻子跑。首先，金正恩一个多月不露面，这在朝鲜的确是反常的。与此同时，
朝鲜报章、电视台的报道都一如既往，这对金正恩公开场合的缺席形

433
成相当程度的弥补，而不是暗示他的缺席有什么额外意义。这通常不是朝鲜这样的国家发生重大政治变故的信号。相比之下，金正恩“生病了”倒像是有几分可信，而且朝鲜电视台也曾对此有所提及。目前无法确定的是金正恩“生病”的程度，但一个事实是，这位朝鲜领导人的年龄只有31岁。

中朝关系较过去有所冷淡，所有人都看在眼里。与此同时，朝鲜表现出同韩国接触的热情，但昨天双方又在海上边界水域发生军舰交火互射。段时间有朝鲜要与韩日甚至美国改善关系的各种传闻，有人认为朝鲜迟早有个“倒向美国”的那一天。

这里同样有一个事实需要指出，那就是，朝鲜在其现有国体下，它同韩日美改善关系的难度，要大于它同中国发展关系的难度。它同中国的分歧主要集中在核问题上，它同韩日美的矛盾则是多重的。韩国要由它主导统一朝鲜半岛，美国要在制度上改造平壤，这都 是朝鲜整个执政集团无法接受的。

朝鲜长期显示了外交的强势和主动性，但它的经济和军事力量毕竟都较弱或者不够强，很难成为半岛局势的真正引领者。朝鲜近来内部所发生的和围绕它发生的事情，很可能都是战术性的，大概不具有战略意义。美国依然对它很敌视，韩国对它充满防范并犹豫不决，日本想从中沾点外交便宜，但又不敢离开美韩的态度走太远。

中朝关系的复杂性大概不言而喻，但中国仍是朝鲜最重要且积极的邻居，中国对朝鲜的战略意义无可取代。

朝鲜如果发生颠覆性的事态，对所有各方都是严重的挑战。恐怕没有一方能够说，它有单独驾驭、或者联合一个盟友就能不顾其他方面态度驾驭事态的能力。那样的鲁莽行动无疑是一种战略冒险。

朝鲜看来对打破当前的外交僵局有点着急，西方有分析人士称，平壤现在急于吸引外界的注意，金正恩长期不露面有可能也是实现此目的的一张牌，这样的看法算是有趣的一家之言吧。

由于朝鲜封闭而神秘，它吸引了世人对其内部政治的丰富想象。断言朝鲜必将发生什么或者决不会发生什么，或许都是轻率的。朝鲜在对其来说相当恶劣的战略环境中坚持了这么多年，大概形成了某种独特的政治能力。

把这个国家看成是有逻辑的，比把它看成完全反逻辑的，出错的概率很可能要少些。

对外界来说，朝鲜保持稳定是各方利益重合较多的部分。一些媒体总爱听风就是雨，希望朝鲜的故事越离奇越好。而各方政治人物的想法未必是这样。对于编造各种涉朝传闻最多的韩国媒体来说，让它们重温一句名言并且套用到韩国身上大概最合适，那就是：天堂很远，而朝鲜很近。▲

A1.6

海外版望海楼：解决半岛问题的抉择时刻
华益文
2017年09月13日04:37 来源: 人民网
人民日报海外版435来源: 人民网

日前，朝鲜新一核试验换来了更加严厉的国 际制裁。联合国安理会一致通过第2375号决议。从安理会成员表决发言来看，一方面国际社会对朝鲜一意孤行推进核试验表示强烈谴责，同意对朝鲜实施新的制裁，敦促朝方回到无核化轨道;另一方面重申维护朝鲜半岛和东北亚和平与稳定，呼吁以外交与政治方式和平 解决问题。
伴随着半岛紧张局势升级，最受伤的是东北亚地区的和平。半岛问题本就是冷战残余，是地区和平的一块心病。有关各方严重缺乏互信是半岛问题的主要症结。半岛核问题的出现既是这一症结的反映，又恶化了这一症 结。可以说，半岛核问题给东北亚安全局势增添了最具复杂性和不确定性的因素。朝鲜出于自身国家安全和政 权稳定考虑，以为可以“拥核自保”，但由于半岛对立和博弈的复杂性及特殊性，“拥核”也成了套在自己脖子上的一条绳索。在“拥核”上动作越大，受到的孤立、压力越大。美国出于亚太战略和对朝战略考虑，以为可以“恃强凌弱”，但过分的示强和压力使得朝鲜更加担心自身安全，反而进一步奢望通过核导计划以求自保。朝美双方似乎都在理性地算计着战略和得失，但若不改变思路，就永远摆脱不了各自的困境，也让本地区处于一惊一乍的境地。
国际社会决不会承认朝鲜的核国家地位，也同样不会愿意看到半岛再次被战火吞噬。可以说，实现朝鲜半岛无核化，维护半岛和平稳定，是国际社会的共识。半岛“有核”，事出有因，但情不可原。换言之，朝鲜“拥核”，有其万般理由，但破坏国际防扩散体系，构成对国际和地区和平与安全的威胁，对此国际社会不会接受。美国对朝鲜“拥核”及核导计划进展的担忧与日俱增，无疑会寻找各种解决方案，但军事选项也同样不会被国际社会容忍。联合国安理会一系列涉朝决议都是国际社会的折中方案，既对朝核导计划作出严厉反应，又为其对话 协商解决问题留有很大余地。朝鲜新一轮核试验和接踵而来的对朝鲜制裁，是半岛局势恶性的循环的最新表现。尽管半岛各方都有自己的战略考量，但看不出这种恶性循环能让任何一方真正获益。朝鲜半岛已到了何去何从的抉择时刻。
(作者为国际问题专家)
海外版望海楼：中国负责任大国的道义与担当
3月2日，联合国安理会以15票赞成一致通过涉朝鲜问题的第2270号决议。这次新决议谴责朝鲜自年初以来进行的核试验和使用弹道导弹技术发射卫星，要求朝放弃其核导计划。决议一出，立刻被西方媒体围观，决议规定的对朝制裁措施更是受到高度关注。
然而，作为对决议形成有重要影响力的中国，却以更广阔的视角和更长远的目光来对待决议。
首先，中国通过赞成决议，表明在朝鲜核问题上的鲜明态度。中国反对朝鲜发展核武器，坚持朝鲜半岛不能有核，无论是北方还是南方，无论是自己制造还是引进部署。此次安理会通过的决议，重要目标之一是遏止朝鲜进一步发展核导计划。
从制裁内容看，第2270号决议与联合国之前通过的第1718、1874、2087、2094号决议相比明显更为“有力”。决议要求各国禁止向朝鲜运送可能用于核导计划的物品，收紧覆盖常规武器在内的对朝武器禁运措施，冻结可能与核导计划有关的金融资产，强化对朝鲜船只管控等。中国申明，朝鲜连续违反安理会决议，理应为此付出代价。中国坚决维护国际核不扩散机制的权威性和有效性，不会包庇纵容任何国家发展核导等大规模杀伤性武器。这是大国的应有之义。
其次，中国坚定支持决议秉持公正原则。中国主张对朝制裁要避免损害朝鲜民生，更反对借制裁之名，动摇政权之实。事实上，在中国等国的努力下，此次安理会决议内容相对平衡，针对朝鲜核导项目进行精确打击，同时充分考虑朝鲜人道主义形势和民生。一些措施对涉及民生、医疗以及其他人道主义目的的活动予以“豁免”。
尽管西方舆论一再对中国施压，要求中国按照西方的方式“惩罚朝鲜”，但中国仍从事出事发，着眼大局，展现大国担当。
最后，中国对决议的作用进行客观定位。中国认为，联合国决议并不能解开半岛的矛盾纠葛，也无法消除朝鲜和美国之间的敌对情绪。要从根本上解决半岛核问题，必须回到谈判轨道上来。决议应成为谈判的新起点和“铺路石”。为此，中国提出了半岛无核化和停和机制转换双轨并进思路，照顾各方合理关切，包括朝鲜方面的安全关切，致力于使无核化得以实施。中国提出的是全面系统的方案，体现大国智慧。另外，中国关注半岛及地区的和平与稳定。中国不断呼吁各方保持克制，避免半岛生战生乱，建议各方不要放弃复谈的努力，不能放弃对半岛和平稳定承担的责任。中国还明确警告个别国家，不要试图浑水摸鱼实现一己私利，破坏国际社会寻求半岛问题政治解决的努力。
作为安理会五个常任理事国之一，中国坚持《联合国宪章》宗旨，主持正义，积极参与安理会涉朝决议制定。中国作为六方会谈东道主，继续促进
A2: Weibo posts quoted in STEP 1

1. 中国朝鲜一战彻底打掉了列强侵略的野心，由此列强改变了战略，将武力进攻改为和平演变并制定了一系列策略，将希望寄托在中国的第三代。（2014_10_25_do-
cid302108_da5696047fcee205e9e61c11de36de89b, Pos. 1)

2. 挑拨中美关系的一些都是中国毛左[哈哈]俄罗斯、朝鲜那么好，高官、富豪的子女为什么老往美国跑呢？难道他们想让自己的子女受西方资本主义的毒害吗？：以我的观察，挑拨中国与俄罗斯关系的基本上都是中国人，很少是西方人，相信k凤凰卫视的@马鼎盛。（2015_03_28_13_53_56_docid32358b33bee168e2a8c2fb419da71e5b, Pos. 1)

3. : ::: :美法西斯会不顾一切保护和扩大在华利益，中共该醒醒了。 [['现在可以清楚地看出，米国的特种兵潜入的不是朝鲜，而是中国！最应该担心害怕的，好像不是小金…'] (2016_02_13_16_38_48_do-
cid22031_46704e5eba136510930165bd517871a, Pos. 1)

4. 美帝、联合国安理会声嘶力竭地叫嚣：朝鲜发展核‘弹一星’‘影响什么地区**稳定’”…。但至今朝鲜没有在别国派驻一兵一卒，而打扮成‘维护世界和平’的美帝却把军事‘演习’搬到了朝鲜家门口，把尖端武器摆放到了朝鲜国境四周。（2016_02_14_00_22_08_do-
cid22450_14b06a12395c0774c4990cf888053050, Pos. 1)

5. : : : :朝炸你们大使馆了？！朝鲜撞你们飞机了？朝鲜经济制裁你们了？朝鲜要你们买他的国债了？！朝鲜逼人民币升值了？！朝鲜向你们输出转基因粮食了？！朝鲜接见达赖、热比娅了？！朝鲜煽动藏独、疆独了？！朝鲜庇护藏独、疆独份子了？！朝鲜庇护民运、轮子了？！朝鲜抨击你们的人（2016_02_23_20_20_20_do-
cid34052_42ed9d8ecc6f8e96238c9e8f0a654ff3, Pos. 1)

cid263881_75b1c0b9c5b30afee6b19dd6531d856, Pos. 1)

7. 朝鲜连续两次无视中国态度，先进行核试，随后又执意发射远程火箭，等于给了两记耳光。外界评论指出，金正恩近期的举动显示其在一夜努行的道路上越走越远，这意味着朝鲜失控的风险正在迅速增加。此次美曰韩军方首脑开会，无疑已经拉响朝鲜半岛上空的警报。（2016_02_11_14_05_59_do-
cid20665_e85898d180e69af34a5eb0e2f8356c6b, Pos. 1)
A3: Weibo posts identification for tables in STEP 1

