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The pursuit of inevitable glory

Representations of China in People's Daily news articles

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Summary:

This thesis focuses on the discursive construction of the image of China and the Chinese. In this thesis I aim to answer questions about who are the Chinese people represented, how are they represented and why are they represented the way they are. My interest in approaching the topic is focused specifically on how these representations relate to the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

The data is comprised of People's Daily news articles about the CPC centenary celebrations from the year 2021. The data is analyzed with the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with a focus on the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) which emphasizes the importance of historicality. There are many social actors who comprise China and the image of China is also constructed through the representation of foreign actors.

The representation of China focuses on highlighting the achievements of China and the CPC while also legitimizing the rule of the Party at the same time. National rejuvenation is used to understand the journey of China from the beginning of CPC's rule to a prescribed happy ending for the Chinese nation that will take place during the celebrations of the PRC's centenary.

Subject terms: China, national rejuvenation, representations, news articles, critical discourse analysis

Contents

1. Introduction

In the current times the talk of China as a rising global power has become commonplace in political spheres. With the growth of China's economic and military capabilities Western nations have become increasingly worried about the possibility of losing Western values to a Chinese hegemony and about what their dependance on Chinese resources might lead to on the ever-changing stage of global politics. In Finnish news media there exist representations of China as a country to be cautious of (Varjus 2022). There also exists a lack of understanding between the United States and China, and misrepresentations of one another are common in media. In the recent years the competition between the nations has often been in danger of swaying closer towards conflict. While there are efforts for the countries to increase cooperation, the economic competition, the growing military power of China and the effect that war in Ukraine has had on the stage of global politics are making the advancement of bilateral relations difficult. (Parkkari 2023; Shay 2023.) News articles may portray fatalism or fearmongering which creates a view that the Western states are incompatible with China and someone needs to win (Shirk 2023). In this thesis, I want to shift the focus from how the West views China, and instead I focus on how China wishes to be viewed. By better understanding the self-images that nations present of themselves, can their political endeavors better be understood without misrepresentations and vilification. To do this, I am analyzing news articles published by Chinese media that are aimed towards an international audience. The news articles in question are focused on historical discourse and the concept of future glory in the form of national rejuvenation of China.

1.1. Structure of the thesis

First, I will introduce how I have gathered the data and I will go over People's Daily news articles as a genre of text. Then I move on to explaining the way that studying discourses is understood in the field of the DHA, and I will also introduce the principles and methodological guidelines I follow in my analysis. In the third chapter I go over relevant background information relating to the concept of national rejuvenation and I show how the topic of national rejuvenation can benefit the ability to understand national representations. In the fifth and the sixth chapter I open the term representation and then explain the theoretical base for my understanding of national identity.

The sixth chapter focuses on the analysis of the data and going over the results, which are then further summarized in the concluding thoughts.

The main questions in this thesis are as follow:

1. How is China as a nation represented, and how are the Chinese people represented?
2. What kind of ideology is behind this representation?
3. How is the context of national rejuvenation related to the representation of China?

The theoretical base for this thesis will focus on three different theoretical perspectives. The first perspective focuses on the theoretical background relating to the methodology of the DHA. For this I will draw on the thoughts of Habermas and his theory of communicative action as well as his contribution to the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School. Secondly, I will focus on the theory of narrative through which I will explain the importance of narrative as a context-bringing tool. Lastly, I will delve into the theory of national identity which will be the focal theory through which I will examine the results of my analysis. Reisigl and Wodak state that interpretations of discourse have validity only when theories are used to justify these interpretations (Reisigl & Wodak 2017, 88). The three dimensions of theoretical framework will help tie the results of my analysis to existing social theories.

1.2. Position of the researcher

Science aims towards objective knowledge, and the analysis in this thesis focuses on text interpretation which means we must ponder what it means to target objectivity in a study like this. Franzosi believes that all reading is subjective (Franzosi 1998). This means that when someone reads a text, there is no way to assign objective meaning to the text. As researchers are also people, they can't escape from their own subjective inclinations. The research I am doing focuses on discourse analysis, which means that finding context and understanding it is vital. I believe that in such a research the efforts of trying to find increasingly more objective means of analysis may end up backfiring as these efforts can dismiss the remarkable human ability to find and understand meaning. For a research that focuses on text interpretation what is then required is a comprehensive understanding on what meaning-making is and what it entails. In this thesis the

meaning-making done by me, the researcher, will have to find its value not in total objectivity, but in the specific scientific means and guidelines I follow. I must arm myself with foreknowledge, theory and methods that will help me focus on specific aspects of text, regulate the meaning-making in my analysis and improve my literary competence. By doing this I can ensure that there is existing groundwork that my analysis is based on even though there is no objectivity guaranteed in it. The groundwork helps focus on the relevant meanings that I'm looking for as I analyze data through the sociological lens.

1.3. Collection of data

The data for this thesis was gathered through keyword searches on the official English website of People's Daily. The keyword in question was national rejuvenation and I searched only for articles which had these words in the title so that the results would be narrowed down into a smaller number of articles that I could be sure focused on the topic of national rejuvenation. I limited the search results to the year 2021 and searched for articles that included the term "centenary". There were seven results, which I narrowed down into four. The three excluded articles included an article which was a snippet of another article that I've included in the data, an article that didn't have as much relation to the centenary event as the others and an article that had very little text and didn't offer much for analysis.

I decided to limit the data to articles that were published in relation to the event of the centenary of the CPC because the centenary is an event of remembrance. Events of remembrance act as occasions where collective history is re-produced through narrations of remembrance (Schmidt 2008, 193). These narrations select what is remembered and what is forgotten to manage collective memory, which in Confino's words can be understood as "an exploration of a shared identity that unites a social group". The narrations must be related to existing socio-cultural structures in order to be received, and these re-tellings of history can act as motivational stories that influence the behavior and thoughts of those who partake in remembering history. (Confino 2008, 81.) The event of the centenary can provide historical context for the topic of national rejuvenation. The topics of national rejuvenation and national identity can be studied from many different historical perspectives, and as I was gathering the data, I realized I required a perspective

to limit the amount of articles to include in the data. The reason why I chose the centenary to limit this historical perspective was because of its topicality.

The four articles included in the data are titled as follow:

1. CPC founding spirit a source of strength as China strives for national rejuvenation
2. Xi rallies Party for "unstoppable" pursuit to national rejuvenation as CPC celebrates centenary
3. China's national rejuvenation a historical inevitability
4. Young people make their commitment to national rejuvenation

1.4. News articles as data

The articles gathered for the data come from People's Daily Online. People's Daily is a news media founded in 1948 and has been under the control of the Chinese government since 1949, which is when the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established. For the Chinese people it has historically been an important source of information relating to government statements and policies. In 1985 People's Daily started publishing an overseas edition and the online edition for the newspaper was created in 1997, where the news are published in multi-media forms. (Zhang 2017.) The newspaper acts as a voice for the CPC, which means that the articles published follow the Party's guidelines and policies. In my analysis I will not focus on the intentions of individual authors and editors of the articles, and instead my focus is on how the texts represent People's Daily and the guidelines the paper follows.

There has previously been room for subtle criticism in People's Daily, but Weston and Rauchfleisch write that Xi Jinping's time as leader has brought about more repressive and coercive strategies towards criticism, and that media's role as propaganda has become increasingly important. While there has been previous research done on representation in People's Daily, such as representation of disabled people and queer people I've not been able to find studies done on the representation of China or the Chinese in general while focusing on articles from People's Daily. (Weston & Rauchfleisch 2021, 59-61.) Most research done on the representation of China and the Chinese people has had data gathered from sources produced outside China (see e.g. Li, H. 2021; Wang 2022). The studies done on the representation of the Chinese with data gathered from Chinese

sources tend to focus on the representations of sub-groups of people or organizations (see e.g. Krivokhizh, Soboleva & Melnikova 2023; Li, K. 2021).

According to Pugsley news articles work in two ways; they aim to satisfy the audience and also spread a purpose (Pugsley 2006, 85). There are multiple ways in which a purpose can be spread, but in my thesis the focus is on the power of representation. Social actors are represented in categories, and the most simplified and common way of categorizing actors is through the in-group, "us", and the out-group, "them". The in-group is typically represented as positive while the out-group is constructed in a more negative manner.

In China news articles have long worked towards spreading national unity through the building of a positive in-group of the Chinese people. The narrative has focused on the masses overcoming adversity together as a community, and this narrative works well because it is the view that the CPC has long been spreading and no alternative views are allowed. Media in China has been structured to spread the political views of the leaders. Pugsley states that the masses are familiar with the media working this way, and the media is generally trusted, which means that the spreading of nationalistic propaganda generally works quite well in China. (Pugsley 2006, 85.) In the case of international audiences, there doesn't exist a similar historically built trust between the audiences and the media, which can make the propaganda more difficult for international audiences to absorb.

Chinese government propaganda is still resemblant to Mao Zedong's times as leader in the 1900s. Current propaganda focuses on mobilization against perceived threats and relies mostly on emotional appeal, which were aspects that were characteristic for Mao's politics and campaigns. This style of propaganda has proven to work well in China, but Pugsley states that shared beliefs and a common sense of nationalism are necessary requirements for China in order for it to transform from its status as a developing country to a country of greatness. Pugsley mentions that propaganda doesn't spread specific identities simply for mobilizing purposes only, but the conformity that comes from propaganda also spreads stability. (Pugsley 2006, 85.)

News articles are a way to interpret past events. They work to transform real events into stories (Chang 2003, 120 as cited in Pugsley 2006, 82). In this process of recounting, actions and actors are discursively assigned qualitive features that are either positive or negative, and as a result the actors in the story can become either heroes or villains. Discursive qualification is done with the purpose of spreading lessons. A lesson in a news article can mold the readers towards a specific goal. An article may for example be trying to spread a specific national identity. In Chinese nationalistic propaganda this type of specific national identity is often realized in the collective hero role on the path towards rejuvenation. The media represents the in-group of the Chinese as underdogs who will achieve greatness against all odds. (Pugsley 2006.)

2. The Discourse-Historical Approach as a methodological base

The methodological base for my thesis comes from the Discourse-Historical Approach, also titled the DHA, which is an approach formulated by Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl. The DHA works under the umbrella of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Primarily my focus will be on the methodology of the DHA, but I will also explain the general analytical guidelines of CDA as they act as the roots of the DHA. Because the DHA promotes multi-methodological means and combining different theories, my adherence to the approach should be understood not only through the analytical guidelines that the DHA offers, but also through its principles. The DHA should be used to research relevant social issues and the approach focuses on recognizing problems and increasing emancipation. The DHA states that historical context is always to be recognized and studied with the help of social theories, and intertextual and interdiscursive relationships need to be considered. (Datondji & Amousou 2019, 73-74.)

The DHA is an approach that has been formulated to work best in extensive studies, which means that for a research as limited as this thesis, I will have to pick and choose the aspects of the approach that are useful to me and discard those aspects that don't work in a study as limited as mine. Examples of these disregarded aspects include triangulation and focusing on multiple genres of text. Triangulation is very important in the DHA and there is a strong emphasis on multi-theoretical and multi-methodological means. The DHA allows the researcher to not limit their methodology to one perspective, and instead it promotes looking into many theoretical and

methodological perspectives to work together with the DHA. (Datondji & Amousou 2019, 72). The scope of my thesis doesn't allow for as much triangulation as the founders of the DHA promote, which is why I will be relying mostly on the thoughts and texts of scholars focusing on CDA and the DHA.

The DHA promotes analyzing discourses through the way they present themself throughout multiple genres of texts, but my research is very small-scale, which is why I will be only focusing on the genre of news articles. The way that messages are conveyed and understood depends on the genre of the text. Discourses come across differently in different genres of text. Each genre of text is understood differently due to genres being constructed culturally in a social context. Individuals have expectations for how different genres of text typically present discourses, which is why in a CDA study the genre of text should be considered (Wodak & Forchtner 2014, 234-235). This is why in my thesis I've included a section for examining the way that news media typically works in China.

