



Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla

Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales

“Analogical interpretation of Confucian discourse in foreign policy making: Ming and Song exclusivism in Post-Maoist Chinese Regimes.”

Tesis que para obtener el grado de Licenciado en Relaciones Internacionales

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CERTIFICADO DE REVISIÓN GRAMATICAL

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1. The thesis falls within acceptable grammatical and stylistic standards for an academic text produced by a non-native speaker.
2. While numerous grammatical and syntactic errors were identified, these did not seriously impede understanding or compromise the coherence of the text.
3. The vocabulary used is generally appropriate for an undergraduate academic level, while any erroneous usage identified did not seriously impede understanding (see notes attached). At times, the vocabulary used enriches the degree of sophistication observed in the text.
4. The document demonstrates cohesion in its main ideas and a consistent logical structure.
5. For publication in a peer-reviewed journal or by an academic publisher, it is strongly recommended that the text be proofread by an experienced professional.

A report specifying some of the reviewer’s observations in more detail is attached.

The document reviewed represents an impressive attempt at writing an undergraduate thesis by a candidate for whom English is not their first language.



Signature
Benjamin John Stewart
January 24, 2025

Analogical interpretation of Confucian discourse in foreign policy making: Ming and Song exclusivism in Post-Maoist Chinese Regimes

Notes

Outil

The only search results that I can find for this word are the French word for *tool*. If this is the intended meaning, then, in the strongest possible terms, I recommend using the word *tool*.

On

There are many instances of the misuse of this preposition, in many cases where the preposition *in* should be used instead.

The apostrophe ’ never indicates plurality.

There are a number of sentences beginning with the verb form *Is*, for which no subject is provided. Unlike in Spanish, all sentences in English must have a valid subject and a valid verb, with the subject preceding the verb in all cases, aside from question structure and a few very specific exceptions. The structure that the author is seeking to recreate would be “It is”.

There are many instances of definite nouns or noun structures missing the definite article (the) and many indefinite nouns or structures missing the indefinite article (a/an).

There are innumerable instances of subject-verb agreement errors.

There are many instances of sentences that have no finite verb and are, thus, grammatically invalid.

There is only one author of this thesis; however, it makes constant references to “we”, when discussing specific choices made regarding the research approach or narrative employed.

There is persistent misuse of the hyphen to incorrectly create compound adjectival structures for use in noun phrases.

Persistent misuse of inverted commas (speech marks) is noted.

There are many instances of clauses lacking subjects and/or verbs.

There are many examples of the incorrect verb tense being used, which can often greatly impede understanding.

The preposition *along* is misused throughout the document.

The comparative is incorrectly used in various points of the document.

(e.g., p109: the rise of the Mongol empire became an existential threat than anything faced before)

p120 – I am almost 100% certain that *nodding* should be *noding*

East Asian Community (as used on p113): This term seems to correspond to a modern policy issue and, thus, one that cannot be used in the context of the historical period discussed in this section.

The lists below are not exhaustive and only indicate the first use of word/phrase, many of which are repeated throughout the document.

Words/phrases used so incorrectly that they compromise understanding:

Commiserate (p11); distressed (p13); donate (p14); replica (15); results (p16);

reproduction

(p16); ordeal (p16); decant (p17); latter (p18); followed (p18 among many); entourages (p20); cataplasm (p20); visage (p20); remittent (p21); academician (p33); idle (34); punctuality (p35); trough (as opposed to through) (throughout the document); resort (p47, but throughout the document); procurer (p48); upmost (p48); upon (p49); apport (p51); softness (p52); ordinary (p52); entailment (54); latter (p56); precise (56); adhere (56); insurance (p57); dirige (58); acquiescence (p60); dissipation (p60); state of the art (p60); procurement (p60); directionality (p61); Either (p61); succor (p61); overpass (p61); etiquette (p61); underwritten (p62); fundament (p64); preponderance (p64); -central (p64); adhering

(p64); rowdy (p65); intake (p67); outliers (p67); instrumenta (p68); boarded (p68); brisement (p70); speciesism (p70); dwells upon ((p74); deportment (p74); furtherly (76); captaincy (76); infringed (76); frame-up (78); unable (78); sole (79); excerpt ((79); lastly (80); adherence (80); theoretical roundabouts (81); scooping (p82); fractalization (82); nickname (82); trébuchet of its preeminence (83); stringy disparate (83); governance providence (84); constituents (85); costumes (85); virtuous (86); rampant (86); wavy (86); preceding's (87); roundabout (87); overlooks (88); memorial (88); loose (89); stich (96); swerve (97); cornering (100); bunch (100); quell (101); enlisted (102); cause (192); flamboyantly; above (104); exemplary (104); deriving (107); among (108); swift (108); acquire (108); riveting (109); unmountable (109); lawfulness (110); distinct (110); ulterior alter (112); statue (113); acute proceeding (113); revise (118); alienation (118); the result of (118); hyper hatching (119); own (120); hinges (123); longing (123); purged (123); inner (124); whirls (125); reverting (125); hop on (126); carved (126); embroidered (126); sturdy (126); assisting (127); expressed (129); conduction (129); admiration (129); qualitative (130); upstanding (133); envisage (135); information nurturing (135); feedback whirlpool (135); over (136); capital gains (136); reunions (137); bottom-down (138); geolocate (138);

encasement (138); ascension (139); embedment (140); Just as (140); acute (148);
assembles (155); lighthouse (159); cruxes (161)

Words used that don't exist in English or are obsolete:

Theoretical (p20); Scientifical (p21); assertion (p23); routes (p23); supeditation (p29); to
paramount (p29); lackness (p42); argumental (44); self-soing (47); edition re-casements;
sidelies (p54); divization (55); aceptions (55); dynastical (55); sublevations (56); émuetes
(56); souverain (p57); adequation (58); seule (60); sein (p60); aceptions (p61); obéssiance;
anewly (p63); flourishment (p65); acuminated (p66); uphelded (p66); farthering (p67);
metamorphosical (68); intellectia (68); inscripted (80); muets (p81); provocate (84);
equipoise (89); merocratic (92); equal-termed (93); cuspided (93); incurse (93); militarocracy
(94); preexpletively (94); exclusivistic (98); enseignement (98); maintainement (98);
desition
(98); regencial (99); correctment (100); edicted (107); receptionary (108); pacted (109);
controvertly (109); blasely (109); tragical (110); widespread (110); principae; rituality (113);
obliviaded (115); widthness (122); cholera (125); emblessedned (126); transite (126);
applicate (126); came in hand (129); flowcharted (130); tendence (132); connaissance
(134); Tucedian
(134); encheminement (tampoco aparece en búsqueda como palabra en francés);
specially
(137); cataculpted (145); invoque (145); mascaraed (157); increasement (158); upper-
down 160);

“To put the world in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order; we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right.”

— **Confucius.**

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Introduction

International relations require multiplicity and transactionality in theoretical discourse to engage in truly multidisciplinary discussions. Non-western approaches provide contrasting lenses for understanding global dynamics by revising on alternatives for problem solving, analytical surveillance and social theorizing. The Chinese school of International Relations, lead forward by the magisterial corps of the Chinese Foreign Affairs University (CFAU) is reviving the utilization of Confucian philosophical elements on the fields of foreign and public policy making, thus paradoxically transforming the manner in which IR scholars' study Chinese-state behavior.

China is rapidly growing, steadily consolidating, and further expanding its operations and interests globally. The pace of this transformation is decanting into the commencement of a cycle of hegemonic transition that envisages American leadership and therefore requires - academically- further and newer analogical tools for its understanding. Is on this sense that the main focus of this bachelor's thesis is to collaborate into the application of neo-Confucian criteria through western methodological outils. A reverse approach, as named by Dr. Yan Xuetong, is a path to focalize us correctly in sinological studies as Latin-American contributors; allowing the aforementioned vertients to thrive in our field and to theoretically focus our research.

In the sake of international institution re-modeling, a language of harmony and punitivism is leading its way on foreign policy guidelines, therefore encouraging the usage of this particular formula, a clearer vision on the CCP's true objectives can be achieved by combining Confucianism and constructivist discursivism in an innovative way to look into the inner and outer transformations of governmental and party legitimizing strategies on decision-making. Hence, the current bachelor's thesis research topic aims to attest the relational development of the Confucian and neo-Confucian doctrines throughout Ming and Song dynasties and the extent of those elements in contemporary notions at the core of the post-Maoist regime's foreign policy discourse. This, after assessing the impacts of Maoism in Chinese axiology and its ulterior restraint and swerve during the Reform and Opening up era. Through the understanding of the institutional and philosophical basis of the "so called" imperial tributary system and its inclusive and exclusive engagement

dynamics, the permissive use of Confucian elements for the justification of the modern models of development, cooperation, and relationship at the international level will be reviewed.

The objectives of this thesis revolve around the description of *discursivism* as a sociological tool that incurred in foreign policy strategization and the extent of its social and political perceptions; compare and assess the presence of punitive and exclusivist Confucian referents through concrete examples from Ming and Song Dynasties (960-1279 CE and 1368-1644 CE); outline on Maoism as the axiological agglutinant of modern Chinese-state construction and its corrosion during the Reform and Opening Up era; and, analyze Deng Xiaoping's and Xi Jinping's speeches under a dual qualitative and quantitative methodology comprising a constructivist Macro-Structure Discursive approach and Semantic Network Analysis.

The hypothesis that guided us towards the four chapters of the present document is that: *the particularistic and relational application of Confucian meta-values in foreign policy sought the achievement of legitimacy for political action and operation under the Mandate of Heaven ideological order in Ming and Song Dynasties, a phenomenon that, after the revival of these values on the Reform and Opening up era, are often used as a propagandistic nationalistic-oriented tool under the administration of President Xi Jinping.* In consideration, some of the sub hypothesis complementing such statement are: i) discourse determines social and political integral perceptions, thus reshaping foreign policy tendencies and application criteria; ii) exclusivist Confucianism relates to external conditions on Chinese-lead regional panorama; iii) Ming and Song exclusivist Confucianism tendencies are implied in post-Maoist China political apparatus; and iv) from Reform and Opening up to Xi Jinping's administration, Chinese foreign policy discourse has adopted further Confucian elements that serve a cultural oriented legitimizing purpose rather than a political or philosophical inspiration for policy making.