NK1 (17/03/07) 2017_03_07_14_15_54_docid154494_82427d9b10914c64574166cc6c67dc3
NK2 (17/04/05) 2017_04_05_11_25_20_docid175324_cba3b5cfe3f7c1b851b7b4bfb41805c3
NK3 (17/04/19) 2017_04_19_08_27_28_docid194768_5a211d0dd3a8d9db53b0cecd379b2
NK4 (17/08/15) 2017_08_15_20_45_07_docid360301_3630efd5e59e37ec87748f01e
NK5 (17/08/25) 2017_08_25_20_45_07_docid361584_37f065439147a575e442149de
NK6 (17/12/03) 2017_12_13_14_45_29_docid373048_cbae1c34b7e8304db572037f3
NK7 (17/12/23) 2017_12_23_14_45_29_docid379657_dbe9c7b9df6d888ba877819e2807e4d
NK8 (17/10/13) 2017_10_13_14_45_29_docid439657_dbe9c7b9df6d888ba877819e2807e4d
NK9 (17/12/13) 2017_12_13_14_45_29_docid439657_dbe9c7b9df6d888ba877819e2807e4d
NK10 (17/12/13) 2017_12_13_14_45_29_docid439657_dbe9c7b9df6d888ba877819e2807e4d
NK11 (17/12/13) 2017_12_13_14_45_29_docid439657_dbe9c7b9df6d888ba877819e2807e4d
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NK21 (17/12/13) 2017_12_13_14_45_29_docid439657_dbe9c7b9df6d888ba877819e2807e4d
NK22 (17/12/13) 2017_12_13_14_45_29_docid439657_dbe9c7b9df6d888ba877819e2807e4d
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NK36 (17/12/13) 2017_12_13_14_45_29_docid439657_dbe9c7b9df6d888ba877819e2807e4d
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NK38 (17/12/13) 2017_12_13_14_45_29_docid439657_dbe9c7b9df6d888ba877819e2807e4d
NK39 (17/12/13) 2017_12_13_14_45_29_docid439657_dbe9c7b9df6d888ba877819e2807e4d

8. 神马国产进口，不就世袭的遮羞布嘛？看了不敢相信，原以为朝鲜是社会主义国家，理所当然信奉马克思主义，拜托资本论，实行无产阶级专业，事态怎么会如此怪异，马恩的书居然是禁书，他们信奉金氏王朝，我们主流媒体好像没报道过，如此战友竟不是社会主义，不可思议...
**A4: Word lists for dictionary analysis in Quanteda (STEP 2b)**

<table>
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<th>Revolutionary Discourse</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) 海洋实力</td>
<td>13) 毛子冻</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) 帝国主义</td>
<td>14) 帝</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) 美英</td>
<td>15) 抗美</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) 霸权主义</td>
<td>16) 地缘价值</td>
</tr>
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<td>5) 霸道</td>
<td>17) 社会主义</td>
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<td>6) 霸权</td>
<td>18) 同志</td>
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<td>7) 侵入</td>
<td>19) 兄弟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) 干涉</td>
<td>20) 党关系</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) 退制</td>
<td>21) 小弟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) 盟友日本</td>
<td>22) 战友</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) 日本鬼子</td>
<td>23) 传统友谊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) 毛</td>
<td>24) 自身生存</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Discourse</th>
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<tr>
<td>2) 独裁</td>
<td>14) 不管</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) 封锁</td>
<td>15) 包袱</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) 专权</td>
<td>16) 封建</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) 开放</td>
<td>17) 疯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) 违法</td>
<td>18) 神经病</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) 违反</td>
<td>19) 过期</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) 白眼狼</td>
<td>20) 发射</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) 流浪</td>
<td>21) 不负责任</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) 恐怖</td>
<td>22) 谴责</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) 极端</td>
<td>23) 反对</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) 邪恶</td>
<td>24) 危险</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A5: Articles for Lacanian analysis (STEP 3)**

A5.1


(Last accessed: 06/11/21)

环球时报:重新认识朝鲜半岛的地缘价值
李俊球
2014年08月21日08:58 来源:人民网-环球时报 手机看新闻
原标题:李俊球:重新认识朝鲜半岛的地缘价值
朝鲜半岛位于东北亚的中心，也犹如一块伸向海洋的跳板，历史上大陆势力与海洋势力多次在这里碰撞和较量，120年前甲午战争的战火正是在这里点燃，历史在此转折。纪念甲午战争，有必要重新认识朝鲜半岛在东亚地缘政治上的价值。中日在朝鲜半岛第一次正式交锋发生在公元663年。第二次交锋在明清万历年间，中朝联盟获胜，维护了东亚秩序的稳定，同时也暴露了“日本觊觎中国大陆领土久矣”。明治维新后，1885年《脱亚论》发表，主张中国“天下”已经崩溃，日本应转向西洋文明，领衔建立亚洲的新秩序。怎样建立新秩序，日本只有在朝鲜半岛寻找机会。1894年，朝鲜东学党农民起义，日本看准机会，以保护侨民为由出兵朝鲜半岛，中日两军直接交锋，甲午战争由此引爆。这成为改写东亚地缘政治格局的分水岭，从此海洋势力取代大陆势力主导或规制东亚国际秩序。接下来又是几场恶战。1904年日俄战争爆发，然后是抗日战争和朝鲜战争。1950年代，朝鲜半岛战争再次爆发。直到2019年中韩合作，朝鲜半岛战局才有迹象好转。历史证明，当大陆与半岛联盟即中朝联盟强大的时候，也是半岛和东北亚地区国际秩序最稳定的时期。而自甲午战争至今120年间，由于海洋势力介入，直接导致朝鲜半岛动荡不定、战争频仍。如今战争未真正结束，还有余波激荡之势。近鲜年来，不断有人质疑甚至否定朝鲜对地缘战略价值，认为传统地缘政治观念已经过时。这些人无法解释为什么美国反而在强化美韩同盟和日美同盟。明眼人都知道，一旦朝鲜局势失控，敌国插手，足以经由东北之捷径，“直捣北京之背”。

今天的日本已不在决定中国前途命运的战略位置上了。而今天的美国却在扮演日本当年的部分角色。美国实施所谓的亚太“再平衡”战略，目的就是要确保美国主导东亚国际秩序。不同于当年日本的是，美国对中国大陆没有领土野心。中国经过百多年的演进，特别是实施改革开放的强国战略，终于使东亚秩序逐步向它的传统格局螺旋式回归。在这个关键节点上，国人切莫在地缘政治的认识上产生混乱。孙中山曾说：“只有坚强的中国，才能保证韩国独立，也只有自由的韩国，才能屏障中国安全。”他所说的韩国即当时未分裂的朝鲜半岛。这番话精辟地概括了中国与朝鲜半岛之间地缘政治的关系，仍具有现实的意义。

A5.2
https://opinion.huanqiu.com/article/9CaKrnJFTcF
(Last accessed 06/11/21)

李敦球：不能“放弃”朝鲜这65年的伙伴

440
来源：环球时报 作者：李致球
2014-11-27 02:35

近些年中日不断出现否定中朝关系的声音。“弃朝论”的呼声在中国舆论时而出现，它甚至成为了中国战略学者的建议。在中朝建交65年后的今天，就如何对待中朝关系，不但分歧巨大，而且问题还异常严重。

“弃朝论”人主要有两个理由。一个是传统的地缘政治观念已经过去，现代战争已不需要地缘屏障，朝鲜失去了充当中国战略屏障的作用。假如这个理由成立，那么，为什么美国不但不从韩国和日本撤军，反而在不断强化其军事存在。毋庸置疑，朝鲜半岛地缘价值依然存在。二是因为中朝之间存在许多矛盾、摩擦和分歧，在国际事务上朝鲜有时不听中国的话，成为中国的负债，所以中国应“放弃”朝鲜。这个理由似乎更具有煽动性。但这是表层现象，根本经不起推敲。

首先，中朝是两个独立的主权国家，国家利益不可能完全相同，也不可能所有事情都做到协调一致。即使同盟国之间也或多或少存在着矛盾和分歧。问题是要区分矛盾的性质并管控好矛盾。

其次，中朝关系在本质上不同于中日关系，中日关系涉及领土领土、历史认知和东亚地缘政治格局等问题，属于战略层次，是不可调和的矛盾。中朝关系也不可避免地被当年的深渊割裂。因为中国不是当年苏联，不想也不会控制朝鲜。朝鲜也完全不具备中国当年对抗苏联的力量，朝鲜是社会主义政治体制，它难道有替代中国的地缘政治选择。中朝友好是双方共同需要，不是中国一厢情愿。

其三，朝鲜问题本质上是冷战遗留问题，它是与朝鲜半岛冷战基石即《停战协定》和“美韩同盟”绑定在一起的。朝鲜为了自身生存和安全有时不得不“单打独斗”。可以肯定，两个冷战基石不除，朝鲜问题也会长期存在，中朝关系也必然受其影响。尽管如此，中朝两国在地缘政治上的根本利益是一致的，至少在东北亚地缘政治格局没有发生根本性变化之前，中朝两国的根本利益就不会改变。

退一步来讲，如果中国真的“放弃朝鲜”，则可能出现以下三种结果：第一种是朝鲜投入中国之外第三国的怀抱；第二种是朝鲜在敌对各方在经济、文化和军事上共同围困下崩溃；第三种是朝鲜孤立无援，决一死战，朝鲜半岛再燃战火。无论上述哪种结果都对中国不利，还可能再次引来海洋势力控制整个朝鲜半岛，那就又犯历史上的大忌。甲午战争的起因正是日本与清朝为争夺朝鲜半岛而引发的，其余波尚存。当前美国取代日本作为海洋控制朝鲜半岛秩序。如果中国“弃朝”，那么美国就可能重新获得当年在朝鲜战争中都没有得到的战略利益。切忌因战略误判错失大好时机。主张“弃朝”的人可真是伤痕还未好就忘痛。▲(作者为浙江大学韩国研究所客座研究员)