2.1 Focus on historicality

The DHA follows one of the main principles of CDA, which is that discourse is historical. In my thesis historicality will be approached through the concept of context. Foucault explains that historical context contains the history and sub-system of narratives (Foucault 1972 in Wodak 2011, 628). Different narratives intertwine across topics, genres and texts, which creates what we call history. This is why another word for historical context is intertextuality because history is created through the intersecting of texts. Relying on context is a requirement for discourse production and comprehension of discourse (Jahedi et al. 2014 29). When a new text is produced, the creator of the text relies on existing texts and on the narratives and discourses present in them, because it is through these existing historical texts that context is created. When a text is read, the reader then relies on the pre-existing knowledge that they have, which has been formulated from past interactions with different texts and discourses.

As historicality is fundamental for a study relying on the DHA, we must investigate how intertextuality can be approached. Van Djik writes that context should be approached through the

mental representations of social elements that are relevant for both the production and comprehension of a discourse (Van Dijk 2003, 356 in Datondji & Amousou 2019, 71-72). These mental representations that Van Djik writes of can be understood to come from background information, which is why to understand the context of a discourse the researcher needs to look into relevant background information relating to the discourse. I have followed the guide of KhosraviNik who believes that studying background information should precede the analysis of data, because it allows the researcher to understand the social meanings embedded in the data (KhosraviNik 2010, 58). Wodak emphasizes that relying only on background information is not enough, and social theories should also be used when explaining the context of a discourse (Wodak 2011, 628).

Because the DHA focuses on the analysis of context, the heart of the DHA is in the systematic methodology it offers for approaching context heuristically (Wodak 2011, 627). It is not enough to understand that intertextuality is the way that historical context appears, but we must also understand how intertextuality can appear. Wodak posits that some of the more common devices of intertextuality include positioning of actors, argumentation and quotes that are recontextualized (Wodak 2011, 628). Recontextualized quotes are especially common in news articles (Jahedi et al. 2014, 3032).

Another focal aspect of the DHA in addition to historicality is discourse. Wodak and Forchtner describe discourse as "structured knowledge" (Wodak & Forchtner 2014, 234-235). I rely on the ideas of Wodak and Reisigl as they are the founders of the DHA, which is why I will borrow their definition of what discourse is. In their eyes discourse is constituted of three elements: macro-topic-relatedness, pluri-perspectivity and argumentativity. These elements coalesce through context-dependent semiotic practices, and the result takes form as what we call a discourse. (Reisigl & Wodak 2009 in Datondji & Amousou 2019, 71-72.) The structure of a discourse can be understood to come from the cycle of text production and interpretation, meaning that discourse exists in the active processes of texts being produced, individuals interpreting them and then creating new texts based on their interpretations. This is a cycle of which the researcher also becomes a part through their own text creation. (Jahedi et al. 2014, 30.) The way that the boundaries of a discourse are defined relies on the perspective of the researcher as Wodak and

Reisigl posit that the lines between a singular discourse and interdiscursivity are blurry (Reisigl & Wodak 2009, 89).

2.3. Guidelines for analysis

The process of analysis in a DHA study should be approached heuristically, and Reisigl and Wodak introduce three stages through which a heuristic analysis can be achieved. First, the analysis should start from recognizing the contents and topics of a discourse. The second part of the analysis should focus on investigating discursive strategies. Lastly, "linguistic means (as types) and the specific, context-dependent linguistic realizations (as tokens) are examined". (Reisigl & Wodak 2017, 93.)

Reisigl and Wodak expand the analytical framework through introducing the discursive strategies of nomination, predication, argumentation, mitigation/intensification and perspectivization. Focusing on these five strategies allows a heuristic understanding of the ways that the creator of the text frames a discourse. In my thesis instead of focusing on these five strategies I will follow the framework created by KhosraviNik, who simplifies the framework of Reisigl and Wodak by introducing three levels of discursive strategies: actor descriptions, action attributes and argumentation. Actor descriptions is derived from Reisigl and Wodak's strategy of nomination and action attributes are derived from predication. KhosraviNik leaves out perspectivization and intensification/mitigation from his framework, because in his eyes they can be present in the other discursive strategies. (KhosraviNik 2010, 57-58.) I find KhosraviNik's simplified framework more befitting for a smaller scale study such as mine, and it is more comprehensible for someone like myself who doesn't have much experience with the DHA. Following this framework means that in my analysis my gaze will be focused on the way that social actors are discursively constructed, the way that actions are discursively qualified through attributions and the ways that acts and beliefs are justified through argumentation. When it comes to understanding fallacies in argumentation, I will rely on Richardson and Wodak's guide for recognizing lacking argumentation (Richardson & Wodak 2013, 78-79).

I will further enrich my analytical framework with Machin and Mayr's as well as van Leeuwen's tools for analysis. I introduced the categories of KhosraviNik, and while they allow a look into some aspects of representation, they are designed to help analyze discourses in general, which is why in my analysis I will use different methodology to analyze representation, and I will rely on KhosraviNik's methodology for analyzing the discourse as a whole. Van Leeuwen is a critical discourse analysist, whose writings on representation in relation to CDA are very useful to me in my thesis. Van Leeuwen calls the methodology he built a sociosemantic inventory of different ways of representation. The methodology is built on the principle of expanding the sociological understanding of semantics related to agency and highlighting the cultural ties to semiotic practices. (van Leeuwen 1996, 33-44.) Not only has van Leeuwen written about the representation of social actors, but he has also written extensively about representation of social action and legitimation strategies, which are not at the forefront of my thesis, but allow me to dig deeper into the representation of agency and the involvement of ideology. Van Leeuwen writes that by looking into what is legitimized, can you find ideological traces in the text. (Van Leeuwen 2008, 109.)

I will rely on the categories of representational strategies introduced by van Leeuwen and I will combine his methodology with that of Machin and Mayr's. The referential strategies categorized by Machin and Mayr are derived from the writings of van Leeuwen, and the methodologies of these scholars work well together for this fact. Van Leeuwen as well as Machin and Mayr categorize representational strategies, and I have listed the categories of most use to me: (Machin and Mayr 2012, 78-95; van Leeuwen 1996, 33-44):

1. Personalisation and impersonalisation

2. Individualisation and collectivization

3. Specification and genericisation

4. Nomination and functionalisation

5. Use of honorifics

6. Objectivication

7. Anonymisation

8. Aggregation/collectivization and individualisation

9. Pronoun usage

10. Association and disassociation

11. Role allocation

12. Suppression/exclusion

I will not explain each of these categories in depth, because each of these strategies can be used in a multitude of ways. In my analysis I rely on these categories to understand representation of actors, and I use the writings of Machin and Mayr as well as van Leeuwen as a guide to delve into the specific ways of usage depending on the context.

2.3. The DHA and ideological ties

While KhosraviNik modifies Reisigl and Wodak's framework for analyzing discursive strategies, he adheres to their framework for context. I previously wrote about the importance of context in the DHA, and additionally the DHA includes four levels of context through which the researcher should look for connections between text elements. (KhosraviNik 2010, 67; Reisigl & Wodak 2017, 93.) Wodak writes that these levels of context must be understood in order to be able to systematically view agendas in data and how these agendas show themselves through different connections of context (Wodak 2011, 628-629). The levels of context to be analyzed include:

1. intra-textual context (connections of text elements within one text)

2. inter-textual context (connections between texts)

3. discoursal context (connections between discourses)

4. socio-political context (connections to ideology)

When it comes to ideology, I will rely on van Djik's definition, which states that ideologies are "shared representations of social groups" (van Djik 2006, 115 in Datondji & Amousou 2019, 76). Ideologies exist through discourses. Ideologies can be found in all texts that include discourse because discourses embody the clash of people's wills through the utilization of language (Reisigl & Wodak 2017, 88-89). Language is the primary tool to achieve social control and power (Fairclough 1989 in Datondji & Amousou 2019, 3). Through the use of language, power can be implemented, challenged or altered. It is in discourses where this use of language becomes most evident. In discourses actors try to legitimize and de-legitimize existing power relations in order to spread a one-sided perspective to achieve either agreement or subjugation. (Datondji & Amousou 2019, 3, 76-77.) This sort of discourse manipulation creates unequal power relations. For example, media can try to control discourse and manage ideologies, which in KhosraviNik's words represents a larger scale of gatekeeping. Media can try to create representations of social groups through linking discourses with one another. For example, a news article about Japanese exchange students in China might have references to Sino-Japanese political tensions. This type of utilization of inter-discursivity affects the way that these discourses are understood by consumers which leads to spreading of ideology and change in discourse. Thus, discourse and ideology should be understood to exist in a cycle, because changes in discourse alter ideology and changes in ideology alter discourse. (KhosraviNik 2010, 61.)

Wodak defines CDA as inherently anti-discriminatory. As discourses and ideology are so closely intertwined, critical discourse analysis should focus on exposing the hidden ways in which ideologies are embedded in texts. By finding and exposing non-inclusive semiotic elements that produce unequal power relations can the researcher aim to aid emancipation. In CDA the focus is especially on the everyday-beliefs that are scattered across the text through seemingly harmless linguistic devices. (Wodak 2015, 6 in Datondji & Amousou 2019, 71, 76.)

The way that emancipatory critique is justified in the DHA relies on Habermas's theory of communicative rationality. In this theory social actors are believed to change their cognitive structures and learn through a process of intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity describes a process in which social actors exchange opinions and evaluate each other's views. In this process actors argue for their own views, and this argumentation relies on rationality. Habermas defines an

argument to be rational if it can survive the validity claims raised by other actors as these validity claims challenge the argument in a situation of disagreement. This clash of validity claims generates discourse, and this discourse can only achieve its full potential if there are no oppressive social structures to restrict actors from expressing their validity claims. (Forcthner 2021.) In this theory of communicative action emancipation is viewed as a doorway to maximum rationality, which justifies the calls for inclusion and non-discriminatory social practices that the DHA stands for.

A focal part of any CDA and DHA study is critique. What this means is that the researcher must reveal the presence of ideologies in data. Reisigl and Wodak define ideology to be "circulation of hegemonic symbolic forms" that work towards upholding unequal power relations. Reisigl and Wodak categorize the necessary critique in a DHA study into three levels which are text critique, socio-diagnostic critique and prospective critique. To critique a text, one must find contradictions within the discursive elements of a singular text. To do socio-diagnostic critique, the researcher must reveal connections between the ways that discourses are presented in data and ideologies. Lastly, prospective critique has to do with the researcher's suggestions for how the communication that constructs unequal power relations could be made more equal. (Reisigl & Wodak 2017, 87-88.)

The reason why the DHA fits together with my thesis is because I aim to tie together the past, the present and the future in a holistic manner, which is what the DHA encourages (Datondji & Amousou 2019, 72). In my thesis the past is represented by references to the history of China and the CPC, the present is viewed through the event of remembrance which is the centenary of the Party, and the future is constructed through the visions of future rejuvenation. These are all tied together by the concept of narrative, which works to make sense of the passage of time through selecting information. Selectiveness allows writers to present only the information that they want and spread a message. When being selective, it is important to create a flow from one event to another in a way that the progression of events seems natural instead of seeming abridged and edited by humans.

3. National rejuvenation of China

The context through which I will be looking into the representations of China comes from the topic of national rejuvenation. National rejuvenation is closely linked to the term the Chinese Dream, which is a dream of achieving national rejuvenation. The scholars whose texts I refer to in this thesis use the terms rather interchangeably. The term that is used depends on the context, but both of them refer to the same ideological campaign, which is why I will also be alternating between these two terms in my thesis depending on the context. In this chapter I will explain what is national rejuvenation and why it can act as a useful context-bringing tool in my thesis. I will approach the topic of the Chinese Dream and the road to rejuvenation it prescribes as a narrative. There are many ways to interpret this narrative, but I will be focusing on its meaning as an ideological project.