Deepening on the latter would enhance analytical interest in a field currently non attended by International Relations, as dominant Euro-American perspectives thrive and are exposed as universal truths. With this thesis, we are aiming to contribute to the discipline by making visible the existing nexus between nonwestern theorizing and western methodological application as an effort to decolonize by integrating contrasting,

but seemingly visions on human nature, social construction and policy making. The reverse analogical approach is a sign of modern perspicacity and acknowledgment of global power depolarization, and is overall a compound of resistance, cooperation, integration, and differentiation.

Showing this could permit the university's magisterium corps to coalesce in the importance of recognizing the IR as an epistemologically violent discipline and the urgent need to remodel their programs to allow reflections on and beyond Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This, accompanied with complex reflection on the foci that we should embrace as Latin American academia, would open a path for future generations to engage in an active dialogue of defiance.

The motivation that guides the development of the current topic revolves around the important role of China in reshaping the current international reality and the implications that a new set of moral and political beliefs could exert in a world engaged in fully American institutionalist and cooperative perspectives. Chinese motives and objectives are often misinterpreted and misunderstood by the western scholastic and journalistic overviews, especially as cognitive dissonance and uninterest is present along their theoretical approaches.

For understanding the analogical interpretation of the Confucian exclusivist approach in Chinese foreign policy history it is vital to expose the implications of the officialdom discourse for its construction. This bachelor's thesis will rely its efforts on studying discursive variations of Confucian philosophical schools along imperial Ming and Song and communist Deng Xiaoping - Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao- and Xi Jinping's administrations through the usage of a Macro-Structural constructivist approach, which, as presented by Emmanuel Adler, is a theoretical component to international relations that "argues that international reality is socially constructed by cognitive structures that give meaning to the material world" (Adler, 1997, 319).

According to Jackson & Sørensen (n.d), constructivism is a social theory in its constitutional structure. Social theory, understood as a general theory about the social world, social action, and the relationships between structures and actors, it is applied in the scope of IR theoretical niche for observation and delimitation of the construction of reality. Contrasting to material -realist- philosophy and social positivism, "human relations

and international relations, consist of thoughts and ideas and not necessarily of material conditions and forces” (Jackson & Sørensen, n.d). This idealist logic allows us to perceive that social reality is not merely given but modeled and constructed through relational processes of interaction.

As Nicholas Greenwood Onuf (1998) signals, constructivism serves for analytical purposes and solve-approaching models regarding the social realm. It does not propose any explanation on the world functioning, agents’ behavior, or general interactional habitus, but as a feasible and integral theoretical scheme to relate concepts and prepositions that seem unrelated to each other. On this sense, its fundamental cornerstone understands that social relations construct social reality, we make, such as Alexander’s Wendt (1992) famous essay title¹ implies, the world “what we -social agents- make of it”.

Hence, the interaction between states in the international society infers a social ordering on its own. It is a “society of self-contained societies” as each of these participants contains a reality of itself, culturally birthmarked and institutionally distinct. To participate in this exercise of active engagement, rules are necessary to adequate the approaches and strategize methods of mutual construction and cooperation. In constructivism “rules make it possible for us to act on behalf of social constructions” and when patterned and institutionalized, they gave society a clear and recognizable structure” (Onuf, 2013 [1992], 4). Structures are what external agents observe, and institutions are what they act on. Any given structure has a series of designated conditions that directly affects agency by natural or human made phenomena that goes beyond our observable reach. This agent-structure problem has been subject of attention to constructivist *academicians* as they “[scholars] cannot agree on whether structures exist in reality or only in their minds” (Onuf, 2013 [1992], 7).

Nonetheless, the important *foci* of the structural conditions is to highlight that agents do eventually institutionalize structure by bearing rules, then stabilizing and exercising control over more extended situations. On the international scene, there exists a scholarly consensus that there is a clear lack of institutionalization, “they believe that countries are highly institutionalized as states, but that states, through their agents, conduct

¹ “Wendt, A. (1992). Anarchy is what states make of it”.

their relations in an anarchic world” (Onuf, 2013 [1992], 7). This means that anarchy, on these terms, is understood as the absence of an institution above state-like criteria.

Anarchy conceptualization can allow us to point out the main characterizations of social reality exogenous understanding. As on this, following on Alexander Wendt’s argumentative alignment, it is a “balance of threats, rather than balance of power, what determines state action” (Wendt, 1992; 8). The matter is that in this existent void of power, the relational logic is determined by -in western lenses- the self-help logic. That is why rules exist and rectify the guidelines to assert relationships between agents and institutions, giving agents the opportunity to alter their material reality with respect to intersubjective constructions for achieving goals in an individual or collective matter (Onuf, 2013 [1992], 8). Is in this sense that we can achieve to identify the existence of multiple realities in the social realm.

Thereby, social reality’s scaffolding revolves around particular structures: *social structures*. According to Bravo Vergara (2014), social structures are essential for constructivism in international relations, having three elements identified by Alexander Wendt: intersubjective understandings, material resources, and practices. Conceptually, if we commiserate that intersubjective understandings are socially constructed ideas that determine the functioning of structures, they give stability to the norms that create and maintain the constructed identity as these structures only exist because the actors reproduce them when relating (Bravo Vergara & Sigala Gómez, 2014).

Therefore, interaction is important for the establishment and transformation of intersubjective understandings, making that: "in the constructivist perspective the subject becomes an agent that not only reproduces its social order, but that transforms it, precisely by relating to others" (Bravo Vergara & Sigala Gómez, 2014, 407). That is why the relational theory serves as an agglutinant approach for inquiring into the conclusion of the discursive approach.

This discursive approach is made upon rules, which take the form of speeches in three different categories: i) assertive speeches; ii) directive speeches and; iii) commissive speeches (Onuf, 2013). Each of the latter attends to the excerpt of constitutive and regulative rulings, which are mediums of social construction and control, respectively. But even though states hold the monopoly on violence and justice deliverance, any successful

policy application depends on the extent of formalization. This *so called* formality principle responds to the length of fixation and unavoidability of rules. As maintained by Onuf (2013), “formality strengthens a rule by making its character clearer, the more frequently agents follow a rule, the stronger it will be normatively”. In the context of the International Relations -discipline-wise-, spheres of influence and hegemonic mandates uphold family-linked rules to apply on the system as a whole.

By that means agents respond to rules with particular goals in mind to act over or on an institutional scheme. This work, applying the previous theoretical elements, will focus on the imperial tributary system to understand the nature of the Tianxia-inclined ordering and how commitment allowed the vassal states to truly benefit from Sino centrism. Access to culture, knowledge (Confucian teachings) and the benefits of commerce were enough to collaborate in the construction of one of the most successful state-systems in history. Decompressing the aforementioned, as this thesis will rely on the application of constructivist theoretical tools, we will focus on Yaqing Qin’s *relational theory of international relations* as its hardcore for sustaining argumental consistency. According to the author’s conceptions, the world is to be described as one of: relations, interactions, and joint constructions that compose the main element of background knowledge:

“I use this concept (relationality) to constitute the metaphysical component of the hardcore for a relational theory of world politics because it represents a worldview, a way of thinking and doing, and a perspective that differs from those mainstream IR theories which take individualistic rationality as their theoretical nucleus” (Qin, 2018, 107).

The theory asserts that Confucian -later to be categorize as Ruist for this thesis purposes- cultural sphere is cognitively dissonant on its metaphysical core from the traditional western philosophical traditions. For neo-Confucians, who elaborated upon a mélange of religious doctrines -mainly Daoist and Buddhist- to advance the traditional assertions of Confucius teachings, mentioned that the world can be defined as a universe of relatedness that revolves around interaction. The paths lied around that fixed relationships act as the axis that allows dynamism in the social world. This Confucian cosmos is what Hall and

Ames describe as an immanent² one: “everything is in everything else and related to one another as well as to the context, and correlativity as the most significant word in this world” (Hall and Ames, n.d, as cited in Qin, 2018, 108). In this sense, relational complexity discards Anglo-European oriented transcendency as meaningful for making sense of world ordering, social reality, and interactional perception (Hall and Ames, n.d, as cited in Qin, 2018, 108).

This, so called ontological substantialism impregnated on western mainstream theoretical hardcore is widely signaled as the *provocateur* of a vision where the international space is one composed of self-sustaining actors. Even though Aristotle emphasizes on the *zoon politikon* as the core of the socially constructed order, Mustafa Emirbayer’s Manifesto for a Relational Sociology pushes an analogical debate where substantialism is depicted as a construction of preformed entities that can “only add modifications to the (real being) latter, such as do not affect its real nature” (Emirbayer, 1997). Once more, western debates reflect themselves self-centered, individualistic, and Hobbesian, whereas Confucianism demonstrates a vision of interconnection, familiarity, and dependency of the social space. But as we distressed, it becomes vital to clarify this sociological conceptualization of relation and the extent with which it resonates on this IR theoretical approximation.

According to Emirbayer, inspired by Dewey's and whiteheads’ works, relations can be simply defined as “connections between terms or units, linking persons, places, meanings and events [...] overlapping and intersecting socio-spatial networks” (Emirbayer, 1997). This understood, perceiving social settling as mainly relational allow us to define relationality on the following terms:

“Relationalism, on the other hand, treats configurations of ties -recurrent sociological interaction- between social aggregates of various sorts and their component parts as the building blocks of social analysis [...] Because ties are not static “things”, but ongoing processes, a more accurate term for this kind of analysis is processual” (Qin, 2018).

Jackson and Nexon were trying to emphasize that interaction between entities configure the dynamics of world politics. In the Confucian scheme, we can encounter that the ideal

² “The state of being present as a natural and permanent state of something” (Cambridge dictionary)

of society -decent politics and good governance- relies on family ties, as is in this context where the coexistence relies minimally on self interest; making it the perfect model for cooperation, caring and responsibility. Following on Zhao's argument, these familiar values are the ones that must be encountered in any other further social grouping, "including the state and the world as a whole; making them universally applicable (Zhao, 2005, 66-67). That being so, the Tianxia system -*all under-heaven*- in Confucian lenses is one of enlarged family ties where the core for relationships are: *ren* (benevolence), *li* (rituals), *Zhong* (loyalty to one's true nature), *Shu* (reciprocity) and *Xiao* (filial piety). The Chinese worldview then defies western *raison d'état* as Confucius and Mencius conceptual determinism "examines interstate relations at the individual level, because they believe that the basic influence on state relations is the moral outlook of the ruler" (Yan, 2001; 26).