A5.3
http://world.chinadaily.com.cn/2014-12/01/content_19003906.htm
(Last accessed 06/11/21)
中将: 朝鲜若崩溃中国救不了 中国人不必为朝打仗
环球时报-环球网王洪光2014-12-01 13:54:00打印发送我说两句
原题：中国不存在“放弃朝鲜”的问题
作者：南京军区原副司令员王洪光
近日，朝韩问题专家、浙江大学李敦球教授在《环球时报》撰文，认为“有一些战略学者建议中国放弃朝鲜，问题异常严重”。笔者不同意李教授的看法，因为目前中国不存在放弃朝鲜的问题。一是李教授说“中国朝鲜是两个独立国家”，这点笔者完全赞同，但说“中朝两国的根本利益是一致的”，笔者则不敢苟同。中朝都有各自的国家利益，有的利益可能相近或一致，有的利益则大不一样。比如朝鲜的核拥和中国要求朝鲜弃核，都是基于不同的国家利益所提出和坚持的。在重大原则问题上，中国没有必要为了朝鲜的利益而损害自己的利益。朝鲜核拥已产生对我国边境地区造成核污染的严重威胁，中国政府为了该地区中国老百姓的安全，不仅要严厉批评朝鲜核拥，而且完全有理由要求朝鲜核设施远离中国，不能给中国造成核威胁。在这一点上，“中朝两国的根本利益是一致的”吗？另外，朝鲜核拥，可能刺激日韩核拥。假如小小的东北亚地区，有俄、中、朝、韩、日同时核拥，再加上美国的核阴影，东北亚还能安宁吗？中国在一系列原则问题上坚持本国的立场，反对朝鲜有损我国利益的做法，不能看作是放弃朝鲜。以前为朝鲜“擦屁股”的事太多了，专家应该比笔者更清楚。今后则可不必。
二是李教授说“朝鲜是社会主义政治体制，它难有替代中国的地缘政治选择”。其实，朝鲜早就放弃了以马克思主义作为建党的指导思想，在意识形态上与中国没有任何相同之处，并不是真正的无产阶级政党和社会主义国家。朝鲜在1972年《宪法》中还规定：“把马克思主义作为党的思想，主体思想作为唯一的思想方针”，到1980年朝鲜劳动党第六次代表大会，就把“金日成同志的革命思想、主体思想作为唯一的指导方针”，“领袖是赋予人民生命的恩人和慈父”，这时朝鲜已放弃了马克思主义。2013年朝鲜劳动党在建党《十大原则》(其地位高于章程和宪法)中，明确在主体思想指引下，“应深化树立党的政治领导体制事业，并世代延续”，并规定“应将党和政府的血脉白头山血统(即金氏血统)永远延续下去并坚决保持其绝对的纯洁性”。这里有一点马克思主义的味道没有？类似论断还有很多，希望专家多说说老百姓听一听，让老百姓自己做出判断!中朝两国只有国家利益的关系，即国家关系，而不存在社会主义政党之间的同志关系，这是朝鲜主动抛弃的。道不同，不相为谋。无产阶级建党思想要比资产阶级建党思想先进很多，也高明很多，更比封建专制思想进步很多，符合人类社会发展的大方向。我国由共产党执政、各民主党派参政，协商和选举产生了党和国家各代领导集体和最高领导人，而朝鲜三代领导人世袭产生。两者有相同之处吗？中国共产党和中国政府正是以两个平等的政党、两个平等的国家与朝鲜相处，与其他与我国友好的政党和友好的国家一样。这才是正常的政党关系和国家关系。另外，不同政治体制的国家和谐相处，在全世界比比皆是，"朝
鲜难有替代中国的地方政治选择是朝鲜采取的闭关锁国政策造成的，怨不得中国，中国不必对此负责。
三是西方国家妖魔化朝鲜，打着“人权”的旗号，干涉朝鲜内政，中国绝不掺和。朝鲜远离国际社会，内部防控很严，对外十分警惕，这是不争的事实。哪一个国家都有所谓的“人权”问题，包括美国自己。最近美国小城费城警察枪杀一名12岁持仿真枪的黑人少年，引发全国大范围骚乱，又是一明证。老实说，中国对朝鲜的人权状况一点都不了解，不能听几个“脱北者”的口述就给朝鲜下断语，联合国大会还通过审判朝鲜领导人的议案。在人权状况不明的情况下，说朝鲜人权好或不好，都没有依据，中国投反对票是理所应当的。甲午双方在1961年签订了《中朝互助友好条约》，已续签两次。条约规定：“一、缔约一方受到任何一个国家或者几个国家联合的武器进攻，因而处于战争状态时，缔约另一方应立即其全部给予军事及其他援助。”这一条约到2021年有效。这实际上是已给予朝鲜政治上和军事上的保护。条约还规定：“缔约双方将继续对两国共同利益有关的一切重大国际问题进行协商。”试问，朝鲜拥核与中国协商了吗？条约还规定：“缔约双方将继续为维护亚洲和世界的和平，和各国人民的安全而尽一切努力。”朝鲜如果切实遵守的话，就不会在我民航飞机即将飞临朝鲜上空时，却往航线上发射火箭弹，置飞机上一两百乘员于巨大危险当中；也不会在靠近朝鲜的公海上抓捕渔渔民，给我渔民生命财产安全造成重大威胁。朝鲜还三番五次地宣布废止板门店《停战协定》，使朝韩(美)进入准战状态。在《中朝互助友好条约》还有效的情况下，朝韩(美)双方一旦打起来，朝鲜将把中国置于何等地位？这是中国“放弃朝鲜”，还是朝鲜一意孤行？这不是听不听中国话的问题，《中朝互助友好条约》在那摆着呢，朝鲜的做法已经伤害了中国的根本利益，不知教授怎么得出“中朝两国的根本利益是一致的”结论。
四是把朝鲜作为我国的“战略屏障”，或没有这个“战略屏障”，在全球化、信息化时代，从地缘关系的政治、军事上讲，其重要地位大大下降，也是不争的事实。历史上朝鲜半岛从来不是中原政权的主要战略方向，但这个方向上有事，要牵扯到主要战略方向，往往拖累中原政权，作用相当重要。但在二十一世纪以来，从政治上看，周边国家包括朝鲜，对我国居于重要，哪个国家不希望周边是善邻而非恶邻呢？中国以邻为善，对菲律宾这样的弱国都不动武，甚至被国际社会和国内民众看作是软弱的表现。但是从总体上看，周边既使恶邻环峙，也阻挡不了中国现代化的步伐，中国正在崛起。从军事上看，朝鲜半岛北部从三八线到我国边境，纵深也就五、六百公里，充其量只是一个现代战役的纵深。抗美援朝战争时，我只用三个战役行动，两个多月就把进抵我边境的“联合国军”打回三八线以南。当代信息化战争，扩大了空间和缩短了空间，只有一个战役纵深的所谓“战略屏障”，又有何大的意义？
李教授认为“放弃朝鲜”会出现三种结果：一是朝鲜投入第三国怀抱，二是朝鲜崩溃，三是朝鲜决一战，半岛再燃战火。这三种结果把帽子戴得太大了，有点吓人。首先，朝鲜从来就没有投入中国的怀抱，何来再投入第三国怀抱？金日成政权开打朝鲜战争，就没有充分听取中国的意见；上世
纪六七十年代对中国甚至比一般国家还要冷淡;我同与美国建交特别是改革开放以后,更是对说三道四,直到苏东巨变,情况才有所改善。我同作为朝韩问题专家，应该比笔者清楚。其次，一个国家的崩溃，主要取决于外力，如果一个政权得不到人民的拥护, “崩溃”只是迟早的。“拉拢”也好，“放弃”也好，不起重要作用，不要把中国对朝鲜的关系看作历史上曾有更多的朝贡关系，中国不是救世主,朝韩真要崩溃，中国也救不了它。中国做好相应准备就是了，说大了也就是我东北地区受到一定的影响，不可能打断中国现代化进程。再次，要清楚地看到，中国左右不了朝鲜半岛的局势，一个朝韩六方会谈来进行不下去，中国能对朝鲜半岛“战火”负责吗?如果朝鲜“决一死战,再燃战火”，双方的目标也不是中国,中国没有必要引火烧身。谁挑起战火谁负责。当下早已没有“社会主义阵营”，中国的子弟不必为别国打仗。这道理谁都懂吧？
总之，中朝两国两党关系，要建立在正常国家交往和党际交往的基础上。从我国家利益出发，并照顾朝鲜(包括对应任何国家)利益，该支持就支持，该反对就反对，主持公平正义，树立负责任的大国形象,既不“拉拢”朝鲜，也不“放弃”朝鲜，这应是我国的基本态度。

A5.4
https://opinion.huanqiu.com/article/9CaKrnJUihA

海外版望海楼：中国负责任大国的道义与担当
来源：人民网－人民日报海外版
2016-03-04 10:19
3月2日，联合国安理会以15票赞成一致通过涉朝鲜问题的第2270号决议。这次分决议谴责朝鲜自年初以来进行的核试验和使用弹道导弹技术发射卫星，要求朝放弃其核导计划。决议一出，立刻被西方媒体围观，决议规定的对朝制裁措施更是受到高度关注。
然而，作为对决议形成有重要影响力的中国，却以更广阔的视角和更长远的目光来对待决议。
首先，中国通过赞成决议，表明在朝鲜核问题上的鲜明态度。中国反对朝鲜发展核武器，坚持朝鲜半岛不能有核，无论是北方还是南方，无论是自己制造还是引进部署。此次安理会通过的决议，重要目标之一是遏止朝鲜进一步发展核导计划。
从制裁内容看，第2270号决议与联合国之前通过的第1718、1874、2087、2094号决议相比明显更为“有力”。决议要求各国禁止向朝鲜运送可能用于核导计划的物品，收紧涵盖常规武器在内的对朝武器禁运措施，冻结可能与核导计划有关的金融资产，强化对朝鲜船只管控等。中国申明，朝鲜继续违反安理会决议，理应为此付出代价。中国坚决维护国际核不扩散机制的权威性和有效性，不会包庇纵容任何国家发展核导等大规模杀伤性武器。这是大国的应有之义。
其次，中国坚定支持决议秉持公正原则。中国主张对朝制裁要避免损害朝鲜民生，更反对借制裁之名，动摇政权之实。事实上，在中国等国的努力下，此次安理会决议内容相对平衡，针对朝鲜核导项目进行精确打击，同时充分考虑朝鲜人道主义形势和民生。一些措施对涉及民生、医疗以及其他人道主义目的的活动予以“豁免”。

尽管西方舆论一再对中国施压，要求中国按照西方的方式“惩罚朝鲜”，但中国仍从事实出发，着眼大局，展现大国担当。

最后，中国对决议的作用进行客观定位。中国认为，联合国决议并不能解开半岛的矛盾纠葛，也无法消除朝鲜和美国之间的敌对情绪。要从根本上解决半岛核问题，必须回到谈判轨道上来。决议应成为谈判的新起点和“铺路石”。为此，中国提出了半岛无核化和停和机制转换双轨并进思路，照顾各方合理关切，包括朝鲜方面的安全关切，致力于使无核化得以实施。中国提出的是全面系统的方案，体现大国智慧。

另外，中国关注半岛及地区的和平与稳定。中国不断呼吁各方保持克制，避免半岛生战生乱，建议各方不要放弃谈判的努力，不能放弃对半岛和平稳定承担的责任。中国还明确警告个别国家，不要试图浑水摸鱼实现一己私利，破坏国际社会寻求半岛问题政治解决的努力。

作为安理会五个常任理事国之一，中国坚持《联合国宪章》宗旨，主持正义，积极参与安理会涉朝决议制定。中国作为六方会谈东道主，继续促进各方以和平方式解决争端，在半岛问题上发挥了负责任大国的作用。

（作者为中国国际问题研究院国际战略研究所副所长）
APPENDIX B: China and The South China Sea Case Study

B1: People’s Daily articles quoted in STEP 1

B1.1

关注海洋 各国应多干正事(望海楼)
苏晓晖
2015年06月15日08:45 来源:人民网-人民日报海外版 手机看新闻
6月8日至12日，《联合国海洋法公约》第25届缔约国大会在纽约联合国总部召开。该《公约》于1982年通过，1994年生效。根据联合国规定，缔约国大会负责选举国际海洋法庭法官以及审议法庭的行政和财务事项，联合国秘书长需提交报告。
从性质看，缔约国大会是多边平台，本应集中精力讨论《公约》相关事，但偏偏有个别国家不合时宜地干扰议程。此次会议上，菲律宾代表就拿出南海问题对中国进行无端指责。
在国际场合大造声势，是菲律宾搅乱南海的惯用伎俩。其实菲方很清楚，国际上尚未解决的领土主权争议很多，包括东盟国家内部也有一些未决问题，南海领土主权争议本身是双边问题，当事方可以通过谈判解决。但为了抢占中国岛礁，菲律宾骨肉失时机地在各类国际场合大谈南海问题。其目标很明确，就是要混淆视听、吸引关注，对中国维护主权权益的正当行为施加压力。
与菲律宾明显不同，中国作为负责任大国，考虑的不是一己之私，而是事关各方的海洋问题。中国出席缔约国大会代表团团长王毅就如何实现海洋可持续发展提出中方三点主张，其中第一点就是要树立海洋命运共同体意识。
领土主权争端不能绑架南海。事实上，南海局势总体稳定，相关国家应加强交流合作，实现共同发展。同时，各国还须同舟共济应对挑战。面对海盗及武装劫船、资源生态环境恶化、海洋灾害频发等问题，没有一个国家能独善其身。在南海，海盗问题长期困扰航行安全。就在上个月，一艘新加坡注册的油船在马六甲海峡遭海盗持械洗劫，海盗抢走船上大约2000吨柴油。事件更进一步说明，建设海上命运共同体符合各方利益，是大势所趋。
多年来，中国一直支持相关各国针对上述非传统安全问题加强协作。由于海上抢劫、走私和偷渡、毒品枪支贩运等海上违法犯罪活动时有发生，中国多次举行研讨会，推动与东盟各国海上执法机构建立有效的合作机制，联合打击海上跨国犯罪。中国同联合国教科文组织委托，在南沙永暑礁北面海域建设有人驻守的海洋气象观测站，入编全球海平面观测网第74号站。该站为过往南海的中外船只提供可靠的航海水文气象保障，在减灾和海洋气象预报方面发挥积极作用。
不幸的是，当前有个别国家动辄炒作南海问题，破坏南海和平与稳定;不但不配合中国的合理倡议，反而对中国的贡献说三道四、肆意抹黑。这种自私行为阻碍其他国家正常合作，损害集体利益。个别国家与其频频炒作
南海话题，不如为地区和平做点正事。在海洋命运共同体建设方面，各国
有着巨大的合作关系。
中国提出了建设性倡议，但这不是只靠中国一方努力便能够实现的。相关
各国须凝聚共识，管控分歧，相向而行。
(作者为中国国际问题研究院国际战略研究所所长)