3.1. China's national rejuvenation in the field of science

The Chinese Dream represents a collective imagined future. Some of the specific goals of national rejuvenation include moderate prosperity for a socialist society, societal stability and unity of China that is acknowledged both domestically and globally. National rejuvenation can also be understood as the achieving of Chinese socialist values, and on the top of this list of these values are wealth and strength. (Zhang 2019.) National rejuvenation has become a relevant political campaign largely due to Xi Jinping, whose rhetorics related to Chinese power are rooted in historicism. Xi has proclaimed that national rejuvenation is the historic responsibility of the CPC and he often references the "sufferings" and "humiliations" that the Chinese people have faced in earlier times. Because of this Zhang has dubbed Xi's framing of national rejuvenation as a "humiliation-inspired quest for power". (ibid..) The goals of national rejuvenation require many different types of structural reforms in practice, and Xi is increasingly asserting dominance in the Party to achieve these reforms and spread a social rule of law with Chinese characteristics while in power (Garrick & Bennett 2018).

Kallio writes that political leaders in China are starting to rely more and more on the goal of national rejuvenation as well as traditional schools of thought as justification for the exercise of authority (Kallio 2016, 47). National rejuvenation is used as a promise of future greatness that will happen as long as the people of China and the CPC trust each other and work together. Relying on national rejuvenation in political rhetorics is a strategy to reduce the people's dissatisfaction in the political leaders of China, because the promise of national rejuvenation shifts the focus from current-day issues to a possible future glory that will happen if the leaders receive the nation's trust. Kallio writes that the dream of national rejuvenation is a part of what he calls the newly blossoming strategic narrative of China (Kallio 2016, 21-23). This narrative is strategically composed by political leaders to explain the essence of China through appointed Chinese values, goals as well as a story which ties the history of China together with the political goals of the CPC in a package that is neat and easily digestible (ibid., 49). This narrative is then spread to the people in the hopes that a shared understanding of China's essence will increase national unity.

Callahan writes that the Chinese Dream can be viewed to combat the American Dream and Western values because the Chinese Dream promotes Chinese values of peace and harmony, and it focuses on highlighting the continuity of a united China (Callahan 2017, 18-28). While the Chinese Dream is constructed through values that are viewed as characteristic for the Chinese, according to Callahan the CPC is trying to distribute these values not only to the Chinese, but also for the rest of the world (ibid., 29). The Chinese Dream is not just a project for the nation, but it is also a showcase of the positive aspects of China and thus a project of soft power through which China wishes to deepen the effect of China's role in global politics.

Callahan writes that the Chinese Dream is not just a display of soft power, but it should be understood as a project of what he refers to as negative soft power. One of the main features of negative soft power is the building of a positive image for a community through the exclusion of "negative others". The way that this image-building occurs in China is through the use of history. Carrai writes that there are three historical components of national rejuvenation: chosen trauma, chosen glory and chosen amnesia. The historical arguments to support the concept of national rejuvenation are not based on accuracy, instead history is chosen to build collective memory. The chosen traumas act to create a collective identity centered around victimization. The chosen

glories focus on Chinese achievements of the past to create a sense of pride, and chosen amnesia allows the collective memory to disregard the aspects of Chinese history that might challenge the self-identity of the Chinese. Carrai writes that a focal feature of the way that history is used in politics is to create an illusion of a China that constantly forward-looking so that the historical trajectory can be claimed to be headed for only greater eras. (Carrai 2021, 2-5.)

One of the main goals of national rejuvenation is to overcome the events which have been dubbed as national humiliations by the leaders of China (Callahan 2015, 3-5). The most famous instance of this type of adversity faced by China is the century of humiliation. The century of humiliation acts as the focal chosen trauma in the political rhetorics used by Chinese leaders (Carrai 2021, 10). There are different ways of assessing the length of the century of humiliation. Chong prescribes it to the late Qing, Republican and early Communist periods of China, which includes the time period between the First Opium War (1839-1842) and the mid-1900s. During this time China suffered foreign domination politically and economically and was able to emerge out of humiliation after the defeat of Imperial Japan in 1945 and through the Communist Revolution and the establishing of the PRC in 1949. Chinese politicians have afterwards attributed China's ability to break out of subjugation to political and national unity, and this history is still used in political rhetorics to create a sense of nationalism. (Chong 2014.)

According to Callahan the attachment of a history of humiliation to the ideological project of rejuvenation represents negative soft power, because China is painted as the underdog in the situation. The possible future glory of the Chinese nation is made to seem more deserved through representing foreign nations as evil bullies who have unjustifiably subjugated China and its people. (Callahan 2015, 14.) Kallio writes that this narrative of the century of humiliation has been a vital companion to the narrative of national rejuvenation. While many of the goals related to national rejuvenation have roots in traditional schools of thought from pre-modern times, national rejuvenation became a popular keyword in the 1990s when the Party wanted to shift focus from internal class struggles to external threats in the form of blaming foreign nations for China's suffering. (Liu 2009, 245-247, cited in Kallio 2015, 528-530; Kallio 2016, 104, 111.) Callahan echoes this line of thinking by mentioning that the Tiananmen protests in the 1990s lead to national rejuvenation becoming a more popular political narrative, because the Party wished to direct the nation's resentment of the political system to another, external target (Callahan 2015, 13-14).

The goal of national rejuvenation is a group effort, which means that it requires the mobilization of the Chinese masses towards the goals set by the CPC. One of the incentives used for this is history, because shared history can be used to promote nationalistic ideology in cases when there is no unifying ideology. Many scholars write that there exists an ideological void in China currently, which is a result of worshiping economic growth that hasn't been able to create a belief system that unifies people. (see e.g. Chong 2014, 947; Kallio 2016; Pugsley 2006, 84-85.)

3.2. The narrative of national rejuvenation as a context-bringing tool

In a previous section I delved into the methodological details of the DHA and the Critical Theory behind them, but in order to enrich the methodological and theoretical background of this thesis further, I will now showcase how the Chinese Dream relates to the DHA. The DHA focuses on the inherent intertextuality in texts. This intertextuality can also be called historicality. (Jahedi, Abdullah & Mukundan 2014, 31-32; Wodak 2011, 627-628.) All texts relate to other texts and thus they have roots in history. The data that I have gathered can be analyzed from multiple different point of views, but in order to limit the scope of my study I will use the concept of national rejuvenation to minimize these points of views. In my analysis out of all possible historical themes I will focus specifically on the concept of national rejuvenation and on the intertextuality surrounding it. Intertextuality appears through the processes of recontextualization and decontextualization. In the DHA the focus on intertextuality means that the researcher must study these contexts and attach findings to them. (Wodak 2011, 627-629.) For this reason, I have backgrounded the topic of national rejuvenation, so that there are historical contexts I can attach my findings to. This historicality is most reliable when the contextualizing is done by relying on previous scientific research and social theories which relate to the discourse on hand.

In this thesis national rejuvenation will be understood as a narrative. Franzosi emphasizes the meaning of narratives in sociological research. He describes what a narrative is through the definition of Labous, who defines it as "one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually occurred".

Franzosi believes that narratives are very important in sociological research because they are filled with sociologically relevant information. (Franzosi 1998, 517, 521-523.) Through realizing the existence of a narrative in data, sociologists have the potential to grasp relevant information in clauses that might otherwise be overlooked. Narratives allow us to see a story from which we can find a beginning and an end, and in this story we can find events bound together by logical clauses. (Ibid., 521-523.) These narratives are sociologically relevant because they allow us to examine how events are perceived to have happened and which changes in the stories are emphasized and which are discarded. National rejuvenation can be viewed as a narrative because it describes the story of China. The roots of the narrative are in the century of humiliation while the prescribed ending takes place in the future when the Chinese Dream is realized. In this future China will be united, the people will live in moderate prosperity and harmony and China will be respected on the arena of global politics. Currently China is in the middle of this journey to greatness, and the narrative is worked on.

The concept of narrative can be linked to the DHA both in a theoretical manner and as an analytical guide. Forchtner writes that narratives can help us understand discourses better because of the way causal logic is followed in narratives. Narratives are used to make sense of the passing of time, and arguments in these narrative texts operate in relation to time. This context of time can help find meanings. (Forchtner 2021.) The DHA focuses on the historicality of texts, which means that focusing on the causal logic that narrative texts adhere to can help the researcher find and understand the historical aspects of the text better.

Narratives don't only work towards organizing events in relation to time, but they also introduce positions. Forcthner writes that when someone reads a narrative text, they will either consciously or unconsciously consider the positions of actors in the text and will try and position themself in relation to the context. (Forcthner 2021.) While some scholars who study narratives have created multiple categories for possible positions in narratives, in my thesis I will be focusing on the division of "us" and "them". This is the most common and most simplified way to understand the positioning of people in a text. Typically, in texts there will be an emphasis on the positive aspects of "us", the in-group, while "them", the out-group, is positioned in a more negative manner. Many CDA studies focus on examining these divisions of "us" and "them" that actors are grouped to. The

reader of a text will either consciously or unconsciously recognize the way that actors are grouped and will align themselves with either the in-group or the out-group, although it is possible that the reader doesn't recognize themself in either of these groups and in some cases the reader might align themself with both groups.

I will rely on constructivism as the theoretical standpoint for my handling of the topic of national rejuvenation. Heikkinen writes that the focus in constructivism is on the interpretation of the social world instead of objective truths and that gaining knowledge is all about interpretation. These interpretations come to life through storytelling. Heikkinen writes that people use stories as a way to construe their identities and their knowledge of the world. (Heikkinen 2010, 146.) By using the term "story", the idea of objective truth is invalidated, and the focus is shifted on the interpretation of the individual. Pernu writes that understanding identities helps understand actions, because people's interests form through identities and their actions form based on their interests. (Pernu 2013, 90). National rejuvenation as a narrative can help form a specific type of collective identity, which can lead the interests and the actions of the nation.

Constructivism adheres to the thought that individuals build new knowledge on top of their existing knowledge. Old knowledge guides the way that a person reacts to new knowledge, but new knowledge can also overwrite old beliefs. This constructivist view is aligned with post-modernism as they both remark that there is no objectivity in knowledge. Knowledge is always tied to a context. A person's history, their present and their identities all affect the way that they react to new knowledge. (Heikkinen 2010, 146-147.) When it comes to spreading narratives with historical elements, it is important to recognize that individuals have existing knowledge relating to past events. When the political leaders of China spread the narrative of national rejuvenation, there must be enough consistency with existing historical narratives, so that the old views on the past don't clash too strongly with new views. Kallio writes that this is something that the CPC seems to struggle with when constructing propaganda. Some of the currently positively viewed traditional ways of thinking, such as Confucian ideals, have previously been condemned by the Party. (Kallio 2016, 112-115.)

By imagining a future through a story can actions better be organized to achieve that future. To imagine a future means to present the future, influence actions towards a future and to consider ethical repercussions of the future. The root of all knowledge relating to the future is not in what goes on in the present, but in the intentions of people and in what is considered an imagined reflection of the past. This means that how the future is imagined relies on the information that people have, which allows them to reflect their interpretations of past events to the future. (Väliverronen 2003.) Because of this there are people who have completely different ideas of what the future will look like. For example, there exist many climate change deniers who live far in the past instead of following the events that allow others to imagine a future with climate change repercussions. Imagining a future depends on how the different potentials for people's actions are imagined. Future is understood to be uncertain and susceptible to change (Rubin 2014 in Väliverronen 2003, 219). News media can try to be societally active and affect the imaginations of people by spreading values and influencing beliefs. The journalism that affects to influence a target audience of common citizens tells the readers what kinds of knowledge and skills are required in current day society for "a better future". (Väliverronen 2003.)

4. The study of representations

The main questions in my thesis focus on how social actors are represented, and as I wrote previously, representations of social groups always include ideological aspects. Machin and Mayer posit that all representation comes with ideological baggage, as a person cannot be represented in a neutral way because all aspects of an individual will be linked to one or more discourses. Representation is thus a great way to manipulate the image that people will have of a social actor or a group. Consciously attaching an individual to discourses or consciously leaving out discourses from the representation of a person conjures meaning, which I call ideological baggage. When these meanings have been created of an individual, the audience will either align themselves alongside the individual or against them. (Machin & Mayr 2012, 77-79.) Machin and Mayer write that controlling the meanings given to social actors becomes easier through simplification. It is this simplification that is at the core of what can be called effective referential strategies, which describe the strategies of presenting actors/objects/phenomena in texts.