The all-under heaven logic, as it defines a clear hierarchical and patriarchal lineage in society -with the Chinese emperor on top-, reminds the importance of abiding by rulings to achieve harmony and the moral element behind the Master's teachings. Then, the constructivist tools previously mentioned are paradoxically and inherently correct to be applied in this bachelor's thesis argumentative line. This, as rules shape agents and structures, and structure's identity with regard to general geopolitical or administrative conditions. As to the previous statement, to understand the rationale behind the usage of exclusivist Confucian teachings in foreign policy construction during Ming and Song and its emulation in Xi Jinping's administration, a reverse analogical approach³ with constructivism at the core of the theoretical framework will be applied.

For the sake of leading the continuum on constructivism as the axis for this bachelor's thesis research, elements from the discursive methodological approach will be upheld. This Discursivism is a sociological tool that was imported to IR interdisciplinary scheme by Jennifer Milliken in her 1999 essay: "*The Study of Discourse of*

³Finally, with clarifying purposes, it remains to explain that an analogical reverse approach, which, according to Dr. Qin Yaqing (2012), is "an attempt to understand world affairs and Chinese international behavior by using an imported conceptual and theoretical scheme. Thus, setting the example of Yan Xuetong, who uses the IR American School framework to reconceptualize the notion of power settled by Confucius and Mencius, we can agree it is a method to overcome the barriers set up by cognitive dissonance and cooperate along existent theoretical criteria by trying to donate an explanation, in this case, to our complex study line.

International Relations'. Since then, the application of discursive elements has traveled from the post-structuralist standpoint to a more conciliatory constructivist view. This categorization responds to a theorization revolving around the co-constitutive relationship of agent and structure and the search for a middle ground between positivist epistemology and ontology. Ergo, in the broad sense of politics of representation, “discourse can be defined as the space where inter-subjective meaning is created, sustained, transformed and accordingly, becomes constitutive of social reality” (Holzscheiter, 2014, 144).

Discourse is a space of construction and understanding. It is a place where agents donate significance to material reality and an act of engagement for relating linguistic and communicative processes (Holzscheiter, 2014, 144). An exploration of social reality through discourse analysis emphasizes the need to revise the political effects resulting from the usage of vocabulary and “the productive effects of particular constructions of reality on the agency and identity of groups” (Holzscheiter, 2014, 144). In the contemporary arena of International Relations, it becomes essential to comprehend that discursive criteria is the meta-core of constructivism as language and communication generate background knowledge. The latter, as previously explained, is resorted by theorists:

“When they envisage to identify and operationalize social facts such as ideas, identities, or norms and when they try to demonstrate that these facts are not natural but are both a result of discursive practices and constituted by socially shared meaning-structure” (Holzscheiter, 2014, 144).

Then, a discursive approach can allow us to understand the extent to which the exclusivist Confucian school constructed a particular social reality as a response to structurally menacing conditions to the Han Chinese political order and the current replicas over the CCP’s foreign policy agenda. The intent goes beyond localized micro-interactions, but to the revision of a wide period of history on search for patterns into imperial application of neo-Confucian doctrine, as is in the case of the imperial era. Regarding the contemporary notions, a more reduced scope results adequate to identify the evolution of discourse within governmental ranks and towards the international community; focusing us on intra-multilateral institutions behavior.

Ontology of discourse in constructivism, nonetheless, holds an internal debate that pushes scholars to decide between a thin and thick approach of theoretical application. For

the sake of the current investigation and according to the previously presented criteria, following on thin constructivism results fairly suitable as it “assume that social facts can also exist independently of the minds and discourses of the individuals who want to explain” (Wendt, 1999, 75). It sustains that discourse is one social logic -among others- that depends on a particular institutional and normative setting; therefore, the discursive phenomena that this thesis is following must be understood as the result of an indirect interaction that evolves in a contained and modeled milieu (Holzscheiter, 2014, 146).

This leads us to the *Macro-Structure* discourse approach, which, contrasting to the *Micro-Interaction* approach, asserts an epistemological accentuation on structures of signification as the inhibitors of social interaction, reality, and relations (Holzscheiter, 2014, 148). As the reproduction below projects, our chosen approach will focus on a large variety of references from a larger time period to contextualize on the structurally driven ordeal and how this configures meaning structures.

Table.1 Ontological Differences in the discursive approaches

<i>Ontological differences</i>		
	Micro-Interaction Approach	Macro-Structure Approach
<i>Discourse Definition</i>	Discourse as in text but emphasis on discourse as communicative exchange.	Discourse as text in context but emphasis on historically grown structures of signification
<i>Predominant Level of Analysis</i>	Agents/individual- “Subjects make meaning.”	Structure/Holistic-” Meaning makes Subjects.”
<i>Text/Context</i>	Text: Small instances of everyday communication Context: Institutional Setting for Communicative Exchange	Text: Texts as aggregated evidence for larger meaning-structures Context: Broad historical or sociopolitical context

Note: adapted from Between Communicative Interaction and Structures of Signification by Holzscheiter, A. 2014, p. 149.

Signaling the latter, following on Holzscheiter’s criteria, there exists a clear relationship between power and discourse that can either be *productive* or *deliberative*. The Productive Discourse-Power Relationship -the one we will decant for- follows a Foucauldian conceptualization on the effects of power exercise through discursive medium. According

to Foucault, as cited by Holzscheiter (2014), some of the notions could be exemplified as underlying “intellectual projects of deconstruction/reconstruction of the power structures inherently to historically dominant, institutionalized discourses”.

Regarding the levels of analysis in this hierarchized productive approach, the agent's underlying vision is one of a knowledge-power nexus, one where they strive to impose a characteristic construction of reality to others. As to the structure refers, discourses are understood as institutionalized meaning-structures that “produce and perpetuate power asymmetries” -power as domination in Foucault’s terms- (Westwood, 2006). In imperial China and CCP’s decision-making entourage, discourse served to build a particular reality into their spheres of influence and world system, possible only, as they are being the holders of material power.

But, overall, how particularly discourse-power nexus shapes foreign policy? In our disciplinary fields there is a lack of consensus regarding which general elements revolve around a proper conceptualization of the term. However, the aforementioned constructivist theoretical accounts recognize three interrelated issues as the cornerstones of policy construction: i) national identity (traditions of thought); ii) international environment; and iii) institutional, private, and particular interests (Daddow, 2015). These accounts, alongside a more complex diagram, contribute to conscious decision-making processes. Once decided upon the applicable policies, strategies to share and legitimize them result necessary to be taken into place. According to Daddow (2015), most of these articulations are shared through linguistic repetitions, which become the cornerstone of discursive analysis. The ideological basis, medium and audience chosen to determine the impact and perception. Therefore, it is remarked that:

“Linguistic repetitions, such as the idea that Britain must ‘lead’ in Europe, be a ‘special’ ally of the US, a ‘force for good’ in the world, or that Britain is an ‘island’ nation, indicate the nature of the ideational backdrop against which contemporary policy problems are thought about and acted upon” (Daddow, 2015).

To complement on the latter, we consider that a quantitative research methodology would complement and enhance this thesis’ main argumentative lines. So, as will be more clearly explained in the fourth chapter, a Semantic Network Analysis will accompany our scanning

of Deng Xiaoping's 1974 *address to the Sixth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly* and Xi Jinping's 2017 *report to the 19th National Party Congress*. But as followed by multiple authors, it cannot be a substitute for thorough qualitative analysis. While SNA excels at mapping thematic connections and subject modularity, "it has proven less effective for the capture of nuances like emotional valence, tone, or hidden assumptions" (Segev, 2022). It is in this light that the current bachelor's thesis will proceed to combine mapping modularity through subject clustering with the Macro-Structural discursive approach, as the latter is capable to identify productive-power relationships in rather ambiguous and largely referenced discourses, and the manner -or extent-in which they are able to transmit a replication of exclusivist or inclusivist tendencies in the configuration of foreign policy criteria⁴. By recovering constructivism as lenses of the quantitative data bases, we are going to be able to identify the interrelated cornerstones of policy construction mentioned during the introduction of this thesis. Without the application of Semantic Network Analysis, this thesis would have had to rely on subjective valuations and invariable referents of importance inside the speeches and now, on the contrary, we are going to scientifically expose to the readers the capacity to denote value through a dual methodological approach.

⁴ Or at least the idea it seems to convey. It is vital to remember, as it will be briefly mentioned during the first and second chapters, that discourse elaboration is not immediately to be equaled to policy enactment, as they [the discourses] might just be used as a justification that intends a mean blatantly contrarian to the meaning of the message. Especially in the interstices of court or party politics, one must be careful not to confuse this dual intended practices.

Chapter 1. Discourse construction and Foreign Policy: language, perceptions, and social reality.

To define the relevance of discourse in the midst of foreign policy elaboration, it becomes of foremost importance to primarily introduce certain notions that build upon a more holistic understanding of their linkage. According to Dunne, Hadfield, and Smith (2012), the study of foreign policy ought not to be regarded as an independent elaborative field, but rather a conceptual multi-disciplinary construction. Its definition, ever-changing and subject of theoretical debate, holds itself as an arithmetical equation in which the elements that compose it regard the viability of its application on certain entourages.

The general outlook therefore portrays it “as the sum of external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations” (Hill, 2003; 3). The definition enshrines -undoubtedly- a realistic operational overview of the global arena as a place where the subjects of participation strategize to maximize their gains through the most suitable means, contrary to the globalized stage, which currently restrains disorder by enhancing cooperation and leading the board towards interdependence.