B1.2

东南亚，你为什么对安倍噤若寒蝉？
本报记者 杨子岩
2014年01月04日05:51 来源:人民网-人民日报海外版 手机看新闻
高调参拜靖国神社、新年致辞又像“战书”，这些还不够，安倍要在两年
内遍访太平洋诸岛国以慰亡灵。按理说，上述任何一种举动都能招致国际
社会的强烈批评，但考察政府行为，除中韩之外，在世界大战中受日本毒
害深的东南亚国家却保持沉默。在如此大是大非的问题上，是安倍手段
高明无懈可击，还是某些国家被蒙蔽了眼睛？本报记者连线日本 问题专家
对此事进行解读。
安倍拜鬼，东南亚失声安倍在为历史翻案的道路上越走越远，怒者很多。
自民党的执政友公明党党首山又那津男2日就参拜靖国神社劝诫首相倾
听他国呼声。在去年12月26日高调参拜靖国神社后，安倍非但没有收敛，
反而在新年致辞中强调，“夺回‘强大日本’的战斗才刚开始。”在观看
军国主义影片“永远的0”时，他还声称深受感动。
日本媒体透露，安倍还将在两年内遍访第二次世界大战末期的交战地南太
平洋地区的岛国。这些地方都是当时日军和美军的交战地，当地还留有多
多纪念日本军人的“慰灵碑”。这也意味着，安倍不仅要在国内“拜鬼”
，还要远赴海外“拜鬼”。是可忍，孰不可忍？中国和韩国对此举表达了
强烈抗议。韩国国会去年12月31日全体会议上一致通过决议，认为日本
首相安倍晋三参拜靖国神社是给构筑面向未来的日韩关系以及东北亚的和
平与稳定“带来严重负面影响的外交挑衅行为”，将“予以强烈谴责”。
联合国秘书长潘基文1月2日与韩国总统朴槿惠通电话，对安倍参拜靖国神
社表示失望。
美国国务院发言人也在去年12月30日的例行新闻发布会上说，安倍参拜靖
国神社将激化日本与邻国的紧张关系，美国对此表示失望。
二战时期同样犯有战争罪行的德国也对日本的行为表示不齿。德国总理默
克尔的发言 人赛贝特在接受记者提问时说，“一般来说，所有国家都应该
对20世纪发生的可怕事情正直地负起自己应有的责任”。
就连日本本国媒体对首相的举动也颇为担忧。《日本经济新闻》直呼“不要
陷入爱国的 陷阱!”
相比较他国的激烈态度，在二战中备受日本残害的东南亚国家却表现出另
一番态度。除了个别媒体发表了义正辞严的社论文章 之外，多国政府选择
了集体失声。只有越南外交部就安倍参拜靖国神社含糊其辞地表示“希望日本为地区和平、稳定与合作妥善处理问题。”

金钱障眼，“义”字难牵。据日本的公开资料显示，除中国外，在二战中，东南亚国家受害颇深。印度尼西亚约400万人被杀，越南200余万，菲律宾111万，缅甸30余万，新加坡也有15万……如此深仇大恨，理应有咬牙切齿之痛，至少也敢于严厉的谴责。在面对安倍参拜靖国神社的问题上，东南亚国家为何噤若寒蝉，大气都不敢出一声？

“东南亚国家考虑的多是现实利益，不太考虑大是大非的问题。‘见利忘义’一词，尤其是用在菲律宾这样的国家身上丝毫不为过。”中国社会科学院日本研究所研究员高洪分析。“在战后，日本对东南亚国家实施ODA(官方开发援助)计划，一方面对东南亚国家投资，另一方面为日本在东南亚国家。”

“经济合作是手段之一，同时安倍还打出‘价值观外交’牌，宣扬中国威助论，为东南亚国家提供巡逻舰船，在南海问题上围堵中国。”外交学院周永生教授认为。“其实日本提供的无非是蝇头小利。这些援助并不是白给，而是以低息贷款的形式向东南亚国家提供。免费的部分只占1/10。包括巡逻船，也是以贷款形式提供的。”周永生说。但就是为了获得这低息贷款，东南亚国家也不敢担财路投资的回报。“前车之鉴，子系中山狼据日本媒体报道，在访问南太平洋诸国之际，安倍还将政绩重演，积极推进对这些国家的政府援助和经济支援政策，并准备参加将于9月举行的南太平洋岛国首脑会议。

此前，日本只派遣副大臣级别的官员参加这一会议，如今提升到首相级别，无疑在加强日本的影响力。但无论是大米，还是访南太平洋诸国，日本媒体及民众已经对安倍的做法表示了担忧。“民众已经开始有批评声音，认为领导者不应当一味放任，损害国家利益。而且安倍经济学的负面效果也要显现。安倍的第三支箭有可能脱靶。”高洪说，届时，民众意见会很大。专家认为，曾为日本殖民地的东南亚国家不应该为了蝇头小利，在大是大非上犯了糊涂。“子系中山狼，得志便猖狂。”纵容日本滑向右倾，对这些国家来说肯定是得不偿失。众所周知，安倍参拜甲级战犯，实质上就是要颠覆东京审判，美化日本军国主义对外侵略和殖民统治历史，否定世界反法西斯战争成果及二战后的国际秩序，是对人类良知的肆意践踏和对公理正义的狂妄挑衅。如果在此问题上，东南亚国家“不伸明正义立场，就要主导地区合作，谈何容易。”周永生教授批评。

B1.3

日本外相访越月底成行 日拟为越提供大型巡逻舰
2014年07月11日17:25 来源:人民网 手机看新闻
人民网7月11日讯 据BBC引述共同社报道，在日本传信已久的外相岸田文雄访问越南的计划，7月11日再传出新消息。共同社引述多名政府消息人士透露，日越两国外长赴越本月底访问越南，以实现这一延期的计划。报道引述消息来源称，“岸田此访将与越南副首相兼外长范明正会谈，向越南解释日本解禁集体自卫权的内阁决定，务求取得理解”。不过，事实上越南外交部发言人黎海平7月3日已在记者会上称，“越南关心日本解禁集体自卫权的事务，期待日本继续积极地对构筑与维持和平努力地做贡献”，因此岸田此行重点并非求得越南理解集体自卫权，而是日媒关注与中国争夺南海主权的越南要求日本提供小型巡逻舰的问题。共同社11日说，“越南显示着与日本在海洋安全合作上的期待感，看来外相访越时将会对越南的要求作出积极的回应”。岸田原定6月下旬访越，后因日本与朝鲜7月1日在北京谈判而延期，日本希望尽快实现岸田访越，以体现日本与越南保持紧密合作针对中国海洋活动的愿望。(老任)

B1.4

人民日报钟声:美国发展同东盟关系要端正心态 来源:人民网-人民日报 2016-02-18 09:44

大多数东盟国家对一些可能损害东盟公信力和声誉、削弱东盟东亚合作主导地位的行为都有足够警惕。美国时间2月16日，首次在本地举行的美国与东盟国家领导人非正式会议落下帷幕。尽管一些人鼓吹已久，将此次会议视为冲着中国挑事儿的“理想场所”，但是会议最后发出的声明并未如其所愿直接“点名中国”，也未明确提及南海。这样的结果放在中国东盟关系的大背景下并不令人意外，但干扰中国东盟关系的不健康心态，还是应该引起人们的警惕。当前全球版图中，东盟地区的发展活力和战略重要性不断上升，特别是东盟国家在其中的作用将进一步上升。东盟同包括美国在内的各对话伙伴发展平等、友好、不针对第三方的合作关系，对于深化区域合作、促进东亚繁荣稳定具有积极意义。然而，一段时间以来，一些人给美国与东亚关系描绘出的发展路径却与建设性方向相去甚远。人们注意到，此次会议开幕前后，菲律宾执意想把南海仲裁案纳入会议议程，并推动各方将“仲裁”写入成果文件，意图让东盟为其单方面提出的仲裁“背书”。与此同时，华盛顿也意欲推动东盟各国就此形成共识。

事实上，围绕南海问题，类似的外交博弈过去几年已经出现多次，但最后的结果一再表明，东盟能够较好地平衡各方利益关切，不会被个别成员国的单方面主张所“绑架”。大多数东盟国家对一些可能损害东盟公信力和声誉、削弱东盟东亚合作主导地位的行为也有足够警惕，不愿看到东盟按照某一国家的“指挥棒”行事。事实上，个别域外国家热衷于介入南海问题，并不是真正关心南海稳定，而是另有考量。此次会议最后发表的声明
中，所谓“非军事化”再次被炒作。但众所周知的是，美国作为域外国家
在南海频繁实施军用舰机炫耀武力，还图谋拉拢一些国家搞所谓联合巡航，
严重威胁沿岸国家主权和安全，这才是南海军事化的最主要原因。
放大南海问题并不符合东盟现实利益。南海问题是核心是领土和海洋权益
争议，是中国和部分东盟国家之间的问题，不是中国和东盟之间的问题，
更不是东盟和美国之间的问题。中国和东盟国家在南海问题上的沟通渠道
是畅通有效的，中方也支持东盟国家首提的双轨思路，认为这是当前
妥善处理南海问题的最现实有效途径。偏离这一轨道，引入外部势力干预
、恶意炒作矛盾分歧，只会对妥善处理问题的努力造成干扰和破坏，这
也是为什么泰国总理巴育在此次会议上指出，各方应通过建设性对话来缓解
分歧。同时，他也强调《南海各方行为宣言》是聚焦相关各方信任、探索
和平解决方案的有效机制。
东盟正处于跨步前行的历史性发展时期，很多国家都在努力发展同东盟的
关系。但应该看到，这不是凭借满腹私欲可以实现的。唯有真正做到帮帮忙
不添乱，这种努力才能转化为让各方受益的共赢成果。

B1.5

美令马前卒搅乱南海气数已尽 逼华伎俩贻笑大方
来源：人民日报海外版
2015-02-02 09:33
近日，美国海军第七舰队司令托马斯表示，欢迎日本将空中巡逻范围扩展
至南海。美国国防部随后对此言论表示了支持，理由是这将有利于南海地
区的稳定。
众所周知，目前南海地区并不太平。部分环南海国家不顾自己曾经明确表
示过的立场，在过去几十年间不断蚕食我国在南海地区的国土，并进而侵
犯我国在南海的经济权益。与此相策应，美国在去年提出争议各方以2002
年达成的《南海各方行为宣言》为基准，要求各方不要采取有违“现状”
的行动，旨在使其他各方对我国领土的侵犯变为“既成”事实，迫使我国
接收已经受到损害的“现状”。
同时，美国以“亚太再平衡”为推手，在军力全球收缩、军费持续走低的
背景下，突出其武装力量在亚太地区的军事存在，尤其是加强在南海地区
中的军事活动。一段时间以来，美国在南海海空持续显示“肌肉”，不仅
对我国高强度抵近侦察，而且扩展其在这一区域的同盟与伙伴关系，在客
观上为南海其他一些声索国延缓对我侵权行为给予背书。
因此，最近南海地区很不安宁，原因就是两条：区内一些国家继续侵略，
而域外大国大力干预南海地区事务，唯恐天下不乱，而这又对区内声索国
产生激励，令其更加有恃无恐，为所欲为。显然，南海不太平的重要原因
是美国从中搅局，煽风点火，护短谋私，这使南海争端当事国之间本有可能
通过直接协商而获解决的矛盾变得更为复杂。
美军高官以及国防部官员如今又鼓励日本卷入南海事务，反映了五角大楼
为搅乱南海而把更多国家卷入争端。通过把日本以及更多域外国家拖进南
海。美国希望收到一石数鸟之效：其一，通过扩大南海问题的国际化，对中国施加更大国际压力;其二，经由美日等国的武力显示，为对华威慑升级;其三，向那些在南海损害了中国主权与权益的声索国发出信号，即只要依靠美国就不必通过外交手段与相关利益的当事方寻求互利互让。