Representation is a vital part of creating in-groups and out-groups. This division is a common focal point in the DHA, in which the focus is on the ways that power relationships are taken advantage of to create dichotomy. (Wodak & Forchtner 2014, 237.) Van Djik writes that the dichotomy of the in-group and the out-group doesn't have to be explicitly stated for it to exist, instead it can be suggested through linguistic devices of victimization, vagueness, attribution and construction of authority (van Djik 2000, 2004 in Jahedi et al. 2014, 32-33).

Representation is a tool the author can use to make the reader identify themself as a part of a group. The reader may consciously or unconsciously liken themself to actors in a text because they share something. Representation can be used in a mobilizing manner by representing the in-group as positive. Positive representation of the actors in the in-group can lead to the reader believing that because they are similar to the represented actor, they can also achieve what the actor has achieved. This type of mobilizing representation becomes even more powerful of a tool when the in-group has been constructed through underdog situations that showcase the ability to endure and overcome.

4.1. Representation in pictures

Visual representation is a part of my study, but images are in many ways much more ambivalent than written text and they cannot be approached the same way as one would approach writings. The way that I'll approach visual representation is through asking who and what is being represented, how is stance-making established through symbols and signs, and thirdly I ask how is legitimacy argued for visually. These questions relating to visual representation were introduced by KhosraviNik, and they can be viewed as being pertained to the categories of actor descriptions, action attributes and argumentation. (KhosraviNik 2022, 133-134.) Because of the ambivalent nature of images, I will rely on other analytical guidelines as well to help shed light on how to find the focal context in visual images and answer these questions. Machin and Mayer's guidelines for studying visual representation of people includes a focus on distance, angle, individualisation/collectivization and exclusion.

I approach images as devices that offer framing which emphasizes certain messages. Visual text is in a way more effective at framing issues than written text because images require less cognitive effort to digest, they offer visual evidence that written text doesn't offer and they create emotional reactions in readers. Images offer a fast look into the issue at hand, and they create memorability in a way that written text more often struggles to create. (Rodriguez & Dimitrova 2011, 50-51.) In news articles visual material works with the context of the written text that accompanies it, which is why it can be expected to coordinate well with the text of the article. Thus, images work to accentuate the message of the article and increase the effectiveness of spreading the message.
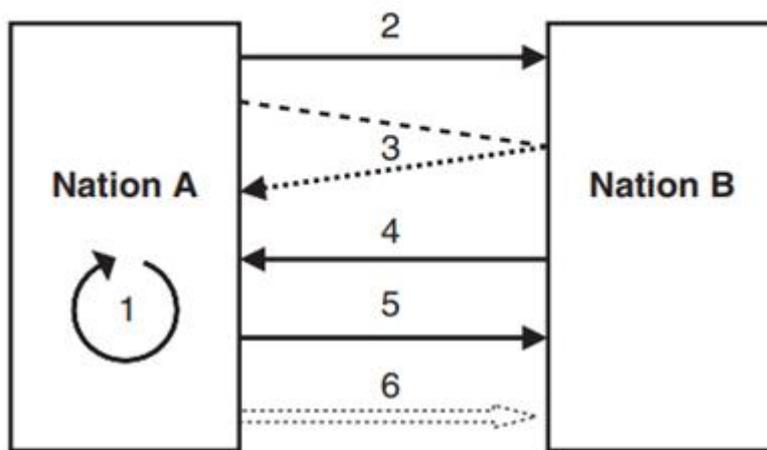
5. The concept of national image

In my thesis I am asking the question of how China's image is represented in People's Daily articles. For this it is important to investigate what national image can mean and how it can be studied. There exists a variety of definitions for national image, but it is very common for scholars to link the topic to national identity, which is why I will also explain the relation between identity and image. My understanding of national identity is formed from a combination of texts by different scholars, and in my understanding national identity refers to an idealization, in which qualities are excluded to create a simplification of the complex construct called a nation (Adorno 1973, 145 as cited in Forchtner 2011, 5; Verdugo & Milne 2016, 1-3). This simplification acts as an auto-stereotype that the citizens use to understand themselves and through which they will construct the beliefs they have about their nation (Kunczik 2013, 13-14). Key aspects of national identity according to Smith include common language, culture and economy as well as shared historic territory, laws, myths and memory (Smith in Fan 2008 as cited in Stock 2009, 122; Smith 1991, 14). The purpose of national identity is to bind citizens together under an umbrella of imagined shared distinguishing features that form a collective identity (Connor in Fan 2008, 16 as cited in Stock 2009, 122).

The way that national identity relates to national image is through understanding that the way that a nation views itself cannot be in dissonance with the way it portrays itself to others. National identity can be viewed as a self-image. Self-image of a nation cannot be in complete separation of

the image that others are hoped to have of the nation (Hatch & Schultz 2002, 27 as cited in Stock 2009, 120). National image encompasses multi-dimensional beliefs related to the nation's past and expectations for its future (Smith 1991, 14). Thus, national identity as a self-image can be viewed as a narrative identity because citizens view themselves as being a part of the narrative of their national culture (Forcthner 2021).

To take our understanding of national image even further I will present the Fan's conceptual framework for perspectives of national image. These perspectives are included in the framework below:

1 Nation A self-perception: i.e. *National identity*
2 Nation A's perception of Nation B: *Reference point*
3 What Nation A believes Nation B perceives it as: *Construed image*
4 How Nation A is actually perceived by Nation B: *Reputation / Actual image*
5 How Nation A is promoting itself to Nation B: *Current projected image*
6 How Nation A wants to be perceived by Nation B: *Desired future image*

Figure 1 The six focal perspectives of a nation's image

Fan's framework helps approach image management, because it reminds us that all of these perceptions are separate and that we should not confuse them with one another, and it helps us focus on the possible ties between these different perceptions. A nation can not be aware of the image it has in the eyes of foreigners, which means that management of national image relies on

the self-image, the construed image and reference points from other nations. Fan's framework doesn't delve into how self-image and actual image are constructed, but in my thesis the construction of national identity and actual image are not of large importance. (Fan 2008, 28 in Stock 2009, 122.)

In my thesis I will use terminology related to national image management (NIM) because the way that China is represented in the data should be understood as a project of national image management. National image has also been studied through the concept of nation branding. I view nation branding through the assessment of Wang to whom nation branding is similar to marketing because meanings of national aspects can be fabricated to cater to a specific audience. Nation branding in this view is a controlled project for improving the position of a nation in economic competition. (Wang 2008, 16-18.) NIM is more complex of a concept than nation branding. It cannot rely on similar fabrication methods as it requires more political nuance. Boulding infers that the roots of national identity come from collectively defined history and culture that the masses expect their leaders to represent to a certain degree (Boulding 1959, 121-122). Because of this, there is more historical and cultural baggage that NIM must account for than there is in projects of nation branding. Nonetheless, nation branding can be understood to be a part of NIM and some scholars use the two terms interchangeably, which is why my thesis is also influenced by some texts that deal with the concept of nation branding.

While concrete correlation between successful image management and increased soft power is difficult to prove, many scholars believe that NIM is a relevant political subject because having a positive national image abroad improves relationships with other nations, and positive relationships allow for soft power to be better exerted (Kinsey and Chung 2013, 6; Stock 2009, 124; Wang 2008, 9). To Nye, the creator of the term "soft power", a nation's image is vital when trying to achieve objectives through the use of soft power (Nye 1990 as quoted in Wang 2008, 13). This is because images guide the way that others react to an actor. Kunczik infers that images are more important than facts because beliefs created by images guide the way that we react to factual information (Kunczik 2013, 13–14). Following this line of thinking, a level of trust can only be achieved by showcasing a trustworthy image, which I believe is very relevant to national endeavors of soft power.

Analysis of data

6. Representations of China and actors within China

6.1. The semantic presentation and discursive qualification of China

In the data China is semantically presented in two ways. First way is presenting China as a geographical location through phrases such as "northwest China", "areas across China". Second is the presentation of China as an abstraction. This type of impersonalisation distances the concept of China from the actions of individual agents, and instead makes China seem like something that exists naturally separate from the people. China in these instances is represented in a way that objectivates the social actors by means of reference to a place.

China as an impersonalised actor is also a representation of the collective identity that individual Chinese fall under. By using the term "China", a group of social actors is backgrounded and the reader of the text has to rely on their existing knowledge to make assumptions about who are referred to, which means that the pre-existing image of China is relied upon. Similarly, the Chinese people aren't defined in the data, so the term "Chinese people" is a referential strategy focused on genericisation, allowing the reader to form their own understanding of the Chinese based on their stereotypes.

When represented as an objectivated abstraction, China either transforms itself or is to be transformed by other actors. The ways that China is represented in this manner can be both active and passive. Passive representations of China include statements of how China is to be built "into a great modern socialist country in all respects" and how "realizing China's complete reunification is a historic mission". As an active impersonalised agent China can act independently. China can "declare a 'complete victory' in eradicating absolute poverty", "present an image of a thriving nation to the world " and it can be "quite sure that it can definitely fulfill the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation". This type of impersonalisation can create authority to the statements in

which China is the actor, because it hides the actual agents behind actions. By writing that China is quite sure that it can fulfill the Chinese Dream, the argument hides both the social actors who actually are quite sure as well as the social actors involved in fulfilling the Chinese Dream, which detaches the argument from individual human responsibilities.

The previous examples on the representation of China focus on instances in which the actor or object is referred to as "China". There are separate ways of representation for the actors referred to as "Chinese people" and the "Chinese nation". These categories collectivize individuals under a larger group, and compared to the term "China" there is more of an emphasis on human involvement through the terms "people" and "nation" and less allusion to a geographical location.

The Chinese nation is represented in the data in relation to national achievements, which means that the Chinese nation is characterized through achievements that have already happened and achievements that are expected to happen, most important of which is national rejuvenation:

> As the country strives for the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation, the Party's founding spirit will continue to inspire the nation to overcome various tests and trials on the way forward, observers said. (People's Daily Online 4.8.2021)

> "All the struggle, sacrifice, and creation through which the Party has united and led the Chinese people over the past hundred years has been tied together by one ultimate theme - bringing about the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," Xi said, adding that this prospect "has become a historical inevitability." (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

The Chinese nation and the Chinese people are in the data represented as a grouping of people who overcome difficulties and achieve success. This implies a quality of resilience. The representation of the Chinese as capable of overcoming and later achieving success is aligned with the way that Pugsley argues the masses are represented in Chinese media for the Chinese audience (Pugsley 2006, 85).

When characterizing the group of "the Chinese" through qualities, the peace-loving nature of the Chinese nation is emphasized:

> Xi added that the Chinese nation does not carry aggressive or hegemonic traits in its
> genes. "We have never bullied, oppressed, or subjugated the people of any
> other country, and we never will." (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

In this instance the word "genes" is used to argue for the lack of aggressiveness in the Chinese nation. This argument can be understood as the Chinese nation being personified through the term "genes", which are argued to not carry aggressive or hegemonic traits. This argument can also be understood as a generalization of the individuals of the Chinese nation, in which case there is an allusion to the individuals of the Chinese nation being connected by gene heritage. The argument carries the fallacy of composition, which posits that because a part of the group has a characteristic, the whole nation must have it as well (Adegoju 2017, 173). This representation of the peacefulness of the Chinese is aligned with the IR theory of China which aims to portray China as being peaceful (Kallio 2016, 30).

The argumentation related to the peacefulness of the Chinese nation is based on multiple fallacies as discourse related to Chinese history is over-simplified and the future is viewed as predetermined through assigning unchanging features to the Chinese nation. In the eras when Chinese dynasties had dominance over other Asian nations, hard power was used in addition to soft power (Kallio 2015, 528). The idea of Chinese people having subjugated other nations through the use of martial spirit doesn't fit together with the peace-loving nature ascribed to the Chinese nation, which means that denying the past domination over other nations with the use of hard power is a sign of chosen amnesia.