These overlapping conceptions permitted a re-inclination of our understanding to a more complete approach that sees foreign policy as a “combination of inputs and outputs that apply to the behavior of a wide variety of actors” (Dunne et al, 2012: 34). Here, while there is a subtle incorporation of theoretical multiplicity, it provides us with the ability to identify, debate and insert various postulations within the IR cataplasms to complexify paradigms and develop fresh disciplinary visages. Hence, for the purposes of this bachelor’s thesis, we will retake this vision to understand the manner in which identities, language and knowledge generate the agglutinant axioms of foreign policy.

1.1 Discourse as a political outil.

Post-structural inclined scholars such as Shapiro, Walker, Ashley, and Der Derian, brought discursivism to the field of international relations by assessing the power contained in language and knowledge production. This, as “a discourse delineates the terms of intelligibility whereby a particular “reality” can be known and acted upon’ (Doty, 1996: 6).

It is not a transparent medium that mirrors the world, neither fictive nor lacking foundation, but a so-called post-saussurean⁵ effect of language.

Mouffe's, Laclau's, Derrida's and particularly Foucault's conceptualization of discourse has extended affinities with the constructivist's assertions, which moreover emphasize that: they "[the discourse] are constructed, reconstructed and also deconstructed by self-observers and distant-observers according to the viabilities of their aims, interests, and possibilities to act". (Neubert & Reich, 2002: 3). Thus, our further understanding of discourse analysis in the Foreign Policy would include an intersectional theoretical streamlining⁶ of both interactive constructivism and post-structuralist⁷ approaches.

Particularly, discourse has certain preconditions in the realm of interactive constructivism as it is multi-layered and assumes three levels of meaning: etymological, semantic, and symbolic; categorizations able to be found in a "socially and culturally orientated form of constructivism, articulated within the philosophical discourses of postmodernity" (Neubert & Reich, 2002: 2). The first implies a Greek-inspired dialogical relationship held on the basis of philosophical approaches to the reality, is a discussion, a speech, a treatise, or an exchange of ideas. The semantic level comprises a cluster of scientific or discussive theories used in a specific epoch or academic school, as psychoanalysis or the philosophical discourse of modernity. The third and more complex one, frames its conceptual existence in the sense of an interpretive community⁸ that allows the identification of a certain *profundeur* compared to the shallowness of the surfaced elements inferred in the speech.

Discourse is then conceived by the interactional constructivists as symbolic formations with patterns allocated in the form of rules or ordinances and as contingencies. The existence of a tensional relationship is then presented on the basis that:

⁵ Post-Saussurean linguistics recognize the existence of structural directionalities in linguistic change. The nature of language as dynamic. (Guy, 1996: 11).

⁶ Both conceptions of discourse theory are not contradictory, but rather complementary in their understanding.

⁷ According to Sayin & Ates (n.d), "poststructuralism interrogates the constitution of structures and subjects and makes a connection between the subject and the discursive founding of social order. Emphasizing that power and knowledge have a reciprocally interaction and a linkage, it suggests the way of having power passes through having knowledge".

⁸ Verständigungsgemeinschaft: "community of understanding"

“They are seen as moveable orders that exist temporarily in contexts of social understanding and, in their very moment of articulation, often already turn out to be transitions towards other discourses. There is no discourse being complete in the sense of a self-contained or self-enclosed form that is totally present. Rather, there is always missing and absent, a lack that refers something the discourse is not-the work of the discourse is infinite” (Neubert & Reich, 2002: 3).

Any social interaction requires a self-other who implicitly or explicitly intervenes as an observer-participant. The remittent actor is unable to provide any reflection regarding a third-oriented perspective of its discursive construction and the extent of its influence in particular contexts of understanding and legitimization. This is, as presented by Wittgenstein, because the emissary is not exempt -nor linguistically or organizationally- of socio-cultural participation and agreement to fit in the “constructive conventions of an interpretative community” (Neubert & Reich, 2002: 3). This proves culture is embedded in relationality and that any discursive agenda is load with background knowledge. To compel an audience is necessary to bond, call upon empathy and refrain the existence of shared objectives to successfully transmit a message, recognizing the relativity of knowledge and the importance to be cognizant with regard to the pre-understandings of argumentation the addressed public holds.

This empathetical refrainment whose Neubert’s formula alludes to, is nonetheless antithetical to the traditionally inclined rationality in IR foreign policy analysis. For Graham Allison, the construction of a model is required to comprehend the scholarly attempts to explain international events, a perspective that, in his fashion, is done by re-counting the aims and calculations of nations in certain situations. The explanation, whose basis relies on Morgenthau’s *Politics Among Nations* formulae, understands the analytical approach as following:

“We put ourselves in the position of statesman who must meet a certain problem of foreign policy under certain circumstances, and we ask ourselves what the rational alternatives are from which a statesman may choose who must meet this problem under these circumstances (presuming always that he acts in a rational manner) and which [...] is likely to choose” (Morgenthau, 1978).

But compelling to the usage of rationality as the core for decision-making includability is to jeopardize the adherence of non-human characteristics to statesman and policy advisors. This over-objectivizing approach operates as a motionless cylinder of assumptions, either relating

to the subject's behavior, category and purposefulness, that mostly ignores the performing nature of the relevant constraints. State-as-actor hyper embeddedness in the collective academic criterion has led to these generalizations -on the extent of responses, forcefulness of active engagement and assertion- to be the standard to which the international community expects an actor to acquit when applying the guidelines of foreign policy.

Lena Hansen routes the latter by engaging in a theoretical debate between post structuralism and realism: egoism-altruism and rational-irrational dichotomies set the boundaries to structure our ability to comprehend international politics and, therefore, are often taken for granted in philosophically intended explanations of foreign policy phenomena. Is in this sense that Post Structuralism aims for deconstruction, to bring out cultural contingency in two stages, first comparing the paired concepts and then assessing the "superior one" by reflecting their higher level of dependency in an expository basis. That presumption permits to elaborate an alternative vision of *Otherness* to that presented by Reich and Neubert, "because identity is theorized as performative in post-structuralist discourse analysis, it cannot operate as an explanation, nor can it be tested against other 'variables' explaining foreign policy decisions or behavior" (Smith, Hadfield, & Dunne, 2016).

But to sensibly convene into a deeper conception of discourse, Reich (2002) remarks that it becomes of utmost relevance to understand the role observers play. For this purpose, observers must be defined as subjects of the *Verständigungsgemeinschaft*⁹ that engage in discursive construction in interaction with other subjects of the same cultural pre-understanding. Here, the author introduces a distinction between self-observers and distant observers, where the firsts act *inside* the discourses pursuing intentions and claiming truths by mutually mirroring experiences¹⁰ with other available discursive material. The distant observers, in the other hand, observe discourses from the *outside* -being detached spatially or temporarily- and are able to further recognize aspects that the self-observers superficially surpass.¹¹

Neubert & Reich (2002) also signal that "discourses live on the symbolic interaction of the preposition and opposition". Linguistically, the prepositions are commonly used to

⁹ Communities of understanding

¹⁰ Spiegelungen

¹¹ Reich (2002) highlights the existence of a tensional dilemma where a distant observer is also a self-observer and vice versa.

portray the existence of a relationship between space and time or a logical relationship between dual analytic subjects, places or things (Cambridge dictionary, 2024). This interaction allocates a dynamical nature as the contravening positions permits producing further differences and recognize the existing ones.

Ergo, the stasis of placements in discourse is made fluid by the circularity of dislocations and references, which are bestowed in the inflicative meta-relationship of the *One* and the *Other* in discursive reality. The *One* appears when a claim is introduced, is the driving force and sense-provider who exist in opposition with the *Other*, for whom it looks for correspondence. It is an interplay relationship, a confrontation that permits multiplicity and donates reason for its deliverance; if there's not a conveyed receptor, there is no reason to generate it in the first place.

This exchange originates a third placement in discourse, a place of *construction*. For interactive constructivism it represents a *symbolic production* that emerges from the differences that can be stabilized and returned from the encounter of the One and the Other; a tangible response, a synthesis in the broader sense of Hegelian dialects. (Neubert & Reich, 2002: 12). An entanglement that precisely allows discourse and Foreign Policy to converge, as Foreign Policy is assumed by post-structuralism -not in confrontation with previously mentioned constructivism- as “the practices through which ‘otherness’ is constituted in relation to ‘our’ identity”, making the Foucauldian categorization of “knowledge as power” become present in the idea that through discourse subjects and actors constitute and identify themselves. A phenomenon that Schneck (1987) comprises as a reflection of the contemporary realities of dominance and repression.

Here, Foucault insist that discourse is the practical exercise of power relationships in modern politics, as regimes, government institutions and scientific corps call upon their “truths” to universalize perspectives, legitimize their operations and control public mobilization -electorally or media wise-. According to him:

“Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth: its “general politics” of truth: that is, the type of discourses which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish from true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true” (Chomsky & Foucault, 2006: 168)

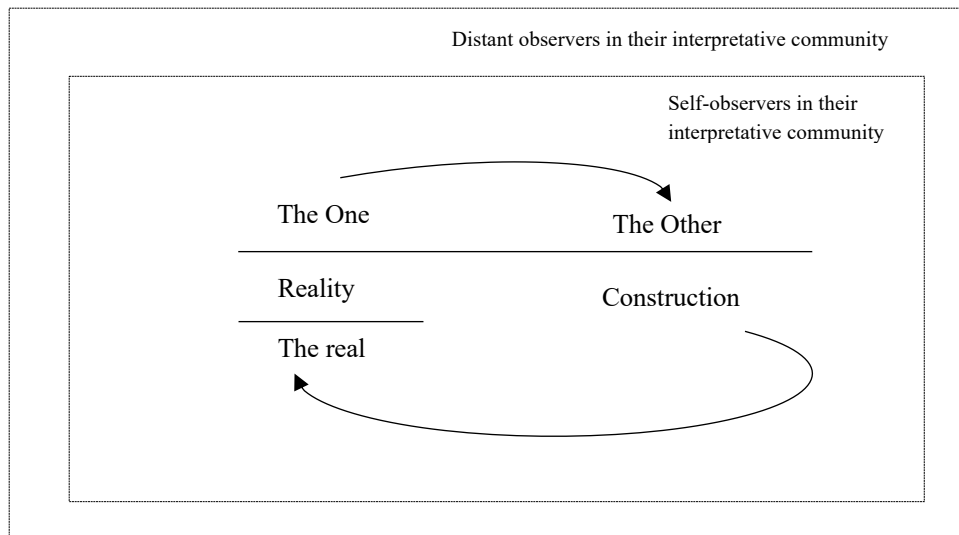
Although this thesis will further address this convergence on the following sections, this third placement of [symbolic] “construction” makes possible to consider discourse a political util, a place where identities are shaped through powerful societal idealizations and culture-oriented mechanizations.