美国之所作所为，无非就是继续其对东亚的传统主导，不能让中国或任何其他国家来制定规则。但是，中国寻求的是正当的国家主权与权益，并不谋求什么特殊权利。我国在南海地区所声索的权利，既是历史条件自然形成，也是南海周边国家在过去所曾明确接受或默认的。然而这些国家出尔反尔，单方面改变现状。即便如此，中国仍愿搁置争议，与相关争议方直接协商，以求互谅互让，共同开发，合作共赢。

然而，美国对个别南海国家的单边行为却百般庇护，要求被它们改变的现状不得再被逆转。如此偏颇的逻辑不仅不会带来地区安宁，反有可能引发更多失稳。当前，美国又开始鼓动域外国家到南海巡逻，无非是唆使马前卒成事，试图将南海局势搅得更为紧张。美国一再欢迎日本前来南海巡逻，更显示了它试图利用中日矛盾，阻碍中国与东盟国家自主协商的阴暗心理。超级大国使出如此不负责任之招数，颇似大气已尽，令人贻笑大方。

美国以地区稳定为名行挑拨离间之实，不仅无助于它继续主导东亚局势，反让世人看穿当今美国软弱也无力为地区与世界稳定提供公共产品的本质。东亚各国倒要有所反省，实现区域发展和安全终究要靠自身合作，而非让外力有火之机。

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### B1.6

天凯：对美方在南海问题上过度反应感到担忧
2015年06月02日16:40来源：中国新闻网

中新网6月2日电5月28日，驻美国大使崔天凯就南海局势接受《华尔街日报》外事主编霍瓦特专访。崔天凯在专访中表示，近来美方对南海局势做出过度反应，不断采取导致紧张局势升级的言行。美国向这一地区派出搭载媒体记者的军用侦察机，显然是试图挑动和加剧紧张局势。“我们对美方上述过度反应感到担忧。”

外交部网站6月2日公布了专访主要内容。全文如下：

霍瓦特：大使先生，感谢你来到《华尔街日报》。本周，中美之间围绕南海局势的论战不断升温，主要关于中方在斯普拉特利群岛(南沙群岛)采取的行动以及美方对此的反应。你认为这场论战会发展到什么程度?地区有关各方在这一问题上应采取哪些正确的行动?

崔天凯：首先，我很高兴来到这里接受专访。也许我们应该先搞清楚一些基本事实。第一，中方目前所做的事情仅限于中国主权管辖范围内的岛礁上。我们并没有试图收回那些被其他国家侵占的岛礁。当然，岛礁上有一些军事防御设施，但主要功能还是为各类民事需求服务。这些服
务不仅提供给中方的船只，也提供给其他各国船只，比如海上保护和搜救、气象观测、海洋环境保护、渔业生产等等。第三，近来美方对南海局势做出过度反应，不断采取导致紧张局势升级的言行，我们对此感到很意外。美方向这一地区派出海军媒体记者的军用侦察机，显然是试图挑动和加剧紧张局势。美方还发表大量言论，对中国进行无理指责，并在地区领土主权争议问题上占边站队。这些言行只会使地区局势变得更不稳定。我们对美方上述过度反应感到担忧。

霍瓦特：目前美方的解释是，上述行动是在回应中方采取的被美及有关周边国家感到具有挑衅性的行动。一是中方可能对一些礁石提出领土声索；二是中方在有关岛礁上修建军事设施，使这一地区军事化，而这一地区是中国和多个周边国家之间重要的战略通道。对一些国家认为中国正在采取挑衅行动这一观点，你怎么看？

崔天凯：事实上，中国比其他任何国家都更关心南海的安全和航行自由。中国是世界主要贸易国之一，每年都有大量进出口货物通过南海航道进行运输。因此，保持南海的稳定不仅符合中国的利益，也符合其他各国的利益。除非有人另有所图。如果有人真的希望看到地区局势紧张升级，那这种紧张局势就会被他们当作推进军事部署、组建冷战式的军事同盟、部署新型反导系统的借口。如果这确实是某些人的真实意图，那么他们做出的其他事情就顺理成章了，其中的逻辑也更加显而易见。否则，我看不出这些公开表态背后到底有什么逻辑。

霍瓦特：我注意到中国外交部官员曾提到美方“另有所图”。中方是否真的认为美国正以此为借口加强在地区的军事力量？

崔天凯：正如我刚刚谈到的，维护地区稳定符合包括中国、美国和地区国家在内的各方利益。但美方目前的所作所为在中国受到很多质疑。为何美方有这些反应？为何美方反应过度？为何美方派越来越多的军舰和军机对中国进行抵近侦察？美方的真实意图何在？是试图在亚洲重新上演冷战吗？

霍瓦特：中方是否感到美国及其盟友近来采取的行动对中国形成了包围？几件事情我也许会提到，包括日本与菲律宾和澳大利亚提升防务合作等。但这些相关国家都认为他们的行动是针对加强地区力量投放、航母建造计划以及声索更多领海和领空主权的回应。

崔天凯：实际上，我们并不担心与邻国的关系。我认为我们与邻国的关系发展得相当好。比如，我们与亚洲国家的整体关系就非常好，如你所知，最近我们同印度甚至日本的关系都在发展。中国始终致力于同邻国发展友好合作关系。使我们感到担忧的不是我们可能被包围或遏制，我不认为世界上哪个国家有能力包围或遏制中国。我们真正感到担忧的是那些可能对我们地区以及全球安全造成影响的行动。如果我们继续放任这种冷战思维，冷战就有可能在亚洲重演，亚洲就可能出现如同冷战时期一样大国军事集团相互对峙的局面。出现这种局面对谁有利呢？中国，美国还是亚洲人民？我认为对谁都不利，因为如果亚洲地区的稳定受到干扰，经济发展长的良好势头被削弱、区域经济合作被抑制，各方利益都将受损。这是非常严重的后果。我不知道华盛顿是否认真思考过这些后果。
霍瓦特:你对中国与邻国在其他方面友好关系的评价是准确的。但有些时候，正是这样的友好关系，令那些地区以外看到这一系列纷争的人们感到困惑。为什么这些岛礁如此重要?相关国家不仅要进行声索，还要在上面开展建设活动并通过它来扩大主权声索?
崔天凯:这些主权声索和领土争议由来已久。我认为，如果有关各方都采取建设性姿态，我们是能够处理或管控这些问题的，各国之间的整体关系也不会受到干扰。这仍然是中国的既定立场。但重要的是大国不要采取干涉行动。而更为重要的是行动背后的意图。那些高频率、高强度的抵近侦察活动以及所有相关行动背后的真实意图到底是什么?我们现在谈的不是墨西哥湾，不是加利福尼亚海岸，也不是夏威夷，我们谈的是中国南海，距离中国如此之近。如果美方没有任何敌意，为什么要做这些事情?
霍瓦特:我想你知道答案，因为美国同中国的一些邻国有盟友关系，他们在本地区也有自己的利益。
崔天凯:如果按照这种解释，就意味着美国同这些国家的同盟关系本质上是以反华为目的的。如果这些军事同盟致力于维护地区共同安全并与所有地区国家开展合作，那么它们就不应该做现在这些事。唯一的解释就是这些军事同盟将中国看作对手甚至敌人。这是最危险的。
霍瓦特:你是否认为美国同澳大利亚、菲律宾等国的军事同盟关系是反华的?
崔天凯:这个问题应该由美国政府来澄清。我认为，采取建立反华军事同盟的政策只会适得其反，甚至是愚蠢的。
霍瓦特:但我想说，这些军事同盟确实存在着并相互开展防务合作。这不是什么新事物，已经存在了很长时间。你使用“反华”这个词给我的感觉是，你比以前更加认为这种军事同盟对中国是一个威胁，或者是在公开场合更视其为威胁。
崔天凯:问题不是我们怎么看，而是这些军事同盟怎么做。它们不应该做那些使中国人更加确信它们是在针对中国的事情。我们只看事实。
霍瓦特:美国国防部长卡特呼吁，由于除了中国之外还有别的国家也进行了填海造地，考虑到当前局势，所有参与填海造地的国家都应停止建设行动，至少是暂停。请问中方愿意暂停或停止建设行为，并就地区局势进行广泛讨论吗?
崔天凯:同世界上其他主权国家一样，中国有自卫的权利和能力。霍瓦特:我感到，仅仅提出这些问题，就能反映出美中之间的敌意，或者说缺乏互信，至少在海上问题上是这样。但在其他问题上，如贸易和经济问题上，美中之间实际上有很多对话与合作。
崔天凯:的确，中美关系之广，远远超出了这些问题。此外，南海问题不应成为中美之间的问题。美国在南海没有领土主权声索，为什么要让这个问
题成为中美之间的问题。正如我此前所指出的，意图最重要。我们将根据
美方的言行做出自己的判断。我们当然希望同美国发展积极、合作的关 系
，不仅在贸易、气候变化、防灾等问题上，也包括安全问题。我们愿同美
方在太平洋、在南海开展良性互动，但这种互动应该是双向的。中方一直
保持着克制，而克制不应是单方面的。
霍瓦特: 为什么你认为美国寻求挑起本地区的紧张局势? 从美方的角度来看
，这么做的目的是什么？
崔天凯: 关于这个问题有一种解释，尽管我并未接受这种说法，我也希望这
不是真的。这种说法是: 有些人希望本地区出现紧张局势，甚至进一步加剧
，这样他们就有理由鼓吹加强军事部署，建立新的反导系统，加强在本地
区的军事同盟，把中国限制为一个“内陆”国家。这样，就会形成一个亚
洲版的北约，冷战就会在这 里重现。有一些人持这种观点，虽然我对此并
不认同。
霍瓦特: 中国是否试图达成一种平衡，即一方面在军事上不受制约地投放自
己的力量，另一方面避免惹恼邻国，防止他们联合起来向中国挑衅？
崔大使: 并非所有的邻国都这样。
霍瓦特: 一部分邻国。崔天凯: 对，一部分邻国。中国军力的增加并非由什
么大的战略驱使，而是由于日益增长的经济和其他方面的需要。因为中国
正前所未有地融入全球经济体系。中国在许多方面拥有更多利益，甚至在
远离中国的地方。因此，中国提升维护自身合法权益的能力是顺理成章的
事。这样才能使我们在贸易、能源资源等对外经济关系方面的利益受到更
好保护。同时，随着中国的发展，国际社会对中国承担更大国际责任的期
待也在上升。我们充分了解到这种期待，并为此做好了准备。我认为，人
们不应把中国视作威胁。我们(军力的发展)是为了满足经济发展的需要，
也是为了回应国际社会的期待，愿意履行应尽的国际义务。这为中国、美
国和其他国家开展合作提供了机遇。世界上还有那么多问题需要解决，没
有哪个国家可以独立应对。中国不行，美国也不行，我们必须合作。
霍瓦特: 感谢大使先生光临并接受采访。崔天凯: 谢谢。很高兴来到这里

B1.7

中青报: “一带一路”呼唤新的国际安全体系
储殷

2017年03月01日08:14来源: 中国青年报 原标题: “一带一路”呼唤新的国际安全体系在以方中心为支撑的资本主义全球安全秩序日益瓦解的今天，这种成中的新安全体系，正在成为维持地区稳定、保障世界和平的重要工具
。随着“一带一路”高峰论坛举办日期的临近，“一带一路”的落实与推
进情况成了社会关注焦点之一。在为“一带一路”倡议3年以来取得诸多
伟大成绩而欣喜的同时，发现与分析“一带一路”倡议实践过程当中面临
的主要困难，找到相应的解决思路，已经成为推进“一带一路”所必须完
成的任务。从目前“一带一路”倡议落实的情况以及未来的推进趋势来看，“一带一路”的安全观将会得到更多关注。