6.2. The semantic presentation and discursive qualification of the CPC

The CPC is a focal collective actor in the data. The CPC is defined as "the world's largest governing party with more than 95 million members". There are no negative action attributions in the data related to the CPC. One way that the CPC is positively qualified through actions is by representing members of the CPC as courageous and altruistic through aggregation strategies:

During times of crisis, whether triggered by earthquakes, floods or epidemics, great numbers of Party members have rushed to the forefront without the slightest hesitation. (People's Daily Online 4.8.2021)

The Party members who are represented to have participated in aiding are represented through "great numbers" and their actions are referred to through an abstraction of actions of having "rushed to the forefront". The statement works not to show accurately what Party members have done but to ideologically associate the Party with values related to aiding. "Without the slightest hesitation" emphasizes the selflessness of the Party members because they are represented to prioritize aiding others. By collectivizing the Party members and highlighting the great number of agents involved in aiding others, an illusion of a shared quality of selflessness is created.

Similarly to China, the nature of the CPC is characterized through positive qualities as well as past achievements and imagined future achievements. Not only is the CPC qualified as positive social actor through these factors, but the splendor of the CPC is represented as unchanging:

Russian media organization Sputnik believes that the CPC has always played a leading role as China turned from a country invaded by Western powers to the world's second largest economy. (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

Today, a hundred years on from its founding, the CPC is still in its prime, and remains as determined as ever to achieve lasting greatness for the Chinese nation. (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

Martin Jacques said that [–] "one thing is sure, based on its achievements, its capacity for governance and its ability to change, the CPC will still be China's leader, architect and mentor". (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

These statements highlight how the CPC has been influential in transforming China in the past through references to economic development, how the CPC is currently still in its prime and how the CPC's leadership will carry into the future. The CPC is represented through declarative statements that insert the positive influence of the CPC to the past, the present and the future. By highlighting the achievements of the CPC, the leadership of the Party is legitimized through the

argument of it having been beneficial to the nation in the past and being beneficial in the future. This legitimation of the CPC's leadership also showcases approval that the Party receives from other social actors, because the arguments about CPC's unchanging splendor come not just from Chinese social agents but foreign social actors as well.

There are similarities between the ways that the Chinese people and the CPC are represented in the data. One of such similarities is the attribution of being peaceful. The image of the CPC as peace-loving is emphasized through the use of association:

> The Party will continue to work with all peace-loving countries and peoples to
> promote the shared human values of peace, development, fairness, justice,
> democracy, and freedom, and strive to keep the wheels of history rolling
> toward bright horizons. (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

This example doesn't include explicit qualification of the CPC, but through parataxis association an alliance between the CPC and "all peace-loving countries and peoples" is created to showcase shared values which the CPC is represented to promote (van Leeuwen 1996, 50). The CPC is thus defined through these values as well as the strive for linear development metaphorized through "the wheels of history".

6.3. The role allocation of the CPC and the Chinese

Similarly to the Chinese people, the CPC is commonly represented through achievements, but a noteworthy distinguishing difference is that the CPC is often represented as leading the Chinese people to achievements. The Chinese people are represented most often as passive through subjection and beneficialisation at the hands of the actions of other actors, such as the country or the CPC. The most common relationship represented between the Chinese people and the CPC is through the act of leading. This type of relationship is stated explicitly seven times in the data, and often it is accompanied with a message of unity as well:

> During the past 100 years, the CPC has united and led the Chinese people to achieve
> great success in the new-democratic revolution, socialist revolution and construction,
> reform, opening up, and socialist modernization, and socialism with Chinese

characteristics in the new era, writing the most magnificent chapter in the millennia-long history of the Chinese nation. (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

Vowing to remain committed to combating corruption and root out "any viruses that would erode its health," Xi said the CPC must continue to advance the great new project of Party building. "We must unite and lead the Chinese people in working ceaselessly for a better life," he added. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

Having started from nothing, the CPC has led the Chinese people in transforming a poor and lagging country into the second-largest economy in the world. (People's Daily Online 4.8.2021)

In these sentences the Chinese people are passive subjects while the CPC is represented as an active force through its powers to unite and lead, both of which have been done during the past 100 years and "must" be done in the future as well. These sentences state that the unification and the leading of the Chinese people is the task of the Party, which emphasizes the importance of the leadership of the CPC. It is important to note that while the Chinese people are subjected actors in these sentences in relation to the CPC, the leading of the people results in mobilization. The Chinese people have been led to actions such as achieving "great success", "working ceaselessly for a better life" and "transforming" China, which means that the Chinese people are also represented to be benefiting from the active leadership of the CPC.

The CPC leads the abstract object of "China" as well as the Chinese people:

CPC has always played a leading role as China turned from a country invaded by Western powers to the world's second largest economy. Under the leadership of the CPC, China will inevitably further enhance its global influence. (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

The CPC is said to have "played a leading role", but the development of China to the world's second largest economy is still attributed to China itself.

While a common representation of the Chinese people is as beneficiaries of the CPC, another way that the role of the Chinese people is allocated in the data is as an active collectivized actor. This

type of represention is linked to a specific context, which is the potential threat of out-group forces:

> But the Chinese people will never allow any foreign force to bully, oppress, or subjugate us, he said. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

> "Any attempt to divide the Party from the Chinese people or to set the people against the Party is bound to fail. The more than 95 million Party members and the more than 1.4 billion Chinese people will never allow such a scenario to come to pass," he said. (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

> "No one should underestimate the great resolve, the strong will, and the extraordinary ability of the Chinese people to defend their national sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

The representation of Chinese people as independently active has to do with potential scenarios of imagined threats. While the role of the Chinese people within China is allocated as beneficiaries, meaning that they are represented to be benefiting from being under the power of the CPC, when it comes to out-group actors, the Chinese people are represented to actively not accept subjugation.

While the CPC is represented as having power over the Chinese people, one agent is represented to have power over the Party, and that agent is Xi Jinping. A similar representional strategy as mentioned before is used to represent the relationship between Xi and the Party:

> Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, hailed the Party's success over the past century and called on the whole Party to continue its hard work and carry out "a great struggle" to achieve national rejuvenation. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

Xi is represented as a person to have the power to call on the Party, but the assertiveness of Xi takes form as a mobilizing message, meaning that the Party is represented to benefit from the leadership of Xi.

There are cases in the data when the terms "China", "the country" and "the CPC" are used almost interchangeably and the role allocation between them becomes unclear:

> Today, the country is rallying and leading the Chinese people on a new journey toward realizing the second centenary goal. (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

> CPC and the Chinese people share a same future, and the Chinese people are the largest source of confidence of the Party in governing the country. (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

In the first sentence the country is said to be "rallying and leading the Chinese people". This begs the question of whom "the country" is referring to if not the coalescence of Chinese people. "The country" could be referring to the leadership of the CPC, but in the second sentence which is from the same article, the CPC, the Chinese people and the country are separated through semantic categories and material actions. The Chinese people are said to offer confidence to the CPC in governing the country, meaning that actions of the CPC are transactive in nature as the CPC is represented to have transformative impact on "the country". This type of transactiveness is a representation of power as it shows that one entity has power to transform another entity. (Van Leeuwen 2008, 59-61.)

The Party's leadership is present not only in the processes where the CPC is represented to lead other actors to achievements, but also in statements that explicitly indicate that the Party's leadership is a necessity for China:

> The firm leadership of the Party must be upheld, he said, calling it the foundation and lifeblood of the Party and the country, and the crux upon which the interests and wellbeing of all Chinese people depend. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

> Under the leadership of the CPC, China will inevitably further enhance its global influence. (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

The leadership of the Party is called the foundation and lifeblood of the Party, which insinuates that the CPC is a beneficiary of the CPC's leadership, which is a contradictory role allocation. This makes it unclear whose leadership is actually referred to and who is in charge of upholding said leadership. Nonetheless, the fallacy of inevitability is used as the leadership of the Party is claimed to inevitably lead to positive results on the global stage and within China in relation to the wellbeing of all Chinese people.

6.4. Representation of Xi Jinping

The most commonly represented indidual in the data is Xi Jinping, who is represented in all of the articles, even though his inclusion was not a part of the requirements for data collection. Xi Jinping in the data is characterized through his political career, which means that much like other represented actors in the data, Xi Jinping is not individualized through his personal qualities. Representation of Xi focuses largely on translated quotations from him and recontextualized speech in the form of summarized statements. Xi in the data works as a figure of authority. He is represented through functional honorifics. He is "Chinese president", " general secretary of the CPC Central Committee", "chairman of the Central Military Commission". These three functional honorifics appear in all the articles except for one, in which he is functionalised only as " general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee". Functional honorifics both signify importance and connote legitimacy. With three different functional honorifics he is signified as a very special figure, because each of these functionalisations apply to him only. These honorifics both help legitimize the messages that are spread through recontextualized quotes, but they they also add formality to the articles through signifying respect.

Xi is the most active agent in the data, and there are no representations of him as a passive agent. Xi is someone who rallies, declares messages, lays down principles, delivers speeches and calls on the Party. In verbal processes Xi is coded as the focal "sayer" as he is associated with many active verbs related to speaking. Many of the active verbs used in relation to Xi are neutral structuring verbs such as "said" and "put it", which don't carry evaluative aspects, but Xi's actions are also represented through metapropositional verbs which do include evaluations such as "Xi stressed", "Xi rallies" and "Xi's remarks further made it clear". The metapropositional verbs used in relation to Xi interpret him as assertive, which creates an image of Xi as an assertive person (Machin & Mayr 2012, 59-61). The high level of agency that Xi is represented to have protects him from objectivation and beneficialisation. This creates a sense of having power, as Xi's character is not represented to be dependent on the actions of other actors or phenomena. The high amount of quotations from Xi suggests that his sentiments are viewed as highly valuable because of how much space in the data is given to Xi's remarks.

Many of Xi's statements are authoritative arguments on how things are or how they ought to be:

> As Xi put it, the founding of a communist party in China was an epoch-making event, which profoundly changed the course of Chinese history in modern times, transformed the future of the Chinese people and nation, and altered the landscape of world development. (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

Additionally, his actions are associated with values and beliefs:
> Xi paid tributes to CPC forefathers including Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, as well as revolutionary martyrs who died for the Party's cause. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

In this sentence Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping are the beneficiaries of Xi's tributes, as are the revolutionary martyrs. The association of Xi with these actors further cements the posthumous worthiness of CPC forefathers and revolutionary martyrs, because he is shown to positively evaluate these agents through paying tributes. The discoursal context of the revolution is added to the article to cement the idea of the revolutionary spirit as valuable through Xi's positive evaluation.

Xi's importance is built not only through the representation of him as a figure of authority, but his actions are also positively evaluated by the authors of the articles:
> The important speech delivered by Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, at a ceremony marking the centenary of the CPC sparked positive responses from the international society. (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

There are three instances in three different articles where Xi's speeches are attributed to be "important", and in the example above Xi's speech is also said to "spark positive responses", which further advances the image that Xi's words are valuable and his contributions are admired by other social actors.

6.5. Representation of the Chinese youth

A commonly represented subgroup of the Chinese people is "the youth", and they are strongly tied to the discourse around national rejuvenation. As national rejuvenation takes place in an imagined future, the idea of it is represented to have been passed on to the current youth, and the mission of achieving national rejuvenation is delegated to them:

> The Party's founding spirit has a far-reaching influence on the country's younger generation, who will carry the baton for national rejuvenation. (People's Daily Online 4.8.2021)

The youth is strongly associated with the CPC, as most individualized members of the youth are also represented as members of the Party or as members of organizations under the CPC's leadership through nominations such as "a generation-Z Party member from Tongji University". The main function of young people in the data is to represent the youth's loyalty to the Party and the Party's goals:

> Over 1,000 young people, who are representatives of the Chinese Communist Youth League and Young Pioneers, conveyed their congratulatory message through a recitation at Tian'anmen Square, expressing the younger generation's commitment to the CPC's cause. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

> The four students jointly delivered an affectionate ode to the Party. "Today, we make a vow to the Party: Listen to the Party's call, be grateful to the Party and follow its lead," they said in unison. (People's Daily Online 2.7.2021)

The youth acknowledges the leadership of the Party and welcomes it, which spreads an image of the youth as loyal and grateful. Both of these qualities represent political stability, and by referring to the whole younger generation being commited to the CPC's cause, any displeasure expressed towards the Party is hidden behind an illusion of collective commitment.