But reckoning on the argumental line, the fourth and last placement of discourse for interactive constructivism is the *Place of the Reality*: where the discursive re-constructions - reiteration- must logically fit into the distant observer’s interpretative community, thus recognized as realistically viable. By achieving a detached position regarding the discourse and once the *das Reale*¹² are identified, observers will try to elucidate the evocated message and provide it with meaning. This subtle categorization is connected with Foucault’s conceptualization of truth as Adams (n.d) signals that the nature of the discursive realm is self-enclosed, trying to always separate the immanent and transcendental object of discourse from any sense of reality.

Ergo, overlapping the four placements of discourse alongside the intervention of the *One* and the *Other* result in the establishment of a discursive tableau which divides itself into an upper and lower half. The first, which comprises the places of the *One* and the *Other* represents the most superficial eventuality of discourse itself, while the second encompasses the deepest elements revolving around the codification, elaboration and meaning of them; everything behind the scenes. Just as the following portrays:

¹² Intrusions of the real

Figure A: The One and the Other



Note: adapted from Neubert & Reich, (2002).

We are able to conclude by fully looking at the discursive tableau introduced by the interactional constructivism, that is clearer to comprehend the reconciliation of post structuralism and constructivism when assessing the political categories included in this explanatory realm. Any social interaction, which in these cases are almost indirect, implicitly contain a political sense. Discourses are aimed to shape realities, dislocate identities in favor of a particular worldview and redirect public opinion, for which the *One* needs to advocate to symbolic and historic representations of the aimed public in order to aligned them to a single set of objectives.

But how representations could be veridically chartered through the irrational nature of discourse elaboration? To Van Der Merwe (2022), even though the existence of a rational norm in policy-related gauges' is an ideal scenario -as it would determine decisional practices based on qualifiable factors-, it "could however be constraining and exclusionary; it may conflict with putative desirables like human freedom and diversity". Therewithal, rationality requires consistency to properly function as intended in any analytical exercise, an element that discursive tools are unable to identify in foreign policy elaboration processes. Regularity and consistency are not synonyms and should not be considered intrinsically as such.

In Derridean terms, discourse becomes subject of doubt as it cannot be claimed to be understood or to be able to fully capture the meaning of a linguistic sign in a semantic system due to its lack of enunciative locus. To him, meaning-generation is gestated through *différance*, who notoriously defines as being “the systematic play of differences, of the traces of differences, of the spacing by means of which elements are related to each other” (Derrida, 1981: 27). Similar to the Confucian notion of coexistence, this particular vision enables us to, regardless to this thesis’ endorsement of discursivism, to identify the remarkable limitations it holds when referring to identity-building strives. In the end, “our decisions and actions cannot be objectively described. Instead, we must engage in contingency, alterity and the overdeterminations that characterize our contexts (Woermann, 2016: 8).

Thus, from an analytical standpoint and putting impetus into the thesis’s objectives, the position of the *Other* will be held to identify the utter elements of the lower half of the discursive tableau by retaking the previously explained methodological tools. A macro-structural approach permits us to further distant ourselves from the discourses’ symbolic elements, while adjoining it from a thin constructivist perspective will enable to convene post-structuralist conceptions of power, language, and knowledge production. Strengthening the argumentative line and precisising the most subtle elements of Confucian punitivism in the way.

1.2 Foreign Policy Making and Dialogue

A policy is a deliberate plan, a course of action for management. It is aimed at guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes, is both an active approach for problem-solving and an attempt to persuade social actors on a particular set of values to advance them. Governments, International institutions, and Civil Organizations -among other actors- generate them to, in conjunction with governance, systematize public administration and private management. Olssen *et al* (2004) argue that policy deliverance contains discursive-inclined power production when understanding that:

‘Policy here is taken to be any course of action relating to the selection of goals, the definition of values or the allocation of resources. [...] The exercise of political power and the language [discourse] that is used to legitimate that process’ (Olssen *et al*, 2004: 72).

This nexus between power and knowledge production in decision-making criteria once more highlights the unutterable embeddedness of cultural components in state action. Bagley *et al* (2016) insist to concentrate in the untangled -and indirect- dialogue between policy makers and policy implementors and its fluctuations depending on the particular sociocultural dynamics each of them operates into. There is no general formula or universalized truth regarding policy implementation, the passage from principle to action refrains the involvement of -in the case of the state- Secretaries, Departments, Branches of government, Autonomous entities and local or supra-national authorities. Through this bureaucratic enchainment, different perspectives and interpretations can overlap before the final transmitter is positioned.

Commonly known as Policy Response, this overview lacks the recognition of multisectoral involvement and the process of subtle re-interpretation once directives are emitted. Thus, in the words of Braun *et al*, we must divergently re-conceptualize it by talking: “not of policy response but *policy enactment*, which they claim, ‘involves creative processes of interpretation and recontextualization-that is, the translation through reading, writing and talking of text into action and the abstractions of policy ideas into contextualized practices” (Begley et al, 2016: 47).

So, once understood the nature of policy and its enactment, is it correct to assume that public policy and foreign policy are different? A questioning posed by Morin, finds its response with the acknowledgement of a blatant porosity in the contemporary international scene, leading to the appearance of blurred boundaries between the domestic and international domains (Morin et al, 2018: 4). Result of globalization and its ever-growing interdependence, certain issues have become both a national and global concern, namely terrorism, climate change energetic resources and security are some of the more entangled ones.

An example of this relationship was early elucidated by John F. Kennedy in a speech delivered to the U.S Congress in 1951 when he was a House Representative:

“Foreign policy today, irrespective of what we might wish, in its impact on our daily lives, overshadows everything else. Expenditures, taxation, domestic prosperity, the extent of social services – all hinge on the basic issue of war or peace” (Dallek 2003: 158).

Probably unhinged in the interstices of the Cold War, Kennedy's words reflect a supeditation of external affairs and generates a clear linkage with domestic policy. In this case, he compels his constituency and fellow policymakers to assimilate them as mutually inclusive domains. But despite to his comments, Fordham (1998) argues that economic and social policies have never been "subjected to Foreign Policy security concerns".

Contrary to the realities of exercising power, the IR literature on the matter has established a fictitious assimilation of high politics to Foreign Policy and low politics to Domestic Policy, an idea based on the perception of the state as the "main" actor of the international relations. This, as realism emphasizes the ought to paramount security concerns over social and economic issues: no logical actor could prioritize them unless it has adequately addressed their security concerns and leaving low politics in an irrelevant stand (Youde, 2015: 4).

Morin et al (2018), once again insist in the unsustainability of this assertion by citing on the example of the Suez Canal Crisis, where a domestic matter had important impact on international trade and economy. Thus, the rigid distinction between internal and external politics became obsolete, there exists an interconnection that should be comprise in their respective level of operation. Both policies have different aims and alternate operationalizations, making them different but co-dependent regarding certain decision-making approaches.

Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) can be then defined as the "the study of how the states, or the individuals that lead them, make foreign policy, execute foreign policy, and react to the foreign policies of the other states". Intellectually born in the early 1950's, this subfield of International Relations commenced by being a methodological experience-based domain for diplomats and historians to comment upon (Potter, 2010). With the nouvelle behavioral revolution in Social Sciences and the influence of the American policymakers, a more systematized oriented perspective thrived. The aim? Emplace positivist solutions to political problems.

From comparative Foreign Policy to more comprehensive theories on personal level behavior, FPA grasped a decision-maker approach to understand the origins, unfolding - possible- solutions to international phenomena. By placing the "leader"¹³ as the central unit

¹³ Decision-maker (might change according to the studied case)

of analysis, FPA has maintained an unceasing interest in further operationalize interactions numerically and analyzing them quantitatively; suitable for statistical data-gathering. As a result of this, multiple models, such as the arrays for discursive criteria identification have been developed, paving the way for a more systematic understanding on the reasoning behind Foreign Policy construction. (Potter, 2010).

Foreign Policy Analysis, at the end, operates as a device the decision-makers engage with to viably reach a series of pre-set objectives and doctrine entanglements who solely benefit -and act in accordance with- the principles of the government-lead policies. International Relations has historically concerned with approaching this subfield through the lenses of realist and neorealist theoretical diagnoses. Hence, in compliance with Morgenthau's maxims -enhancing gains and lessen risks by capitalizing hard power capabilities- the FPA responds to the upmost needs of the *top to down* structure of public administration.

This continuous race to fulfill the dictums of *national interest's* has raised concern in the academic community as its definition is subject of debate respecting the extent of its viability to predict state-behavior and its tendency to reflect it as an integral medium. According to Nuechterlein (1976), it is appropriate to portray it as "the perceived needs and desires of one sovereign state in relation to other sovereign states comprising an external environment", subcategorizing itself in the form of: i) Defense interests¹⁴, the protection of the nation-state's sovereignty from any direct external threat; ii) Economic interests, the enhancing of development and well-being with other states; iii) World Order interests, operationalize the maintenance of the international political and economic system in which the state finds security and stability, and; iv) Ideological interests, a set of values the population of the state share in reference to the nature of social relationships.

These four shaping interests are not -at least ideally- either mutually exclusive or hierarchizable. Decision-making processes, nonetheless, behest the attribution of degrees of concern to identify the most *intensify interests* and counterbalance them with a variety of factors unique to the affronting situation (s): "process of thinking through the values and potential costs involved and, ultimately, reaching some decision about the level of concern which the state should express" (Nuechterlein, 2010: 249). But the FPA, in its effort to

¹⁴ Italics mine

operationalize, has developed a matrix that converges the above criteria with another four conceptions that -according to the literature- sanctions an ulterior capacity to identify the intensity of interest in the national-scale spectrum.