安全观大致可以归纳为四个方面。其一，一些“一带一路”沿线国家，由于各种原因，国内安全形势严峻。在近几年的实践中，一些国家出现了政局动荡、族群教派争端、恐怖主义分离主义势力兴起以及中央地方的冲突等安全观，在一定程度上阻碍了“一带一路”项目的推进，甚至导致了部分项目的中止。其二，一些“一带一路”的重点区域如乌俄、印巴存在地区冲突或国家间关系紧张的局面，阻碍了“一带一路”所推动的地区整合。其三，一些域外大国有意在“一带一路”沿线国家和地区制造区域紧张气氛，以阻碍“一带一路”倡议的推进。比如美国在南海问题上的一系列举动，就带有很强的遏制“一带一路”的目的。

其四，随着特朗普政权“反全球化”路线的逐渐清晰，未来国际安全形势很可能会进一步恶化，部分“一带一路”沿线国家很可能会深受波及。尽管中国的“一带一路”倡议是以经济为侧重的，但经济发展必须依赖于有保障的安全秩序。为了保护随着“一带一路”的推进而快速增的中国海外利益，以及大量的中国企业与人员的财产与生命安全，围绕“一带一路”构建新的国际安全体系，已经成为中国所无法回避的历史使命。尤其是在域外大国频频以安全秩序对冲中国的经济影响力的情况下，建设“一带一路”之上的国际安全新秩序，已经成为中国国家崛起的必然要求。坦率而言，任何一个大国的崛起，都伴随着国际安全秩序的重组。在方社会的历史中，这种重组通常是通过大国争霸、帝国崛起，甚至世界范围内的战争来完成的。这也是一些国家对中国崛起忧心忡忡的重要原因。但对于承袭了天下大同精神的中国而言，在文化基因上，就对以天下秩序成就一国之私的霸道缺乏兴趣。也正因为如此，在历史上，中华帝国以及围绕这一帝国的东亚秩序，迥然不同于以征服、殖民为代表的西方帝国。在“一带一路”的推进过程中，中国更倾向于通过与沿线国家的协调与合作，构建互信、平等的安全秩序。无论是中国与中亚国家的上海合作组织，还是中国-东盟的安全合作，都完全不同于以美国霸权为中心的北约和隐隐成型的美日韩军事联盟。在以方中心为支撑的资本主义全球安全秩序日益瓦解的今天，这种成长中的新安全体系，正在成为维持地区稳定、保障世界和平的重要工具。时至今日，出于对一些国家可能产生误解的担心，中国在军事、安全领域的国际合作仍然保持着低调与谨慎，但随着“一带一路”的进一步推进，中国社会终究会发现，向“一带一路”沿线国家提供作为公共产品的安全秩序，不仅将是中国重要的大国责任，而且也是所有希望从“一带一路”中获得和平、稳定与繁荣的国家的共同期待。

B1.8

“一带一路”成中菲合作新机遇(望海楼)
苏晓晖
2017年05月01日04:11 | 来源:人民网-人民日报海外版
近期，第30届东盟峰会在菲律宾举行。菲总统杜特尔特在峰会后的记者会上确认，将于5月前往北京出席“一带一路”国际合作高峰论坛，他还对“一带一路”倡议做出了积极评价。中菲得以探讨“一带一路”合作的基础是两国正在有效管控分歧。阿基诺三世政府时期，菲方不断挑动南海争议，严重损害双边关系。杜特尔特就任总统后，对华释放善意。两国达成重要共识，一致认为应聚焦合作，搁置争议，共同推动南海问题重新回到双边谈判协商解决的轨道。菲方多次明确不会把所谓“南海仲裁案”裁决作为东盟会议讨论议题，强调正与中方进行双边接触，没必要在东盟层面提及争议议题。此次东盟峰会的主席声明在涉及南海的问题上表述克制，并表明东盟与中国正式海基问题进行良性互动。很明显，担任东盟在中菲关系向好的背景下，“一带一路”倡议引起菲律宾的关注是必然的。首先，菲认可中国发展成就，希望学习中国发展经验。中共十八大以来，中国对内推动深层次改革和经济转型，对外开放合作理念，在全球治理方面发挥作用重要作用。杜特尔特总统将“一带一路”倡议视为中国提出的经济发展理论，主动研究，想借相关合作搭乘中国经济发展的快车。其次，菲赞同中国提出的合作理念。近年来，针对“一带一路”的恶意解读频现。然而，包括菲律宾在内的越来越多的国家逐渐对中国倡议有了一定了解和认同，认为中国在推动合作的过程中秉持共商、共建、共享原则，尊重国家间的差异，不干涉他国内政，实实在在推动合作共赢。

最后，菲着重中国推动合作取得的成果。自习近平主席2013年提出“一带一路”倡议以来，倡议迅速落地生根。短短几年时间，中国已与40多个国家和国际组织就共建“一带一路”签署了合作协议。东盟国家对“一带一路”倡议颇表重视。除杜特尔特总统外，印尼总统佐科、老挝国家主席本扬、越南主席陈大光、柬埔寨首相洪森、马来西亚总理纳吉布、缅甸国务资政昂山素季等也将参加“一带一路”国际合作高峰论坛。菲总统聚焦区域内基础设施建设，已在今年4月推出大规模基础设施投资计划。截至2016年6月，中国国企在26个“一带一路”沿线国承建大型交通基础设施项目38项。不少菲方心人士认为，中菲在基建等领域有巨大的合作潜力。受南海争议干扰，菲一度错失合作良机。在两国关系实现转圜之际，围绕“一带一路”的合作机不可失，失不再来。盼望菲方抓住机遇，让“一带一路”成为中菲合作新亮点。

B1.9

人民日报钟声：搅浑南海的企图不会得逞
2016年03月10日04:35 | 来源：人民网－人民日报小字号

中国一直在为南海和平稳定做出各种努力，中国有信心、有能力完全有能力与东盟国家一道，确保南海的和平发展大局。两会期间，一些国外媒体的目光还是围绕着南海问题转。有的人带着惯有的偏见，拿中国主权范围内的正常举动说事，同时不遗余力地炒作一场走
了调。变了味的所谓仲裁。中方的回应有理有据："中国不是在南沙最早部署武器的国家，也不是部署武器最多的国家，更不是军事活动最频繁的国家，‘军事化’的帽子扣不到中国头上，有更合适的国家可以戴。"事情的是非曲直其实并不复杂。中国根据国际法赋予的权利在自己的岛礁上建设了一些必要的防御措施。除此之外，中国建设更多的是民用设施，是为了向国际社会提供公共产品。南海航行自由非但不会因中方举动受到影响，反而会得到更好维护。至于菲律宾发起的所谓南海仲裁案，中国已在严格根据国际法相关规定作出排除强制性仲裁的政府声明。菲方继续不合法、不守信、不讲理的言行，除了进一步暴露闹剧的幕后指使者和政治图谋，不会改变绝大多数人对事情本身的公道看法。

在南海问题上，中国维护国家主权和领土完整的意志坚如磐石，不是中国的，一分不要，该是中国的，寸土必保。对于这一点，任何人都不应心存侥幸。与此同时，中国愿意同有关国家通过直接商谈和平解决争议，并同南海沿岸国一起努力维护南海地区的和平与稳定。中方的思路体现了解决问题的诚意和智慧。马来西亚前总理马哈蒂尔不久前就对媒体指出："我们不相信战争，我们认为还是通过谈判找到和平解决这一问题的方法比较好。"

一段时期以来，美国一些人在各种场合大谈所谓中国“军事化”南海，试图渲染一个不断对外扩张的中国，并以此为借口屡屡派出先进舰机，企图搅动原本稳定的局面，并为闹事者撑腰。《纽约时报》9日直白地写道："当‘约翰·C·斯坦尼斯’号航空母舰及4艘其他美国军舰上周驶入南海进行所谓的例行演习时，该行动发出的信息是明确的：美国是这个地区的主要军事力量，并打算保持其主导地位。"

然而，没有根据的“叙事”必定有破绽。就连美国《国家利益》杂志网站刊登的一篇文章也认为美军方的逻辑太过牵强："中国的领土主张自1949年以来几乎未有改变。中国提出的主权要求的范围和特点不足为奇，而且大体上与其他国家的做法相一致。当前的领海争端出现在中国国力和海军实力增强之前，任何认为中国因为觉得自身更加强大而扩大领海主张的设想均没有事实依据。"

南海问题并不是中美之间的问题，美国一些人在南海问题上频频挑事儿，根源上还是因为他们对中国抱有战略疑虑，总是担心中国有一天会取代美国。有学者指出，南海问题不是美国加强与中国竞争的起因，而是结果，"美国只是在用‘狼来了’的策略吓唬东南亚国家，以使这些国家投入到美国的政治及军事怀抱中"。显然，基于这样的盘算，是无法看出完整的"利害清单"，也感受不到地区国家心愿的。新加坡总理李显龙就曾强调，地区国家希望避免不得不选择支持或反对一个大国的事情发生，与承载着意识形态负担的冷战不同，这里关系到的不是一场零和游戏。

中国一直在为南海和平稳定做出各种努力，中国有信心、有定力也完全有能力与东盟国家一道，确保南海的和平发展大局。如果有人执意想把南海搅浑，把亚洲搞乱，中国不会答应，本地区绝大多数国家也不会允许。
人民日报钟声：密切合作的大潮
印证人心向背
2016年08月18日09:09 来源:人民网-人民日报

中国东盟关系面临新时期的重大发展机遇，携手同行的未来，一定是共同繁荣的景象。缅甸联邦共和国国务资政昂山素季于8月17日至21日对中国进行正式访问，这是缅甸新一届政府成立以来领导人首次访华，同时也是昂山素季上任后首次出访非东盟国家。对外界而言，这一访问具有两大积极看点：其一，中缅双方对彼此关系高度重视；其二，所谓菲律宾南海仲裁案闹剧过后，中国同包括缅甸在内的东盟国家关系依然行进在良好的发展轨道上。

就在昂山素季踏上访华行程前，落实《南海各方行为宣言》第十三次高官会刚刚在中国和马来西亚闭幕。各方表示将以此为新的《中国东盟国家外长关于全面有效落实《南海各方行为宣言》联合声明》为指导，重新将妥处分歧，增进互信，排除干扰，共同致力于将南海建设成为和平之海、友谊之海、合作之海。各方表示愿以中国东盟建立对话伙伴关系25周年纪念日为契结，深化中国东盟合作，推动中国——东盟战略伙伴关系迈上新台阶。

实际上，中国同东盟国家的交流互动并没有因外部干扰而停滞过。7月下旬，在老挝首都万象举行的东亚合作系列外长会议上，东盟国家外长会议发表的声明只字未提南海。8月初，在贵阳举行的第九届中国东盟教育交流周上，来自东盟国家的教育部长、大学校长、专家学者等人士与中国同行共同探讨推动双方人文交流之诺。8月初举行的东亚合作经贸部长系列会议上，中方提出的各项倡议颇受东盟各国认同。

“保持与发展对华经贸关系，这是东盟各国经济发展的重要推动力”老挝国立大学经济学院院长桑奇的观点，代表了东盟各国的主流看法。

中国与东盟关系持续健康发展，全方位、多层次、宽领域的合作关系是根基。中国与东南亚山水相连，血脉相通，在经济社会发展的历程中相互启迪、通力合作。中国连续6年成为东盟第一大贸易伙伴，东盟连续4年成为中国第三大贸易伙伴。东盟是中国第四大出又市场和第二大进口来源地。2015年双方贸易额4722亿美元，互访人次2364万，互派留学生逾10万人。政治互信不断加深、经贸合作日益紧密、人文交流成果丰硕，使双方利益更加紧密交融。