The youth is represented through individuals in many instances, and each individual agent who is represented as a part of the youth is a student:

Zhang Xi, an undergraduate student at Beihang University in Beijing, said he was excited that he was invited to attend the ceremony. "As an undergraduate student and Party member, we need to live up to the expectation of the times and become role models for other young people," he said. (People's Daily Online 2.7.2021)

A student called Zhang Xi is quoted to have stated that the group "we", a group which can be defined by Zhang's expressed identities of being an undergraduate student and Party member, needs to become role models for other young people. This statement represents examplery behaviour for young people, as those young people who need to become role models are defined to be undergraduate students and Party members, meaning that being an undergraduate student and a Party member is desirable for the youth. Because the value of education is strongly tied to the youth and the youth is represented through positive attributes, the data can be said to represent education as highly valuable.

6.6. Visual representation of social actors

Picture 1

The picture of Xi Jinping (picture 1) is included in two articles. The picture portrayes Xi in an official setting giving a speech, which aligns with his representation as a "sayer". The photograph gives full attention him as the only social actor, but the crop of the photo makes sure to include the emblem of the CPC which signifies his association with the Party. Due to the distancing and the angling of the photo, the viewer is not uncomfortably close or in direct eye contact with Xi which allows the viewer to examine him without the feeling of a personal connection. Instead, there is space given in the photograph to represent the setting in which the photo is taken and not just the individual photographed.

Picture 2

In one photograph (picture 2) the viewer sees what seems like a mother and a child picking celebratory decorations. The social actors are looking far away from the angle of the camera and are in the middle of extending their arms in the same direction. The viewer is thus not supposed to focus on the faces of the individuals and who they are, but on their actions and the scenery

surrounding them. This photograph emphasizes the celebratory aspect of the centenary through the inclusion of decorative objects.

Picture 3

One article includes a photo in which the viewer can see the back of an individual surrounded by a sea of people, but instead of showing the faces of the people, their presence is made known by the flags they hold. The inclusion of this photograph of red flags of the CPC covering the individuals can be viewed as a symbol of loyalty to the Party as these social actors are represented to take part in the centenary celebrations by proudly holding up flags of the Party.

Picture 4

There are multiple pictures in the data that include the representation of the Chinese as a united group of people. In picture 4 this unity is represented through the photographing of chorus members performing. The social actors are dressed in similar clothing and their hairstyles are similar as well. They are standing in an orderly fashion with straight posture, and there is a social order created by dividing men and women. This picture emphasizes the large number of people involved in the celebrations. The photo fixates on the few individuals in the front with their features being sharp and clear, but angle of the photo makes sure to include the groups of people behind them as if to show that the individuals that the viewer can clearly see make up only a small portion of the people gathered to celebrate the centenary of the CPC. The celebratory monument dedicated to the CPC further allows the viewer effectively to associate the large masses with the event held to commemorate the Party.

A common theme in most of the the pictures attached to the articles is the color red. This similar hue of red is the color of the Chinese flag, akin to a national colour, and the usage of red increases the sense of national unity and as a symbol of nationalism it legitimizes the nationalistic powers. There exists a quotation from Xi Jinping acknowledging the signifance of red in relation the country of China: "Our red country is the result of the blood and lives of millions of revolutionary martyrs. The country [the rivers and mountains] is the people, and the people are the country. We will never allow the country to change color, and the people will never agree." (Bandurski 2022.) The photographs mostly focus on representing celebrations, save for a singular landscape shot which I did not analyze as it included no social actors. The unity of people as well as the quantity of people are emphasized, and the photographs create strong associations between the social actors represented and the CPC.

6.7. Chapter conclusion

China and the Chinese people are represented through achievements that include both past achievements and imagined future achievements. The most represented Chinese social actors include Xi Jinping, the CPC and the youth. The Chinese social actors represented are associated with the CPC either as beneficiaries of the actions of the CPC or through showcasing commitment to the CPC, while the CPC and Xi Jinping are represented to be the most active agents, and they are represented to have transactive power over other agents. The most individualized agent is Xi Jinping, but even he is not individualized through personal traits. The focus in the data is on representing the collective of the Chinese and the sub-groups of the Chinese as well as generalizing the collective through the attaching of values that are either explicitly stated in the text, such as being peace-loving, or implied through actions, such as resilience.

The power relationships that I've found in the data frame Xi Jinping as the most influental social actor. He is followed by the CPC and below the CPC in the power hierarchy are the Chinese people, but the Chinese people are represented to not allow subjugation from the hands of foreign nations, which implies that the Chinese people as a collective are above foreign nations when it comes to transactive power.

7. Representation of out-groups and China's relations to them

7.1. Included out-groups

In order to understand how China is represented in the data, it is important to look at how the relations between China and actors outside China are represented. I approach foreign actors with the presupposition that they are the out-group in relation to China. The data I have gathered doesn't have foreign relations or foreign actors in the focus, but there are still many references to out-group actors and there is much to be gleaned from the way they are represented.

The out-group of non-Chinese is represented in the data through an individual person referred to as "American journalist Edgar Snow". Through the generic category of "American", Snow is framed as an outsider, and his introduction as a journalist adds formality to his character. Snow is not individualized through personal traits, and instead it is emphasised how he is influenced by the Chinese, thus making his inclusion in the article a way to construct an image of the Chinese:

> Interviewing people holding up in the revolutionary cradle of Yan'an, Snow was moved by unconquerable spirit, strength and passion. He wrote the book "Red Star Over China" to record what he considered the rich and splendid essence of human history. (People's Daily Online 4.8.2021)

Snow's actions are motivated by the Chinese and his emotions are influenced by the Chinese, meaning that his role in the article is to react. In the words of van Leeuwen, reacting is a way to represent mental processes (Van Leeuwen 2008, 57). Snow's mental processes are represented through him being moved by the Chinese and considering the revolutionary Chinese to represent "the rich and splendid essence of human history". He is an individual to reflect a construed image of Chinese Communists, which can also be understood to represent the desired image of Chinese Communists.

Another individual who is represented in a similar manner to Snow and is given the role of the reactor is Martin Jacques who is also represented through a generic category relating to his nationality, and he is functionalised formally as a scholar:

Recently, British scholar Martin Jacques said that the CPC over the past century "has arguably been the world's most successful political party ... the CPC's extraordinary success is because it found a way ... of combining a huge reforming capacity with a profound rootedness in Chinese society and culture" (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

The praise sung to the CPC in Jacques' comment is high, because not only is the success of CPC evaluated as extraordinary, but Jacques also argues for the CPC being the world's most successful political party. The verbal choice of "world's most successful" exaggerates the actions of the CPC, which includes an ideologically charged perspective. High praise sung to the CPC by a foreign out-group agent allows for such arguments to be made without the perspective becoming too self-centered as the praise is not made by CPC-affiliated agents but an outsider whose perspective is simply given space to become represented.

The representation of foreign actors as evaluators of China and the CPC works to legitimize the rule of the Party. Russian media organization Sputnik is one of these actors whose comments are used. The organization is an impersonalized actor as it refers to a large collective, and it is said to believe "that the CPC has always played a leading role as China turned from a country invaded by Western powers to the world's second largest economy". This outsider view on the history of China as an invaded nation transforming into an economic powerhouse legitimizes the Chinese narrative on historical development. Sputnik's comments pick a side, as Western powers are mentioned here and collectively referred to, which means that the historical conflict between the Western nations and China is acknowledged, and China is sided with, which acknowledges the underdog situation from which China has risen from.

7.2. Excluded out-groups

Some out-group actors are excluded in the data in referrals to resistance. These out-group social actors are suggested, but not explicitly referred to. Opposition of the socialist cause is suggested through the use of statements such as "to fight for the socialist cause". This statement about fighting for the cause assumes an enemy to fight, but it is not specified who this opposition refers

to. Another suggested out-group in the data is people who are against the unity of China. This is seen in an article in which there is a mention of what is called the Taiwan question:

> Resolving the Taiwan question and realizing China's complete reunification is a historic mission and an unshakable commitment of the CPC, Xi said, vowing resolute action to utterly defeat any attempt toward "Taiwan independence". "No one should underestimate the great resolve, the strong will, and the extraordinary ability of the Chinese people to defend their national sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

Taiwan independence is referenced in quotation marks, which not only refers to direct quotation from Xi Jinping, but it can also be a strategy of belittling an issue or distancing oneself from a description of an issue that one wishes not to acknowledge (Predelli 2003, 3). The people who stand for Taiwan independence are anonymized and excluded as they are not referred to as a specified group of people. Instead they are referenced only through attempts towards independence, and they are framed as an out-group as they are to be "defeated", and these "no ones" are positioned to be against "the Chinese people". These referential strategies create vagueness and the lack of specification distances the reader from those who want Taiwan independence and are warned not to underestimate the Chinese people.

Another instance where an out-group is suggested is in a quotation from Xi Jinping with similar methods as mentioned before, but the difference is that the author of the article clarifies the out-group through an interpretation:

> "Any attempt to divide the Party from the Chinese people or to set the people against the Party is bound to fail. The more than 95 million Party members and the more than 1.4 billion Chinese people will never allow such a scenario to come to pass." Xi's remarks further made it clear to the international community that the CPC and the Chinese people share a same future [–]. (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

In Xi's quote, the out-group is suppressed as there is no agent mentioned as the enemy of China's unity. The out-group is referred to through referring to attempts "to divide" and attempts to "set the people against the Party", but it is not mentioned who is the one making these attempts, which creates vagueness and distance from these actors. The author then specifies that this

message is meant for the international community at large, and this specification of the audience rectifies a feeling of intimidation. The fallacy of inevitability is used to argue for division attempts for bounding to fail, which means that the message for the international community is to not even try such actions. Xi also highlights the amount of the Party members and the Chinese people, and in this instance the emphasizing of these numbers can be understood to work ideologically to show the amount of resistance one would face if they attempted to divide the Party from the Chinese, and the aggregation also works to conceal any political resistance against the Party within China because the Chinese people are aggragated to include all of the people in China in order to represent total opposition to the separation of the Party and the people. This passage thus works to both distance the Chinese people from the out-group of opposing forces while it also withholds a message of intimidation.

Similar devices of silence are used to suppress an out-group of other nations while also representing the Party as a willing beneficiary of the teaching of out-group actors:

> The Party is eager to learn what lessons it can from the achievements of other cultures, and welcomes helpful suggestions and constructive criticism, Xi said. "We will not, however, accept sanctimonious preaching from those who feel they have the right to lecture us," he said. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

China is associated with other cultures through the statements showing willingness to learn from the achievements, suggestions and constructive criticism of other cultures. The "suggestions" and "criticism" in question are objectivated actions, they are not actions represented through active verbs, but process nouns "achievements", "suggestions", "criticism". When an action is objectivated, representation of it downgrades the action to give priority to something else, which in this case would be sequencing as the objectivated actions act as a preface to actions represented through an active verb "accept". (Van Leeuwen 2008, 64.) This emphasis on sequencing is further cemented through the use of the term "however", which shifts the focus from the humility required to learn from others to the rejection of preaching and lecturing. Xi's speech then moves on to emphasize a message of intimidation, in which the the out-group is given a warning message:

> But the Chinese people will never allow any foreign force to bully, oppress, or subjugate us, he said. "Anyone who would attempt to do so will find themselves on a

collision course with a great wall of steel forged by over 1.4 billion Chinese people,"

Xi said, as the crowd present at Tian'anmen Square burst into thunderous applause

and cheers. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

This is another example of intimidation, because the opposition to the Chinese is promised

resistance from all of the over 1.4 billion Chinese people.