The matrix arrays: i) Survival issues, ii) Vital issues, iii) Major issues and iv) Peripheral issues. Each of them comprises security as the main concern and the intensity of any other interest will therefore be qualified referencing the level of avoidance, capacity to overcome it, expected degree of harmfulness, resource allocation and the deployment of countermeasures. Any *Major* and *Peripheral* issues can be resolved through diplomatic means as economic and private interest may not be aligned with certain political course of action. Negotiation and the clearance of communication channels allow de-escalation and permit the intervention of international arbiters or binational commissions to revise the affected “stakes”. Nuechterlein (2010) portrays it as following:

Figure B: Intensity of Interest

	Country X	Issue Y		
	Intensity of interest			
Basic interest involved	<i>Survival</i>	<i>Vital</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Peripheral</i>
Defense				
Economic				
World Order				
Ideological				

Note: as adapted from: Nuechterlein, D. (1976).

Although an important foreign policy assessment tool, it is mainly useful for decision-makers. Categorizing the intensity of threats depends on the state’s operators perceive capacity to neutralize them, received advice on course of action and the volatility of the international scene. Nonetheless, the current matrix will permit us to assess on which degrees the Chinese Imperial apparatus focused its foreign policy interests on during the Ming and Song dynasties, allowing the sustenance or undernimming of this thesis’ argumental ordeal.

But for this to be plausible, it becomes essential to recall the politics of representation in discourse and the manner in which Foreign Policy is affected by them. According to

Hansen (2016), post structuralism conceives language as the central medium for which social meaning is generated, permitting foreign policy to act as a conductive thread to provide representations of the problem that policies are aimed at resolving. As portrayed by the author:

“One should recall that discourse is an analytical concept, not something that exists ‘out there’ in the real world. Therefore, to study the representations that legitimize foreign policies is to make analytical decisions. We need, more specifically, to identify those ‘key representations’ (Hansen 2006), or ‘nodal points’ (Laclau and Mouffe 1985), that structure debates on a foreign policy issue. [...] Key representations need not be those terms that are most frequently articulated, but rather those that allow us to identify the main combinations of representations and policies, and which have the status of being ‘building blocks’ around which variations can be placed (Hansen, L, 2016 [2008]: 103)”.

This representational logic must be acquainted in an institutionalized level, as the grip of power is what determines social reality construction through the application of social-defining criteria. Identities are constructed, protected, and represented by the same structures that generate them, a logic that has placed Butler’s intersectional debate -in gender-oriented subjects- under discussion. In fact, this representational logic in the individual level ceased its rationality when Foucault explained that “the subjects are in fact produced by those discourses and apparatuses of power that represent them” (Geerts & Van der Tuin, 2013: 4). Is under this scope of understanding that Lena Hansen insists on reminds us that for post structuralism materiality is achieve through discourse, being nothingness the prevailing character of policy enactment in the extra-discursive realm.

These key representations are easily observable when analyzing policy chronicles and academic case studies under the discursive criteria. In order to provide a clear example on the matter, we are going to resort to Lena Hansen’s explanation on the Bosnian War¹⁵ as a perfect set of representations for Foreign Policy Discourse. Here, according to her, two main characterizations can be identified: i) its reference as a “Balkan war” and, ii) the comprehension of the war as a genocide. This dichotomy in the approach of the conflict determined two main policy directions that does not permitted the west to actively engage in

¹⁵ According to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (n.d), during the Bosnian war “a campaign of war crimes, ‘ethnic cleansing’ and genocide was perpetrated by Bosnian Serb troops under the orders of Slobodan Milošević. It is estimated that between 20-50,000 women were raped during the war in Bosnia, as part of a strategy of ethnic cleansing.

a united front. The dominant discourse reconceptualized it as a humanitarian issue in the west, completely changing their foreign policy stand and the “required” set of action. Constructions -discursive and non-discursive- determine reality. Through language, policy is enacted and therefore the faith of millions is shaped, everything from a particular vision of the world and the manner choose to express it.

Here, cultural settings play an essential role in the level of importance it donates to each scenario. As previously introduced, the interactional nature of Foreign Policy construction and discursive vehemence finds alterity when the *One* and the *Other* are part of the same *Verständigungsgemeinschaft*, due their background knowledge allows a more profound understanding of any adopted position. But the cultural issue in the policy realm has more complex implications that are considered relevant to enlist in order to explain the importance of the particular Chinese vision of the global stage and its past and current schemes.

It is a shared conviction among the IR scholar community that to comprehend the linkage -the nature of- between two states is necessary to include a broad analysis of the implied societies. In fact, “the cultural characteristics of any given society are important because the cultural characteristics make up the cultural framework in which the foreign policy establishment operates. In other words, culture can be said to be a foundation of foreign policy” (Liland, F, 1993: 6). As it is a foundation, culture can also be a part of it when the formulation of cultural policy is framed in the cadre of foreign affairs: the development and implementation of a cultural diplomacy task is a clear example of this phenomena.

In conjunction with the latter, culture can also function as a resource of its own to portray Soft Power in bi-directional or multidirectional relationships, which, according to Joseph R. Nye (2003), can be defined as: “the ability to achieve what you want by attracting and persuading others to adopt your goals”. Following the author, there are three resources in which a state exercises this form of power: culture, political values, and foreign policy. These elements are strategically included through communication campaigns, awareness-raising events, academic and cultural exchanges, and multimedia content aimed at entertainment. Once more, culture proves to be the most important asset for discursive construction. Understanding a society’s behavior and collective conscience requires

academicians to resort to the constructivist overview, which enhances subjectivity as the core of global entanglement.

But to understand a nation's general cultural outlook is not a simple assignment. It requires a deep analysis of the values, traditions, social structures, and the shared history that makes up a common identity. Even though a distant observer's positioning is useful to more pragmatically identify the manner in which those elements shape relational logics, methodological and theoretical challenges are constantly posed when determining the main subjects of analysis¹⁶. However, following on Liland's argumental narrowing, limiting the cultural implications on Foreign Policy construction to the ensuing results is relevant to our point:

“A somewhat narrower type of studies focuses on the individual foreign policy actor or a limited group of actors. The aim is often to construct a "cultural topography" based on studies of the cultural environment of the actors as well as the actors' cultural outlook. The general assumption is that the decision-makers' cultural attitudes and tendencies are of vital importance in understanding their opinions, attitudes, decisions and actions regarding all aspects of foreign policy. Studies of this kind deal with what has been called the foreign policymakers' "cultural assumptions", "mindsets", "core values" or “general moods” (Liland, F, 1993: 12).

Consciously or unconsciously, as the author signals, this particular approach on cultural influence “rest on the premise that foreign policy is a reflection of culture”. The underlying reasons for its enactment, application and understanding idle on the nation's societal structures and cultural threads. Although it plays a fundamental pillar, culture might be understood as a complement of other constituting factors, such as those listed in Nuechterlein's matrix on the intensity of interest, namely: defense, economy, world order, ideology and geography¹⁷. Therefore, it becomes essential to look upon culture in relation to foreign policy not in a mirroring manner, but as a space where explanations -relate to its nature- can be found.

To encapsulate this section, it is imperative to understand the role of culture as a Foreign Policy resource of its own. Though cultural dynamics may seem to be placed in an

¹⁶ Is relevant to address that national identities are not consistent, rather act and co-exist in particular and fluctuant expressions.

¹⁷ Even though is not included in Nuechterlein's “intensity of interest” matrix, geography is an essential factor to consider regarding foreign policy enactment.

ulterior echelon regarding policy construction, it must be understood through the lenses of an incremental approach in which cultural diplomacy can lead to the enlightenment of important political, economic and social paradoxes inferring in the decision-making processes (Liland, F, 1993: 21). As precised by Frank Ninkovich:

“Although cultural relations are a minor form of diplomacy, at the same time the entire foreign policy process is itself subordinate to larger cultural dynamics [...] a nation's foreign policy is only an expression of powerful cultural forces beyond its grasp.” (Ninkovich, 1981: 21)

Therefore, Foreign Policy Analysis must address national interest at the core to arrange the level of intensity it delivers to each of the previously presented points. To permit the materialization of this analytic punctuality is then required to generate a cultural *résumé* for its application in the overall comprehension of the driving forces of societal behavior. Once done, discursive criteria can enable us to unfold the crevices behind particular bondages made by policymakers and state actors. Culture determines the truths for which identities are shaped, values generated and *weltanschauungs*¹⁸ ordained.

1.3 Discourse and social projections in foreign affairs.

Governance models are the main and more direct reflection of Foreign Policy directionality. It cogitates on a country's perspective regarding the manner in which relationality should be addressed and the collective philosophical traditions. How to govern and its implications have been a constant subject of IR research programs, as focusing on the institution's *suivre* model for cooperation could permit policymakers to reduce uncertainty and augment the basis on their predictability models. Reduce conflict, prevail synergy and enhance positive neighborliness are some of the main interests of the international community as a whole, edging the scholarly community to nurture a discursive ligature where rule-based governance seems to appear to be the right model at international and regional levels (Qin, 2018).

European inspiration in regional-institutions architecture is a noteworthy and procedural approach, but not the only one. Classical Chinese philosophers -Confucius and

¹⁸ A German term which refers to the ‘worldview’ or ‘philosophy of life’ of different groups within society. Nietzsche, contrary on Kant's appraisal, argued that “every individual creates their own unique world view based on their personal experiences, desires, and values. He believed that this personal world view was the only way to make sense of the chaotic and unpredictable nature of existence” (Dennis, 2023).

Mencius¹⁹, for reference- discussed the importance of social relations as the foundation for benign governance, leading to the establishment of an alternative archetype that places the “web of social interaction” at the center of the discussion. Yaqing Qin follows upon this duality by establishing that²⁰:

“Humans are rational animals and relational animals, but relational animals first. The unconsciously exclusive emphasis on rule-based governance [...] might neglect social contexts, relational processes, and human practices, thus missing significant factors in the area of intellectual exploration and practical exercise of governance” (Yaqing, Q, 2018: 320).