中国坚持与邻为善、以邻为伴，坚持践行亲诚惠容的周边外交理念，致力于构建更为紧密的中国东盟命运共同体，推动建设亚洲命运共同体。与此同时形成鲜明对比的是，某些域外国家，身体已进入21世纪，而脑袋还停留在冷战思维、零和博弈的旧时代。它们乐于看到地区不稳定，到处鼓吹所谓“中国威胁”，妄想在中国和东盟之间打楔子，企图坐收渔利。但是，中国东盟密切合作的大潮证明了人心向背，逆潮流而动的伎俩不会得逞。当前中国与东盟关系面临新时期重大发展机遇。双方领导人已规划了未来发展蓝图。《落实中国东盟面向和平与繁荣的战略伙伴关系联合宣言行动计划(2016-2020)》所包含的263项实实在在的内容，承载着双方的共同意
愿，映鉴着合作的活力和前景。人们有理由确信，中国东盟携手同行的未来，一定是共同繁荣的景象。

B2: Weibo posts quoted in STEP 1

1. 回复@童年的风筝2015:目前中国与越南在陆地军事上对抗的可能性非常小，越南领教过中国陆军的威猛，巡逻边界加强沟通，少点误判了。目前健在南海，必须压制住越南挑衅的气焰。
   (2015_05_20_01_31_35_docid348322_a70490072f4614f8815a1f14aaecf93)

2. #南海局势#【中国解决南海问题新思路】美国在南海问题上软硬兼施横加干涉，南海诸小国也不断叫嚷。中国有必要教训某国已让其停止挑衅。http://t.cn/R2HPsEO（分享自@凤凰视频
   (2015_10_20_12_28_55_docid386631_0ea3e6b16649dc3626c489f14b9f8ff, Pos. 1)

3. 那些跟着美国跑的反华国家政权，一个个都被毛泽东整的焦头烂额，自顾不暇，根本不敢也请得侵占中国的领土领海，所以，当年中国没有藏南问题，没有东海问题，钓鱼岛也没有被日本实际控制，也没有南海问题 (2015_03_17_09_32_docid330060_bf4a745c0450b885dde1dab78974390, Pos. 1)

4. 【解决南海问题，我们相信“德不孤，必有邻”】在处理与菲律宾的南海争议上，中国虽遭受很多别有用心的阻力，承受了不少的歪曲甚至妖魔化，但是中国人相信，“德不孤，必有邻”。只要始终坚守正义和公道，我们相信，支持中国立场的力量会越来越强大，中国与邻国通过谈判协商解决领土和划界问题的正确主…全文
   (2016_06_13_08_52_48_docid37245_d3ca0e0c90bc69f6246b775c476ac476, Pos. 1)

5. 菲律宾拉莫斯刚走，缅甸昂山素季又来，中国与东盟高官在建立外交热线和推进南海各方行为宣言达成共识，这些预示中国在南海问题日趋掌握主动。在经历南海仲裁闹剧后，东盟国家意识到美国太远，中国太近，美国只有大棒，而中国才有胡萝卜，棒子不能当饭吃，还得小心打出去的棒子弹回来必伤自己，吃饭要紧…全文 (2016_08_19_13_49_52_docid94975_cf697782dfb096bf0429ebd6d5ea0acbf, Pos. 1)

B3: Weibo posts identification for tables in STEP 1

| SCS1 (17/01/12) | 2017_01_12_14_55_26_docid259804_176d5a7d26f826e0e6abcedc7e91405 |
| SCS2 (17/01/23) | 2017_01_23_14_24_33_docid96906_fab4644198c303ed60f2e76c80a723c |
| SCS3 (17/02/05) | 2017_02_05_19_44_22_docid124607_123571db3e37046c4e71f81206 |
| SCS4 (17/04/06) | 2017_04_06_22_46_20_docid176807_0e75ee8d0a641237c017aa84d557c |
| SCS5 (16/05/17) | 2016_05_17_11_58_03_docid54814_3f2895104aa0e7602209058ae9956c91 |
| SCS6 (16/07/12) | 2016_07_12_17_37_36_docid77360_9c88d52b0143146df775c464fa219 |
| SCS7 (16/07/12) | 2016_07_12_23_13_23_docid80539_6f881386673f9a7584e927938d2345 |
| SCS8 (16/07/13) | 2016_07_13_13_14_00_docid83222_bc5f858c6155e30a3d2a0296267ab |
| SCS9 (16/07/14) | 2016_07_14_21_42_42_docid87773_318961d614216b0f04006455bf8d9f |
B4: Word lists for dictionary analysis in Quanteda (STEP 2b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Great Power Discourse (D1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1) 反华</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) 入侵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) 挑起</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) 教训</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) 不认识</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) 崛起</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) 小国</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) 干涉</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) 遏制</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) 针对中国</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
各方南海挑衅 中国空间在收窄
来源：环球时报
2013-03-29 09:01
中国海军编队近日在南海中国最南端的领土曾母暗沙附近巡航，官兵们在舰上宣示保卫领土的决心。此前中国舰只在西沙群岛附近对非法进入中国海域的越南渔船发射警告性信号弹，这些都展示了中国不会从南海领土争端中后退的坚决态度。美国国务院两次对中国海军的动向都做了表态，用词或轻或重，保持了美国可以随时介入南海问题的姿态。美国新换了国务卿，希拉里个人咄咄逼人风格带来的一些附加东西在凋谢。但美国仍是美国，其在全球对中国的挤压不会有南辕北辙的变化。中国明里同菲律宾、越南摩擦，实则与美国在南海博弈，这样的复杂性和紧张感都不会消失。经过希拉里用巧实力外交在南海4年的搅和，也经过菲越同中国几次摩擦，南海的各种风险都涌上表层。各方彼此更加熟悉，更清楚对方的力量和决心。中国通过对菲越挑衅的强有力反制，改变了以往的被动。中国一直非常担心南海摩擦会恶化周边环境，损害中国的战略机遇期。这一轮博弈帮助中国打消了大部分顾虑，也磨炼了中国对摩擦尺度的把握。黄岩岛等危机撕破了中国与菲越之间的一层窗户纸：这毕竟是力量极度悬殊国家之间的较量，如果南海问题变成实力对抗，菲越承受不了，也无获胜希望。中国对南海问题的立场和态度也没有变，比如中国没有一举夺回菲越等非
法侵占所有岛屿的打算。但中国对菲越挑衅的反制变得果断而坚决，中国变得"强硬"了。而南海局势总体上对中国的"强硬"出现了适应。中国对南海问题的控制力在增强，深挖原因还是中国国力的稳步发展，其抵制美国插手南海的底气越来越足，可用资源越来越多。菲越可以在南海上同中国作对的空间都在不断收窄，美国南海政策受到的牵制则在增多。只要中国继续保持南海基本政策的延续性，就会在这一地区有不断增长的战略富裕，逐渐扩大在南海的主动权。得了教训的菲越将忌惮做新的大动作挑衅，如果他们再敢胡来，中国回击挑衅的舆论风险将更小。中国需要对南海的事情做出实事求是的总结。中国的得分证明我们不需要任何力量面前苟且求安，但它也不应造成我们可以放纵自己，我们所有愿望都应实现的印象。在南海问题上中国是"忍"了的。中国是在"忍无可忍"的情况下对菲越发动了反制。中国的反制在战略上没有出格，因而菲越闹一阵，美国帮帮腔也就过去了。中国的反制构成了实际的渐进性，菲越等与中国激烈对抗，比接受中国带给他们的教训，麻烦要大得多。中国今后也应在南海认真经营不妥协的战略，敢于迈步，也给局势的适宜留足空间。中国崛起不断积累不怒自威的力量，中国需要顺着这种力量的自然扩散调整行动。中国致力于和平发展，但我们应为维护核心利益采取坚决手段，中国对外摩擦的是是非非应总体上塑造世界对我们这一大的认识。我们本来就是这样的，让外界不误判我们，对中国的长远战略环境至关重要。

B5.2
http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2013/0328/c1003-20943393.html
(Last accessed 06/11/21)

海外版望海楼：用行动在海上划一条清晰的线
贾秀东
2013年03月28日08:16　来源：人民网－人民日报海外版　手机看新闻
目前，东海、南海涉我海域的形势已发生根本性变化，中国正用行动在海上划一条更加清晰的线，一条维护中国领土主权和海洋权益、不允许逾越的线。这主要得益于我们过去一个时期特别是去年以来所做的两件事：一是创造海洋维权新模式。

去年，菲律宾、越南和日本分别在南海和东海挑起事态，我方被迫打出"组合拳"，后发制人，变被动为主动，实现了对黄岩岛海域的常态化、排他性"物理控制"，设立了三沙市及其警备区，在靠近越南的九段线中南方一侧开展油气区块招标，公布了钓鱼岛及其附属岛屿领海基点基线，并一举打破日本幻想的对钓鱼岛的所谓单方面"实际控制"。近日，我国派遣多批次海监、渔政船前往西沙群岛、黄岩岛、美济礁等南海海域以及钓鱼岛海域执行巡航护渔，加强常态化管理。中国海军南海舰队联合机动编队
抵达南海海域，进行海上机动作战、海上维权、远海护航，支援作战快速反应等科目的训练。

二是打造海洋维权新利器。

在硬件上，我国制定了庞大的海上维权执法舰船建造、设备更新、队伍增配等计划，一批先进的海监、渔政执法船先后下水，奔赴钓鱼岛、黄岩岛和南沙等海域执行巡航任务。更为重要的是软件上，通过重新组建国家海洋局，将隶属不同部门的海监、海警、渔政和缉私等四大执法队伍及其职责进行整合，并成立国家海洋委员会，对各相关部门进行协调，从而形成拳头。我国海洋权益主张涉及300多万平方公里海域，其中超过一半与周边国家有争议，海洋争端上升趋势明显，维权执法任务极为艰巨、复杂。

今后，在海洋权益问题上，我们要着力在以下几个方面下工夫：

第一，理直气壮地坚持海洋问题涉及中国的核心利益。2011年中国政府发表的《中国的和平发展》白皮书，明确将国家主权、领土完整和国家安全界定为中国的核心利益。中国谈南海问题涉及中国的核心利益，不是什么见不得人的事，没有必要扭扭捏捏，而就是要大大方方地阐明我方立场。

第二，义无反顾地捍卫我国内岛主权和海洋权益。近日，越南诬称中国海军“枪击”越方渔船，事件闹得沸沸扬扬。中方予以及时澄清，并声明：我方对进入我内海海域进行非法作业的越方渔船采取的驱离行动是必要的、正当的。对于侵犯中国主权和海洋权益的行为，中国不会忌惮对方的抗议、纠缠、道学和生事，要做到违法必究、执法必严，形成新的惯例，让有关国家适应，不能再把逃脱惩罚的不正常现象当做正常，把非法当合法，确保对方的挑衅和侵权得不偿失，最终不敢轻举妄动。

第三，持之以恒地寻求对话解决争议和塑造合作共赢环境。从辩证的角度和长远的效果看，我国内海维权与维稳两手并用，绝不矛盾。有理不在声高。我国在南海和东海依据国际法和国际法采取维权执法行动，以此为基础，继续坚持通过对话和平解决争议的立场，可以斗智斗勇，但不斗气。

对于那些顽固的对手和政客，该冷落时当然不能热乎。同时，将争议限制在一定范围内，继续利用适当时机积极打造双边关系纽带，促进地区一体化进程，塑造整体对我国有利的大环境。

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B5.3


(Last accessed 06/11/21)