The out-group of foreign nations is referred to in relation to the construed image of China, which

showcases how the author believes China to be viewed or how the author wants to represent the

construed image of China. The image that China is said to be presenting the world "is one of a

thriving nation that is advancing with unstoppable momentum toward rejuvenation". This

sentence refers to a construed image of how China believes it is viewed through its presentation.

Phrases such as "the world believes" are used in the data to refer to how foreign actors are said to

qualify changes that have happened in China:

> The world believes China has gone through an astonishing century, during which it
>
> made an unprecedented leap forward and the most remarkable achievements.
>
> (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

> The world generally believes that the exciting achievements have enhanced the
>
> confidence in global poverty reduction, and set a reference for countries to promote
>
> inclusive development. (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

These representations of the views of the world focus on positive qualifications of China's

achievements. In one of the statements the actions which are qualified are left unspecified, which

means that the sentence doesn't argue that any specific achievement of China is universally

acknowledged and admired, but that there . The other statement focuses on poverty reduction,

and China is represented as an examplary force that others use as reference. The representation

of China as a role model creates authority, and thus constructs China's relations to other nations

as a relationship in which China is the authoritative agent that has the transactive power to affect

others (Van Leeuwen 2008, 108). Arguments such as "the world believes" also create authority

through conformity. By arguing that the whole world believes something, the belief is made to

seem common and thus normalized. (Van Leeuwen 2008, 109.) This can be a strategy to affect the

reader to adopt the way of thinking represented in the text. The term "the world" simplifies the

argument by concealing who is actually said to believe in China's achievements; the statement argues that China's success is universally acknowledged. The out-group of "the world" in these instances in not represented as an antagonistic agent, but as an outside viewer that is there to react to China and fawn over the achievements that China has made.

The articles do not address the reader at any point in time. While there are many cases in the articles where messages towards groups labeled "us" are used, these pronoun uses are present only in recontextualized quotations. There are no signs of the authors trying to build an in-group of which the reader is expected to be a part of. This is a sign of the articles being catered to foreign audiences. Since the audience of the articles can be expected to include any person from any nation, the suppression of China's foreign adversaries can be viewed as a strategic choice, because explicitly representing a specific nation as an adversary of China could offend or distance a reader who is a part of that nation. The articles instead seem to shy away from a condemnatory and accusatory tone by not specifying any out-group opponents.

7.3. Representation of non-CPC Chinese agents

There is one out-group of Chinese people that is represented in the data through the representational strategy of suppression:

> Vowing to remain committed to combating corruption and root out "any viruses that would erode its health," Xi said the CPC must continue to advance the great new project of Party building. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

The term "vowing" is used to refer to Xi's statements, and thus the verb "combating" refers to an out-group in relation to Xi, and this out-group is represented as having to be defeated. This out-group is referred to as "corruption" which refers to a process/phenomenon caused by social agents, but doesn't mention the involvement of any human agents. Similarly, the out-group that is represented to cause potential troubles for the CPC is referred to as "viruses", which objectivates the social actors involved and reduces them to an impersonalised phenomenon that is generally understood as negative. The term "corruption" creates a more naturalized interpretation of the actions of agents. While corruption is represented as something to combat, the statement doesn't

argue for the inevitable defeat of corruption. Overall, as the out-group is not referred to through agents, they are actively being excluded from the article in question.

Chinese non-CPC-affiliated actors are represented in the data once in a way in which the agents are not excluded:

> Wan Exiang, chairman of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang, read a congratulatory message on behalf of the eight non-CPC political parties in China, the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, and personages without party affiliation. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

Wan Exiang is both nominated and functionalised through honorifics, which allows the reader to view him as a figure of importance. Non-CPC actors are represented as a part of China, and while they are defined to be persons without party affiliation, they are still associated with the CPC through the act of congratulating, which as an act includes a cognitive process that positively evaluates an aspect or aspects of the CPC. To congratulate someone, one must evaluate the other's actions to be achievements worth commendation. This means that non-CPC-affiliated agents reading a congratulatory message is an act that represents building rapport and thus associates these agents with the CPC in a way that shows positive evaluation.

7.4. Chapter conclusion

The actions of foreign agents are represented through reactions more often than actions. Foreign actors' positive reactions to China and the CPC have been selectively included in the articles to legitimize the Party's leadership. While the out-groups of foreign actors and non-CPC-affiliated actors are not necessarily represented in a negative way, they are implied to be below China in the power hierarchy due to their role as China's positive evaluators as well as being on the receiving end of Xi Jinping's intimidation.

Negatively qualified out-groups are the most suppressed social actors in the data since antagonistic representation doesn't exist in the form of directly attacking any specific nations or sub-groups within China. Out-group actors are specified and personalised only when they are positively evaluating China and the CPC. Because there is no focus on negatively portraying specific out-groups, it

can be argued that these articles are not trying to create explicit dissonance with any specific countries.

The role that foreign nations have in the narrative of China is represented differently when talking about the past, the present and the future. There are references to the Western nations having invaded China in the past, which qualifies them as adversaries of China. The representation of foreign nations in the present day and near future is either as imagined threats to China or as beneficiaries of China's exemplary influence. The way that foreign nations are imagined in relation to China in further future is through China increasing its global influence.

8. Legitimisation strategies in the data

8.1. Common strategies of argumentation

A common strategy for solidifying argumentation in the data is the usage of representational strategies of vagueness and specification. By this I refer to a strategy of argumentation that first argues for something to be true for a large group of people and then moves on to represent examples of specific individuals whose experiences match the argument.

When representing youth, collectivisation of the young Chinese is paired with individualised examples of youth. Using aggregation as a referential strategy creates an illusion of homogeneity, which aims to make the devotion of the youth seem like a fact. By pairing this strategy with individualized examples, there is an aim to bring more legitimacy to the claims made of the devotion of the youth. First, there is an argument that the youth has remained devoted to the Party's cause:

> Since then, under the banner of the Communist Party of China, generation after generation of young Chinese have devoted their youth to the cause of the Party and the people, and remained in the vanguard of the drive to rejuvenate the nation. (People's Daily Online 2.7.2021)

This argument is later in the article followed by representations of individuals who reinforce the argument:

> At the ceremony, Beijing primary school students Yao Muchen and Peng Youxin, who represented the Chinese Young Pioneers, and university students Feng Lin and Zhao Jianming, who represented the Chinese Communist Youth League, saluted the Communist Party of China and expressed their commitment to the Party's cause. (People's Daily Online 2.7.2021)

This type of strategy combines representation of social actors with argumentation, because the mixing of aggregation and individualisation creates a sense legitimacy for the arguments written. The strategy of aggregation works to hide the lack of consensus, which creates an illusion of a fact. For example, in one article when talking of the achievements of the CPC it is argued that "[m]any people have experienced a significant improvement in their lives" because of the CPC's leadership. This is then followed by examples of individuals who express that their life and other people's lives have significantly improved thanks to the CPC:

> "When I returned home in recent years, I saw big changes: expressway has been opened, traffic is made convenient, and everyone's life is getting better," Bao told Xinhua at Tian'anmen Square. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

> Having traveled to more than 70 mainland cities with large ethnic populations, Yang said he has seen those places undergoing tremendous changes over the years. "The Party's support has reached every village and every ethnic group." (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

In these examples further aggregation is used as the individuals who are quoted state that "everyone's life is getting better" and that "the Party's support has reached every village and every ethnic group". These individuals using aggregation strategies in statements that echo the arguments made by the author brings more legitimacy to the original claims that relied on aggregation.

When talking about the century of CPC leadership, the achievements and positive developments are highlighted. The century is defined to be "astonishing" and it is characterized through the CPC's "tremendous success". When talking about negative things that have happened in the recent history of China after the revolution, the focus is shifted from the existance of these problems to examples of the Chinese overcoming them and showcasing martyrship. The discursive

qualification of the losses of human lives focuses on positive effects of death through the concept of martyship instead of framing the deaths of people as tragic or unfortunate:

> Over the last few years, more than 1,800 CPC members and officials had sacrificed their lives for the cause. (People's Daily Online 4.8.2021)

> Xi paid tributes to CPC forefathers including Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, as well as revolutionary martyrs who died for the Party's cause. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

When adversities are mentioned in the data, the focus is on the power of the people who are represented to have won over adversities or to have advanced the Party's cause through their death, while failures in reacting to adversities are not mentioned.

8.2. The use of abstractions

The discourse related to the revolution is connected to other discourses through the concept called "the revolutionary spirit" or "the founding spirit", which is defined by Xi Jinping through principles of "upholding truth and ideals, staying true to the Party's original aspiration and founding mission, fighting bravely without fear of sacrifice, and remaining loyal to the Party and faithful to the people". These principles related to selflessness and loyalty are found in the representation of many CPC-connected agents in the data, and they can be said to represent the idealistic image of a Chinese person from the point of view of the Party.

The revolutionary spirit is involved in current-day discourses through recontextualization of the spirit. The spirit is said to demonstrate its strength in scientific and technological research. This claim is then strengthened through the representation of Wu Jun, deputy director at a national key laboratory of hybrid rice:

> The spirit has demonstrated its strength in various endeavors, be it scientific and technological research, rural vitalization, space programs, social governance, or business operation. At a national key laboratory of hybrid rice in Changsha, central China's Hunan Province, Wu Jun and his team were doing research on the breeding of rice varieties that are resistant to major diseases, insect pests, high and low temperatures and drought. "Developing super-high-yielding rice varieties is important to ensuring grain security. We will make down-to-earth efforts in pushing

forward with the research and live up to the original aspiration of our predecessors,"

said Wu, deputy director of the laboratory. (People's Daily Online 4.8.2021)

The association between discourses happens through the abstract concept of the founding spirit.

The founding spirit is attached to the discourse of technological advancement through sequencing.

By following the argument of the spirit demonstrating its strength with the anecdote of Wu Jun

and his team's rice research, the development of rice is recontextualized as representing the

founding spirit. This is also alluded to in the quotation from Wu in which he mentions living up "to

the original aspiration of our predecessors". Due to the sequencing and linking of clauses, these

predecessors can be interpreted to refer to revolutionary forefathers, but due to to the unclear

definition of who the term "our" refers to and who the word "predecessors" refers to, this

interpretation is dependant on the context provided by the whole article.

In the previous example, the founding spirit is given agency as it can demonstrate its strength. As

there is no human agency involved, giving agency to the spirit can be called an objectivated

naturalization in which the spirit is represented to exist and act naturally without human

interference. (Van Leeuwen 2008, 68.) There are other cases in the text where the spirit is given

agency as well:

The Party's founding spirit has a far-reaching influence on the country's younger

generation, who will carry the baton for national rejuvenation. (People's Daily Online

4.8.2021)

Agents are completely suppressed from this statement. The spirit is explicitly defined through

principles such as "fighting bravely" and "remaining loyal", which are abstract concepts that

represent a particular political ideology. Personifying and giving the spirit agency demonstrates

the pervasiveness of these political values that are claimed to influence social actors as if these

values exist without the Party being there to actively promote them. Personification of an

abstraction allows actors to hide behind concepts that are generally valued, which can make the

argument itself seem more valuable (Machin & Mayr 2012, 171).

Similarly to the founding spirit, there are many cases in the data where time is personified and

given agency to. In one article time is referred to as having expectations from the youth, and the

future is said to belong to the young people. In another article it is mentioned that "the CPC has

fulfilled its promise to the history". Time itself is represented to have expectations and history can be made promises to. The reality of social practices is hidden behind the abstractations related to time. As history can be made promises to, time similarly to the founding spirit is discursively constructed through objectivated naturalization. The aim of this is ideological, because relying on the agency of time creates non-human authority. The scale of expectations seems much larger when time itself is the authority behind those expectations, making the duty of the youth seem much larger than it would be if the expectations came from personalized social actors. Similarly the promise to the history which the CPC has fulfilled makes the achievement sound grand, as the whole of history was expecting this promise to be fulfilled.