This Sinitic vision of social reality differs from its western counterpart as there exist an individualistic-communitarian dilemma. The basic unit of analysis of the mainstream IR is the individual *per se*, holder of an ontological status and a special repute as a self-organizing entity. This conception mainly derives from the economic-centric perception of social ordering, where consumers behave in a rationalistic and self-centered fashion; making rules necessary to dissipate chaos, allow cooperation and authorize supra-individual control through the establishment of representative governments. Though a general and simplified overview of this western-persisting phenomena, the existence of theoretical constraints under this paradigmatic umbrella has brought certain issues into display.

For realism -as in any other international relations’ realm- power is conceived to be a power-dependent factor, one in which the *Hegemonic Power* act as the variable that ensures the application and respect of the rule-based order. According to Qin (2018), the main communing in the 80’s revolved around the consequences of the declining power of the United States vis-à-vis the Vietnam War and the economic condition in the global stage, a framework that hypothesized that the loosening of that position would lead to a collapse of the established rules. As the author signals, “the only way out [for realists], was to reinvigorate the hegemonic power in order to keep the governing rules in good shape as the guarantee for international order and effective governance” (Yaqing, Q, 2018: 322).

¹⁹ This lineage of Chinese philosophy thrived during the *Warring States* period (475-221 BCE). It is during this section of the nation’s history that many of the governmental structures and cultural patterns that would characterize China for the following 2,000 years were born (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024).

²⁰ The referenced quote delves into Qin’s discussion on the Chinese perspective of the human nature in contrast to the European one, an argument previously exposed in the introductory section of this bachelor’s thesis.

Institutionalist, on their part, give rules a more ontologically²¹ independent status by establishing that this governance-referent is able to maintain itself alone in spite of the nuance of a hegemonic power behind it. This rationalization upholds a demand logic whereas international actors commend cooperation as essential for their absolute gains by reducing uncertainty, lowering transactional costs, and making information more transparent. Each of the participants of global dynamics benefit from an established set of directives that manage -or governs- behavior. Here international regimes come into play, an although they have proved difficult to define, it is a general consensus that the principal aim of this sub-field of IR is to “generate institutions [or a set of] in identifiable issue areas that affect their behavior [state’s] and foster cooperation” (Levy, Young, & Zurn , 1995: 9).

But is in International Regimes Analysis (IRA) that the conceptual ambiguousness of “rules” is debated, as they are equivocally evoked as *regularity* and *prescription*, a misconception that alongside the presence of indistinguishable components²² relating to institutions, makes unideal to resort to Krasner’s definition. To resolve this notional contravention, Levy, Young & Zurn (1995), defines them as “as social institutions consisting of agreed upon principles, norms, rules, procedures and programs that govern the interactions of actors in specific issue areas”. In the end, both theoretical approaches agree that a listed ordainment is the main axis of the rule-based governance model.

This particular *weltanschauung* of the global scheme is deeply rooted on Euro-American cultural traditions where abiding to the rule of law has been a longstanding practice and the cornerstone of their political systems. Individualistically inclined western societies require the existence of such contractual societal regimes to ensure the respect of personal property, who John Locke considers as the essential backbone to achieve a genuine condition of liberty. Is in this sense, that in *Two Treatises of Government* (1698) Locke carefully arguments the following:

²¹ As presented by Guarino, Oberle, & Staab (2009), “we refer to a philosophical discipline, namely the branch of philosophy which deals with the nature and structure of “reality.” Aristotle dealt with this subject in his *Metaphysics* and defined Ontology as the science of “being qua being,” i.e., the study of attributes that belong to things because of their very nature”.

²² Here, Levy, Young and Zurn (1995) argue that: “the second criticism asserts that distinctions among principles, norms and rules lack intersubjective meaning. This leads to the suggestion that the distinction be dropped in favor of focusing exclusively on explicit injunctions”.

“The state of Nature has a law of Nature to govern it, which obliges every one, and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions [...] and that all men may be restrained from invading others’ rights, and from doing hurt to one another, and the law of Nature be observed which willeth the peace and preservation of all mankind, the execution of the law of Nature is in that state put into every man’s hands, whereby every one has a right to punish the transgressors of that law to such a degree as may hinder its violation. For the law of Nature would, as all other laws that concern men in this world, be in vain if there were nobody that in the state of Nature had a power to execute that law, and thereby preserve the innocent and restrain offenders; and if any one in the state of Nature may punish another for any evil he has done, every one may do so” (Locke, 1823 [1689]: 108).

This blueprint established by Locke perceives that the *law of Nature* should be observed by and executed by an entity with the power and capacity to do so: then directly or indirectly holding the state responsible for the assurance of each individual’s chattels. Linking liberty and the preservation of human life by saying that “every Man has a Property in his own Person” also allows him to sense human labor as a property worth of ulterior protection. Ergo, rule of law becomes a basic trait for social coexistence and the successful establishment of the commonwealth of men. Idealistic and radical ideas for his time, Locke’s writings inspired many of the minds that drove the American Revolution forward: Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, set the basis for the naissance of the world’s first representative democracy and, certainly, today’s main political model worldwide. A rule-based governance entourage then seems to be the evident follow-through in the global stage as this essentialist connotation of the governed individuals as rational calculators gives sense to the establishment of formal rulings, as the cost appear to be reduced in the decisional level.

This legalistic practice is magnified into the international level in order to control the negative attributes of the rational actor, namely, the state, and generate a result-oriented landscape. Even though a working scheme in Europe and The United States, many non-western societies might consider its application backlashing to their relational dynamics and its nature.

This said, the Chinese-lead relational governance acts as an alternative. It is defined by Yaqing Qin (2018): “as a process of negotiating socio-political arrangements that manage complex relationships in a community to produce order”. Here, it seems that both models

seek to counter chaos in societal ordering, though this differs from the latter because Confucianism believes in reciprocity, mutual trust, shared understanding and human morality, comprehending that to achieve harmonious order (*zhentong renhe*) management and coordination of the human relations is necessary. According to Xunxi, that governed-inclined directionality depends upon the moral criteria applied for the achievement of peace, abundance and order, and the benevolent usage of practices to assure the maintenance of those achievements. For this, the respect of hierarchical laddering becomes essential as: “just as there is Heaven and Earth, there is what is higher and lower, and an enlightened ruler is capable of imposing the necessary rules” (Xunxi, as cited by Bottom Beja, Cervera, & Chen, 2021). Differing to the western force-driven application of rules, the sovereign -or policymakers- must ablige to *Li* (codes of conduct based on rituals) to pose a harmonious example to the vassals.

Overall, the combined tripartite elements for a good governance under these lenses are: i) *relations*; ii) *morality* and iii) *trust*. Qin insist that *relations* constitute society, posing individuals in a group -and its interactions- as the basic unit of analysis, namely: Jia, Guo and Tianxia²³. This allows us to identify relational governance as a process-oriented dynamic where interaction between the members of the community takes place entangling and co-embedding each other through space and time, complementing its reciprocity.

Morality, as placed by the author, is the cornerstone of governance in the sense that society must be governed upon a code of moral metaphysics: a charter of conduct for harmonization. In fact, “the Confucian position asserts that morality is not properly the doctrine of how we manage to gather together, but how we make our gathering together worthwhile” (Tu, 2008: 84). Thus, a pre-set of values that set the line for correct behavior in the communitarian entourage is the manner in which both of the previous notions converge.

Trust, the third and last of these constituting concepts, acts as the outil from which good governance is guaranteed. According to Confucius and his disciples, trust is the most important norm in human relations as it rests in the sincerity of its members and their capacity to assume compromise. People trust each other by knowing that they behave righteously under the accountability of the standard moral guidelines: “if people have faith in their rulers

²³ These three ascending categories comprise all the existing stages of societal relationing: jia (family), Guo (country) and Tianxia (everything under the sky).

and if people have faith in one another, the society is necessarily one of trust” (Qin, 2018; 342). The latter is only achieved by self-cultivation of the human being, which will eventually led to profound virtue and blind confidence, as only the hold of this traits would permit the enhancement of good governance. As resumed by the following:

“From the Confucian emphasis on relations, morality and trust we can conclude that relational governance has distinct features compared with rule-based governance. First, it maximizes human creativity in governance. Relational governance tends to be a more flexible approach and less rigid [...] it stresses social relations and practices of social agents, which by definition connote complexity and change. It looks more to the uncertainty of the environment and follows a non-programmatic way in which actors interact under an environment of complex relationships. Reduction of transactional costs and provision of information tend to be implied in relations rather than explicitly defined in formal rules and contracts” (Qin, 2018: 347).

Nonetheless, it can be argued that the application of *Li* in Chinese societies resembles legalism in the sense that both are codes of conduct for social ordering. If a member of society constrains itself from applying and respecting the agreed moral guidelines, it would immediately be confronted and eventually ostracized. To maintain universal balance everyone must abide to the same sentences of judgment and comply with the representational institutions, either a Magna Charta or the five Confucian virtues, the outlay seems rather similar.

Is in the sense that Confucius introduced *yi*, which is what determines personal behavior to be correct in each particular circumstance. Translated as righteousness or even morality, *yi* means to act appropriately in one’s own situation by putting *li* into practice, a situation-oriented formula that appraise both the motive and the situation as essential analytical factors regarding integral communitarian conduct. In fact, “for Judeo-Christians righteousness means being "right with God" by confirming to God's will. The Confucian sage is right with Heaven only in the sense of emulating Heaven's harmony, stability, and predictability” (University of Idaho, n.d).

This said, it results of uttermost relevance to denote that both models of governance aim for the same result but use seemingly different methods to achieve it. Discursive roundabout in governance-metaphysical construction lies upon what Atkinson *et al* conceive as an overstated view of globalization. In the end, policy is the product of narratives that

embed power and knowledge as a pivot, characteristically admitting the establishment of limits into the most veracious tendencies of common consent. Either by following on the notion of Natural Law or the Ba Dao, once more culture proves to be the basis of Foreign Policy enactment by being able to provide unison in political matters: polity is not constructed around a vacuum, instead, it behaves as a “structured process in which prevailing ideologies [...] are articulated by actors who are embedded in organisations/institutions seeking to advance particular definitions of and solutions to problems that are congruent with and further their interests” (Atkinson et al, n.d: 20).