中青报：“一带一路”呼唤新的国际安全体系

储殷

2017年03月01日08:14 来源：中国青年报

原标题： “一带一路”呼唤新的国际安全体系

在以西方中心为支撑的资本主义全球安全秩序日益瓦解的今天，这种成长中的新安全体系，正在成为维持地区稳定、保障世界和平的重要工具。
随着“一带一路”高峰论坛举办日期的临近，“一带一路”的落实与推进情况成为了社会关注焦点之一。在为“一带一路”倡议3年多以来取得诸多伟大成绩而欣喜的同时，发现与分析“一带一路”倡议实践过程中面临的挑战，找到相应的解决思路，已经成为推进“一带一路”所必须完成的任务。从目前“一带一路”倡议落实的情况以及未来的推进趋势来看，“一带一路”的安全风险将会得到更多关注。

安全风险大致可以归纳为四个方面：
其一，一些“一带一路”沿线国家，由于各种原因，国内安全形势严峻。在近几年的实践当中，一些国家出现了政局动荡、族群教派争端、恐怖主义及分离主义势力兴起以及中央－地方的冲突等安全风险，在一定程度上阻碍了“一带一路”项目的推进，甚至导致了部分项目的中止。
其二，一些“一带一路”的重点区域如乌－俄、印－巴存在地区冲突或国家间关系紧张的局面，阻碍了“一带一路”所推动的地区整合。
其三，一些域外大国在“一带一路”沿线国家和地区制造区域紧张气氛，以阻碍“一带一路”倡议的推进。比如美国在南海问题上的一系列举动，就带有很强的遏制“一带一路”的目的。
其四，随着特朗普政权“反全球化”路线的逐渐清晰，未来国际安全形势很有可能会进一步恶化，部分“一带一路”沿线国家很可能会深受波及。尽管中国的“一带一路”倡议是以经济为侧重的，但经济发展必须依赖于有保障的安全秩序。为了保护随着“一带一路”的推进而快速增长的中国经济利益，以及大量的中国企业与人员的财产与生命安全，围绕“一带一路”构建新的国际安全体系，已经成为中国所无法回避的历史使命。尤其是在域外大国频频以安全秩序对冲中国的经济影响力的情况下，建设“一带一路”上的国际安全新秩序，已经成为中国国家崛起的必然要求。

坦率而言，任何一个大国的崛起，都伴随着国际安全秩序的重组。在西方社会的历史中，这种重组通常是通过大国争霸、帝国崛起，甚至世界范围内的战争来完成的。这也是一些国家对中国崛起忧心忡忡的重要原因，但对于承袭了天下大同精神的中国而言，在文化基因上，就对以天下秩序成就一国之私的霸道缺乏兴趣。也正因为如此，在历史上，中华帝国以及围绕这一帝国的东亚秩序，迥然不同于以征服、殖民为代表的西方帝国。

在“一带一路”的推进过程中，中国更倾向于通过与沿线国家的协调与合作，构建互信、平等的安全秩序。无论是中国与中亚国家的上海合作组织，还是中国－东盟的安全合作，都完全不同于以美国霸权为中心的北约和隐形型的美日韩军事联盟。在以西方中心为支撑的资本主义全球安全秩序日益瓦解的今天，这种成长中的新安全体系，正在成为维持地区稳定、保障世界和平的重要工具。

时至今日，对于一些国家可能产生误解的担心，中国在军事、安全领域内的国际合作仍然保持着低调与谨慎，但随着“一带一路”的进一步推进，中国社会终究会发现，向“一带一路”沿线国家提供作为公共产品的安全秩序，不仅将是中国重要的大国责任，而且也是所有希望从“一带一路”中获得和平、稳定与繁荣的国家的共同期待。
B5.4
(Last accessed 06/11/21)

望海楼： “一带一路”成中菲合作新机遇
苏晓晖
2017年05月01日08:28　来源：人民网－人民日报海外版

近期，第30届东盟峰会在菲律宾举行。菲总统杜特尔特在峰会后的记者会上确认，将于5月前往北京出席“一带一路”国际合作高峰论坛，他还对“一带一路”倡议做出了积极评价。
中菲得以探讨“一带一路”合作的基础是两国正在有效管控分歧。阿基诺三世政府时期，菲方不断挑动南海争议，严重损害双边关系。杜特尔特就任总统后，对华释放善意。两国达成重要共识，一致认为应聚焦合作，搁置争议，共同推动南海问题重新回到双边谈判协商解决的轨道。
菲方曾多次明确不会把所谓“南海仲裁案”裁决作为东盟会议讨论议题。强调正与中方进行双边接触，没必要在东盟层面提及争议问题。本次东盟峰会的主席声明在涉南问题上表述克制，并表明东盟与中国正就海上问题进行良性互动。很明显，担任东盟轮值主席国的菲律宾不但不愿让南海问题干扰中菲合作大局，更试图避免这一问题绑架东盟。

在中菲关系向好的背景下，“一带一路”倡议引起菲律宾的关注是必然的。首先，菲律宾发展成就，希望学习中国发展经验。中共十八大以来，中国对内推动深层次改革和经济转型，对外坚持开放合作理念，在全球治理方面发挥重要作用。中华合国将“一带一路”倡议视为中国提出的经济发展理论，主动研究，欲借相关合作搭乘中国经济发展快车。
其次，菲赞同中国提出的合作理念。近年来，针对“一带一路”的恶意解读频现。然而，包括菲律宾在内的越来越多的国家逐渐对中国倡议有了了解和认同，认为中国在推动合作过程中秉持共商、共建、共享原则，尊重国家间的差异，不干涉他国内政，实实在在地推动合作共赢。

最后，菲律宾推动合作取得的成果。自习近平主席2013年提出“一带一路”倡议以来，倡议迅速落地生根。短短几年时间，中国已与40多个国家和国际组织共建“一带一路”合作。东盟国家对“一带一路”倡议颇为重视，除中华合国总统外，印尼总统佐科、老挝国家主席本扬、越南国家主席陈大光、柬埔寨首相洪森、马来西亚总理纳吉布、缅甸国家政策昂山素季等也将参加“一带一路”国际合作高峰论坛。菲总统聚焦国内基础设施建设，已在今年4月推出大规模基础设施投资计划。截至2016年6月，中国国企在26个“一带一路”沿线国家承建大型交通基础设施项目38项。不少菲方人士认为，中菲在基建等领域有巨大的合作潜力。

南海争议干扰，中菲一度错失合作良机。在两国关系实现转圜之后，围绕“一带一路”的合作机不可失，失不再来。盼望菲方抓住机遇，让“一带一路”成为中菲合作新亮点。
（作者为中国国际问题研究院国际战略研究所副所长）
海外版望海楼：中国正在重返世界舞台中央
张维为
2017年01月27日05:47 | 来源：人民网－人民日报海外版小字号
中国人有“大国情结”，因为这个国家曾领先世界上千年，后因内忧外患而跌入低谷。但通过长达百年的奋斗，中国又逐渐赶了上来，正在重返世界舞台中央，中华民族伟大复兴梦想实现的日子从未像今天这样离我们如此之近。
自中共十八大以来，习近平多次强调“必须准备进行具有许多新的历史特点的伟大斗争”。他指出，我们既要有“乱云飞渡仍从容”的战略定力，又要有“不到长城非好汉”的进取精神；我们要“把握世界大势，统筹好国内国际两个大局，在时代前进潮流中把握主动、赢得发展”；我们要实现“中华民族伟大复兴的中国梦”。
2016年发生了两件大事，展现了习近平的远见、勇气和担当。它们既是“具有许多新的历史特点的伟大斗争”，又是中国重返世界舞台中央进程中具有深远意义的里程碑。第一件大事，是中美围绕南海问题展开的博弈。这场基于意志和实力的较量证明，美国想以南海问题来阻遏中国崛起的企图已经破产。另一件大事，就是2016年9月初，中国作为主办国在杭州举办G20峰会。代表世界经济总量85%、贸易总量80%、人口60%的成员国以及相关国际组织的领导人齐聚杭州，讨论并最终通过了习近平代表中国提出的解决世界经济难题的方案。G20杭州峰会可能是中国软实力崛起的一个分水岭，是中国重返世界舞台中央、实现民族复兴梦的一个里程碑。中国的声音，特别是中国在全球治理领域内的声音，以后将会越来越清晰，越来越得到重视。
在世界都在反思国家发展道路和全球治理理念之际，中国的发展、中国的作用正在不断吸引世界目光。习近平的新年瑞士之行，尤其是在达沃斯论坛年会和日内瓦万国宫发表的两个重要演讲，展现了天下情怀和大国担当，国际关系演变的历史进程中镌刻下中国特色大国外交的深深烙印。
中国正大踏步地重返世界舞台中央。世界看到了中华民族实现中国梦的伟大前景，看到了真正的道路自信和文化自信，看到了中国软硬实力的全面崛起，看到了中国领导人在历史发展的关键时刻所展示的远见、勇气和担当。
这一切，改变了中国，震撼了世界，必将深刻地影响未来国际秩序的演变。崛起的中国，将继续在经济全球化进程中搏击风浪，引领经济全球化的新浪潮，为人类作出更大的贡献，中国重返世界舞台中央的伟大进程也会因此而变得更为壮阔。
10 Sammanfattning på svenska

Kina har genomgått en anmärkningsvärd uppgång under de senaste fyra decennierna och både dess ekonomi och materiella makt har vuxit avsevärt. Den här utvecklingen har givit upphov till flera sammanlänkade debatter om hur denna uppgång ska förstås. Vad avgör Kinas utrikespolitik under dess uppgång? Kommer uppgången bli fredlig och Kina integreras i den nuvarande internationella ordningen eller kommer det resultera i storskaliga konflikter? Den existerande forskning som bidragit till dessa debatter har tenderat att fokusera på den långsiktiga utvecklingen av Kinas utrikespolitik och har ägnat mindre uppmärksamhet åt kortsiktiga förändringar, trots att dessa tycks bidra till utvecklingen av dess utrikespolitik. Forskning som försökt förklara dessa kortsiktiga förändringar med hjälp av realistiska, liberala och konventionella konstruktivistiska teorier inom internationella relationer (IR) har endast gett upphov till delvis effektiva förklaringar.

I båda fallstudierna fann analysen att förändringar i dominerande identitetsdiskurser sammanföll med kortsiktiga förändringar i utrikespolitiken, där dessa förändringar i dominans delvis var resultatet av den kinesiska allmänhetens identitetskonstruktioner ”nedifrån”. När det gäller fallstudien av Kina och Nordkorea dominerade en ”stakeholder”-identitet när Kina visade en starkare vilja att samarbeta med det internationella samfundet i att vidta åtgärder gentemot Nordkorea. I fallstudien av Kina och Sydkinesiska sjön blev en stark ”fredlig asiatisk ledare”-identitet tydlig när Kina växlade till en utrikespolitik baserad på ett starkare samarbete med sydostasiatiska stater. Avhandlingen framför argumentet att dessa dominerande identitetsdiskurser, vilka delvis produceras av den kinesiska allmänheten, möjliggjorde de observerade förändringarna i Kinas utrikespolitik.

Dessa resultat bidrar till debatterna om förståelsen av Kinas uppstigning. De tyder på att Kinas utrikespolitik inom olika områden möjliggörs genom konstruktionen av dess identitet i diskurer. Resultaten visar också att den kinesiska allmänheten kan påverka Kinas utrikespolitik ”nedifrån” genom att bidra till identitetskonstruktioner. Resultaten tyder därför på att huruvida Kinas uppstigning kommer präglas av konflikt eller samarbete inom olika områden, inklusive dess relationer med USA, beror på den pågående diskursiva konstruktionen av identitet i det kinesiska samhället.
In the past forty years, China has undergone a phenomenal rise. This thesis contributes to debates about this rise by analysing short-term changes in China’s foreign policy, arguing these changes are an important part of longer-term evolution in China’s behaviour and have been neglected by many existing studies. It uses critical constructivist IR theory to make sense of short-term foreign policy changes regarding North Korea and the South China Sea, focusing on how changes in China’s identity, constructed in online discourses by the state and society, make possible shifts in policy.

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