8.3. The narrative of national rejuvenation

Time is a focal concept in the data and one way this importance of time is made evident is through prescribing a narrative to China. This narrative that describes what has happened and what needs to happen comprises a significant part of the representation of China's national image. I call this narrative the narrative of national rejuvenation, because the goal of rejuvenation is at the heart of the narrative due to the way that the concept of rejuvenation is inserted into past actions.

There is no unclarity in the data when arguing for the way that the future is defined. This is is especially prominent in the recontextualized quotations from Xi Jinping. The future is described as a story set in stone. There exists argumentation that the leadership of the Party is required for China to reach this future, but the leadership of the Party is also argued to not experience turmoil, which is demonstrated for example in a quote by Xi stating that "the CPC and the Chinese people share a same future". Not only is the future defined by things that will absolutely happen, but it is also defined by events that will absolutely not happen, and one of such things is the separation of the Party and the Chinese:

> "Any attempt to divide the Party from the Chinese people or to set the people against the Party is bound to fail. The more than 95 million Party members and the more than 1.4 billion Chinese people will never allow such a scenario to come to pass," he said. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

This argumentation relies on the fallacy of inevitability, which is generally common in the data when talking about the future. The concept of national rejuvenation comes across as a clearly defined narrative. The beginning for the narrative of national rejuvenation is dated back to the beginning of the party and the revolutionaries:

> One hundred years ago, a group of young people held high the torch of Marxism and started an arduous journey of exploring the prospect of national rejuvenation under great difficulty and hardship, Xi said. (People's Daily Online 2.7.2021)

> "All the struggle, sacrifice, and creation through which the Party has united and led the Chinese people over the past hundred years has been tied together by one ultimate theme -- bringing about the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," Xi said, adding that this prospect "has become a historical inevitability." (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

National rejuvenation is attached to the discourse of the Party creation as well as the rise of Marxism in China. Kallio and Liu posit that as a concept the China Dream was indeed present with revolutionary forces, and it has been a dream of the Chinese to return to peace, prosperity and freedom from foreign aggressors ever since the end of the imperial era (Liu 2009, 245 as cited in Kallio 2015, 528). This quotation from Xi summarizes well the way that the narrative towards rejuvenation is desccribed in the data. The Chinese people endure and overcome hardships, and as a result of enduring and overcoming, the Party eventually leads the people to greatness.

The narrative of national rejuvenation can be categorized into three stages. The past is represented as a struggle which can be found represented in some of the verbs used for China's development such as the verb "standing up", which refers to a time where China was metaphorically on the ground and had not yet stood up. Some references to China's past struggles are clearly defined through terms such as having been "undeveloped", "poor" and "invaded by Western nations", which backgrounds the discourse related to the century of humiliation.

The current day is represented as a time of development in which problems still exist, but great leaps forward have been taken and the Chinese people are enjoying a time of moderate prosperity. Achievements are celebrated, such as the eradication of absolute poverty, and the commonly occuring message in the data has to do with increasing the unity of Chinese people, which backgrounds the issue of not yet having reached full unity. This is especially evident when talking about Taiwan:

> [Xi] also called for making efforts to strengthen the great unity of the Chinese people. Resolving the Taiwan question and realizing China's complete reunification is a historic mission and an unshakable commitment of the CPC, Xi said, vowing resolute action to utterly defeat any attempt toward "Taiwan independence." (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

The unity of the Chinese is not put under questioning, instead the verb "strengthen" represents unity as already existing but lacking. While the Taiwan question is not explicitly attached to national rejuvenation, Kallio writes that the rejuvenation of China includes resolving the issue of unachieved territorial integrity, which means that achieving total unity is a requirement for national rejuvenation (Kallio 2015, 530). In fact, the only goal explicitly attached to national rejuvenation through clauses in the data is the building of China into a "great modern socialist country" by 2049 which similarly to the concept of national rejuvenation refers to an abstraction of multiple differenct actions that are categorized under one concept. Because unity is so closely tied to national rejuvenation, there exists an implication that the issue of Taiwan needs to be solved before the centenary of the PRC in 2049.

The representation of the future in the narrative of China happens through the realization of the Chinese Dream. The way that history and time are talked about in the data create contrast between different stages of China, which allows the reader to understand the historicality as linear development. There are references to the hardships of the past while the future is near utopian, because national rejuvenation is attributed to be the end of struggling and a time of greatness. It describes an end goal, a predetermined end of the story, and there are no mentions of what political goals there are for China after the rejuvenation.

8.4. Legitimation of the narrative of national rejuvenation

National rejuvenation is at the heart of the narrative of the articles. It is made to seem natural by de-attaching it from the fact that it is a concept and a goal upheld by political actors. Rejuvenation refers to an abstraction of multiple actions that are required for the concept of rejuvenation to happen. Rejuvenation is thus a label for these actions, and the actions can be legitimized by

attaching them to rejuvenation, because the goal of rejuvenation includes positive connotations. (Van Leeuwen 2008, 65.) National rejuvenation can be viewed as a moral tale where the nation is rewarded after collectively struggling and overcoming their problems. Van Leeuwen describes this type of story-telling as mythopoesis, which is a strategy of legitimation that focuses on the power of using stories and imagination to legitimize goals (Van Leeuwen 2008, 117-118).

National rejuvenation is discursively used as a result clause, which means that the outcome of actions is stressed over actions themselves. Most of the argumentation relating to national rejuvenation talks of the Chinese not implying that they should rejuvenate the nation, but with the message that they will rejuvenate the nation:

> The Party's founding spirit has a far-reaching influence on the country's younger generation, who will carry the baton for national rejuvenation. (People's Daily Online 4.8.2021)

In this example national rejuvenation is attributed to be a desirable result, which is why the message bypasses deeper explanations for why the youth will rejuvenate the nation. They are represented to do it because rejuvenating the nation is appropriate. This is strategy of legitimation focuses on rationalizing the effect of an action to be appropriate (Van Leeuwen 2008, 113-116).

The determined nature of the future is strongly present in the title of one of the articles: "China's national rejuvenation a historical inevitability". Van Leeuwen calls this type of representation of time disembodied. In cases like these, time itself acts as an authority. In argumentation the use of disembodied time summons can be used to create a sense of "inescapable fate". (van Leeuwen 2008, 77.) By calling national rejuvenation a historical inevitability, the narrative that ties together the past and the future is de-attached from the fact that it is a narrative created by social actors. Instead, the interpretation of the way that history affects the future is not treated as an interpretation but as an inevitable promise of time. There is a similar case of disembodied time summons used when legitimizing the rule of the Party:

> The Party will continue to work with all peace-loving countries and peoples to promote the shared human values of peace, development, fairness, justice,

> democracy, and freedom, and strive to keep the wheels of history rolling toward
> bright horizons. (People's Daily Online 5.7.2021)

In this sentence a metaphor is used. As history is assigned wheels that are connoted to be rolling towars bright horizons, an impression of history as forward-moving is created. In this example while history is given agency through a metaphor, the Party is represented to be a force behind this linear forward-movingness. The amount of responsibility that the Party has for is mitigated by the verb "strive" as it represents an attempt to control the wheels of history.

National rejuvenation is commonly used to legitimise the rule of the CPC, and vice versa the rule of the CPC is used to legitimise national rejuvenation:

> China's success hinges on the Party. History provides ample evidence that without
> the CPC, there would be no new China and no national rejuvenation. (People's Daily
> Online 5.7.2021)

An interesting discursive choice is made in this statement, which claims that "without the CPC, there would be no new China and no national rejuvenation", because in this argument the verb "would" refers to a past action such as the establishing of "new China", which refers to China after the establishing of the PRC, but national rejuvenation is not a past event since it represents an imagined future event. In this statement it is not only argued that time provides evidence and that China can not be successful without the CPC, but it also insinuates the inevitability of national rejuvenation by discursively constructing it as already have happened.

The century of humiliation is backgrounded in one article as the author states that "[h]aving started from nothing, the CPC has led the Chinese people in transforming a poor and lagging country into the second-largest economy in the world". The use of the term "nothing" refers to the CPC inheriting the remnants of Chinese history before the CPC. Using the contrast of China having been poor and lagging and now being the second-largest economy in the world legitimizes the power of the CPC by rationalizing the successfulness of the CPC's rule as having led to desirable results. In three of the articles there are mentions of China being the world's second largest economy, and each of these mentions is through the attachment of clauses accompanied with references to historical hardships. Discourses of economic growth and poverty reduction are

both used to legitimise the Party's leadership through discursively constructing the past poverty as a hardship that has been overcome thanks to the leadership of the CPC:

> "This means that we have brought about a historic resolution to the problem of absolute poverty in China, and we are now marching in confident strides toward the second centenary goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects," Xi said. (People's Daily Online 1.7.2021)

The resolution of the problem of absolute poverty is termed "historic", which means that the resolution is appointed a place in history. It is described to be a part of the linear narrative of development towards good things. The future is defined to only get better and the problem of absolute poverty is now argued to be gone for good. Kallio writes that using economic growth to justify the power of the CPC has been very much relied upon since the reform era, but it is not as common in the current day, because relying on economic growth only creates an ideological void, meaning a lack of shared societal values. (Kallio 2016, 67.) Even if economic growth as a justification strategy for the rule of the CPC has historically been overused, the achievement of eliminating absolute poverty which is categorized as the first centenary goal is clearly important in the data as is the highlighting of China's place as the world's second largest economy because there is intra-textual context apparent in the way that multiple articles refer to these discourses.

8.5. Chapter conclusion

Much of the argumentation in the data focuses on the legitimation of the Party's rule and on the inevitability of national rejuvenation, and the Party's rule and national rejuvenation are represented to be irreversibly intertwined. The argumentation for national rejuvenation focuses on inevitability which does not include reasonable linking of clauses in order to be a reliable argument. Representations of individuals are used to reinforce the legitimation messages of the authors. The exclusion of the Party's failures enforces the legitimacy of the Party's power because the Party is represented only through positive qualifications and achievements, which creates an illusion of the Party as rather perfect. Carrai writes that the CPC believes that chosen amnesia is essential for preserving legitimacy (Carrai 2021, 15).

9. Concluding thoughts

The aim of this thesis was to find out what types of representations of China and the Chinese are common in Chinese state-controlled news media through the use of Critical Discourse Analysis and the Discourse-Historical Approach. The focus when looking into these representations was on the narrative of national rejuvenation and how social actors are associated with that narrative.

As can be expected from current-day Chinese news media, the articles are not in dissonance in terms of representing social actors. The results of the analysis show that People's Daily articles aim to portray the CPC as a flawless political party with Xi Jinping in the spotlight. The articles aim to legitimize the rule of the Party, and the past achievements of the Party in leading the Chinese nation are used for this cause. Not only are past achievements referred to, but a large part of the legitimation relies on the imagined glory of national rejuvenation which the Party promises to achieve. China comes across as confident and determined to achieve the goal of national rejuvenation no matter what. To the reader the confidence can come across as over-confidence due to the deterministic nature that is ascribed to the narrative of national rejuvenation. National rejuvenation is used to represent the Chinese people as resilient and brave through adding the context of national rejuvenation to both the suffering and achievements of the Chinese.

The articles use foreign actors to construe an image of China as being admired for its achievements, and the image of China that is constructed in the articles mirrors this image that China desires for itself. It is important to note that antagonism towards foreign nations isn't explicit, and none of the articles aim to vilify specific nations, even though there are antagonistic sentiments in relation to China feeling bitter because of voes of the past and feeling threatened currently by foreign actors trying to become involved in internal Chinese politics. Yet, the articles do not represent China as being a threat without being challenged first which aligns with anti-force and anti-hegemony values that are common in Chinese political rhetorics.

Due to the propaganda-type aspects of People's Daily articles, there is much emphasis on formality and legitimation of the Party's rule. There exist attempts to legitimize the power of the CPC even for the foreign audiences. Because foreign audiences are not as familiar with the type of propaganda that the CPC spreads, the articles are most likely not as effective in improving the image of China and creating a feeling of trustworthiness as the media might desire. This thesis

does not touch upon whether the discursive representation of China's values and motivations actually match the political leadership, which is a topic for another study.

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