As outlined in the introduction of this chapter, Chinese international-lead order seeks the revitalization of Confucian values at the core of policy directives to, at least in the superficial level, justify bearing the role of moral leadership in a seemingly disruptive and re-shaping movement of the international relations. But to further analyze this tendency we have now explained the function of culture in discursive elaboration and the way in which those alignments generate foreign policy, a foreign policy that is certainly influenced and shaped through the alienation of a particular model of global governance. It is therefore an accumulative sequence that might enable us to, alongside the conceptual narratives of Confucian exclusivism and historic comparisons, to identify the searched tendencies in post-Maoist addressing's.

Chapter 2. Confucianism and neo-Confucianism in Ming and Song Dynasties: philosophical meta-values and exclusive approach

“Although Heaven is high and far away, Heaven inspects the empire daily. Heaven responds to the deeds of the ruler. If he continuously cultivates himself and treats his people justly . . . then Heaven sends prosperity, and the Son of Heaven receives the realm for all times. There will be no misfortune and nobody will create trouble. If he, however, neglects the deities, ill-treats his people, and does not fear the Mandate of Heaven, there will be misfortune” (Xu Zizhi *Tongjian Changbian*, 357: 8548).

The second chapter follows on a deep description of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism in the imperial era. From the Master’s own history to the continuation of the teachings by his disciples, it is delineated that the doctrine operated as the variable for enacting a common perception of chineseness. Eventually almost by symbiotically relating its political and religious connotations, it became orthodox to governmental practice and operation in both inclusive or exclusive tendencies. Depending upon the regional and domestic contexts, the decision making criteria was chosen to set forth the discursive strategies.

2.1. Imperial unification

Multiplicity, instability, and change are constant markers of global interaction in an international system whose foundational stream reside on chaos and natural-implied violence. The dominant socio-philosophical chassis has created a normative pathway of social subsistence nurtured through the ambience of ulterior remonstrance and mutual demur that, in its fragile pulpit, requires instruments to regulate -either through coercion or force- those obliged to integrate to its prerogative framework. However, as signaled in the previous chapter, societal ordering has always been entrenched in a dynamic of dominance and compliance, regality and commonness, and ownership and lackness, that requires praxeological²⁴ regimes to allow peaceful coexistence. This notion that systematizes conflictive patterns in regular interplay is, as showed, just the lesser side of an ever-flipping coin that intellectual traditions have approached since antiquity.

²⁴ Praxeology is generally defined as a theory of human action and practice that founds its origins in Aristotle “with knowledge in the service of human betterment, what we might now term fulfilment or wellbeing. Aetoeologically deriving from the Greek, Praxis (purposeful action) and Logos (word/thought or principle of knowledge)” (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014).

This *homo homini lupus*²⁵ logic is not secluded to western contemporary experience, and it arguably applies into the thresholds of Chinese state building, as its history is extensively plagued with the imminent scourges of warfare in their longing struggle for unification. Problematizing the historical “Zhongguo” is thus the first step into comprehending the ingrained dynamics of the dynastical governance structure and the misconception of a seamless continuity in the transitional cycle. Commencing with Xia (2070-1600 BCE) and Shang (1600-1046 BCE) and finalizing with the foreign Qing lineage (1644-1912 CE), the common view of it as a natural political entity has failed to identify the territorial fluctuations and the ethnic ascendancies of the dragon throne. As the *Zuo Zhuan*, a Warring States text, puts it, “Territory is defined by battle. It belongs to one state at one time, to another state at another time... Where is the constancy?” (Loewe & Shaughnessy, 1999). The unity paradigm is then debatable, subjective in nature and certainly comparable with contemporary parallels that have led to the portray of the current discussion on terms foreign to Chinese philosophical perspectives. Realist-state constitutional structures do not represent the unaligned political organizations of the Spring and Autumn period and, certainly not those of the Pre-Qin. Therefore, no universal definition can be accomplished as the conceptual “oneness” framed by CCP-inclined academia only serves to a concrete discursive reality and depends on mainstreaming the credence that reunification is still a valid source to uphold nationalistic sentiments among the population.

To fortify this perspective, we can follow on Tin-bor Hui’s (2004) analysis to identify historic Zhongguo as an ambiguous conceptual construction that does not comprises an unchanging territory and a single culture. The conscientious revision of classical chronology and geographical designation allow us to perceive that unification was not the rule nor the norm of chinese-reffered political existence. To address this problem, Ge Jianxiong suggests particularizing unification on the terms of effective control which, under the Weberian perspective could mean: “one that monopolizes the legitimate means of coercion, and that [...] suffers incapacitation or even breakdown when challengers possess significant coercive powers within the territory that it claims to rule” (Tin Bor-Hui, 2007, p. 9). To our understanding, these guidelines seemingly oversimplify the issue of unification and diverges

²⁵ “Man is wolf to Man”, is a phrase popularized by the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes and attributed to Plautus.

the attention from our original descriptive task: state building and political culture. An administrative entity and its imaginary are far more complex than just limiting it to an “effective” military or policy application control under a geographic area, as this has never been truly achieved. The scope of State action has limited capacities and broadly assessing governance performance on early empire-wise configurations would be misleading.

However, if for argumental purposes we were to follow Hui’s approach on unity and division, we need to consider the historic “Middle Kingdom” along the lines of Jianxiong’s description, c’est-a-dire, the maximum territorial control of the Qin Dynasty. This territorial space that “rounded the Yellow River in the northwest, the Yin Shan and the lower Liao River in the northeast, the Sichuan basin in the west, the eastern part of the Yungui plateau in the southwest, the Guangdong and Guangxi regions in the south, and the coastline in the east” (Ge, 1994, pág. 184) will be, until further conquest and institutionalization, the traditional Chinese heartland and the birthplace of their civilization. A chronology of unification then can be made considering that effective control under the descriptive area was held under certain periods of time, adding a limited total of 936 out of 2132 years of post-Qin dynastical order. The following table showcases the dynasties where unification under these terms was achieved and, which therefore -according to this branch of thought- meant periods of peace, stability, and harmony. Anything excluded from the ensuing is labelled as an *interregnum* whose later re-emplacement was to be undoubtedly materialized:

Table 1: Chronology of unification over the Chinese heartland

Dynasty/Period	Duration	Unification
Qin Dynasty	221-206 BCE	221-206 BCE
Western Han	202 BCE-09 CE	108 BCE-22 CE ²⁶
Eastern Han	25-220 CE	50-184 CE
Jin Dynasty	265-420 CE	280-301 CE ²⁷
Sui Dynasty	581-618 CE	589-616 CE
Tang Dynasty	619-907 CE	630-755 CE
Yuan Dynasty	1279-1368 CE	1279-1352 CE
Ming Dynasty	1368-1644 CE	1382-1629 CE
Qing Dynasty	1644-1911CE	1683-1850 CE
People's Republic of China	1949-Currently	1949-Currently
Total of unification		936 years

Note: as adapted from Tin Bor-Hui, 2007.

Before Confucianism gained weight in the collective conscience and until legalism regarded it of equal importance, this narrative of unity “under heaven” was presumably inexistent, at least around its more specific attributes. This discursive platform commenced a transcendental movement centered on cultural and ethnical likeness that created an imaginary chineseness which permitted the identification of certain communities, geographically close or not, into the same civilizatory regard. From that moment onwards, there will be a deeply rooted desire for unifying all chinese people under the same dynastical mandate and, when achieved, it settled in defiance with Mencius’ belief that the tittle of Son of Heaven should passed to someone with no proclivity towards killing (Tin Bor-Hui, 2007, p. 16). But in such scenario of international tension, how could unification be achieved if not by the grip of the sword? As mentioned by Graff: “It is not sheer coincidence that all dynastic founders were military men because they had to fight for the Mandate of Heaven by subjugating other

²⁶ Unification under the brief Xia period is comprised in this account, thus going forward to 22 CE.

²⁷ Western Jin

power-contenders. It may be said that wars of unification typically “exhibited a bandwagoning pattern” (Graff, 2002, pág. 48).

This centrality of war conformed a conventional belief that division led to *Tianxia dualan* -great disorder under heaven- and unification brought *Tianxia duatong* -great unity under heaven-, almost divinely praising Qin Shi Huang for his successful unification of the Warring States and ignoring the notorious brutality needed to achieve it. This lecture thus sanctions the identification of a ruler-ruled diligent need to believe in an ulterior Chinese “manifest destiny”²⁸ -not in an expansive, but certainly repossessing nature- to rectify the guidelines of behavior and good governance. As the following commentary signals in a sense of historic contingency and ideological constraint:

“In the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, in the face of the decline of kingship and the situation of feudal lords competing for hegemony, the concept of "Unification of the World" was continuously improved and developed, and finally formed the Confucian "Unification of the World" concept represented by Confucius and Mencius and the "Unification of the World" represented by the Legalist Han Feizi view. Both Confucianism and Legalism pursue unification, the difference is that the former advocates restoring the system of ritual and music to rectify the order of the world; while the latter advocates the realization of the unification of the world by force. With the establishment of the unified multi-ethnic state of Qin and Han Dynasties, the concept of "unification of the world" has become a reality, and Chinese history has entered the era of real unification” (Hui, 2022, p. 1)

Constituting a paradigm of national transformation towards unity was a centuries long effort that required a particular interpretation of history and rituals to align communitarian spiritual bonds. During Western Han, Emperor Wu decided to adopt the suggestion to “dismiss a hundred schools of thought and respect Confucianism”, commencing a new era of ideological supremacy at the core of the dynastical apparatus. Dong Zhongshu’s inherited from Confucius, Mencius and Xunxi a comprehensive dialectical notion of unification that permitted him the establishment of a dual *unification of culture* and *unification of thought* paradigm that further systematized the ideal of “Grand Confucian Unification” (Hui, 2022, p. 3). In reality, we can argue that the appraisal of Confucian teachings in the political realm

²⁸ Phrase coined by the American editor John Louis O’Sullivan in 1845 which referred to “the nineteenth-century doctrine or belief that the expansion of the U.S. throughout the American continents was both justified and inevitable” (SAAM, n.d).

guided the collective sense of belonging to an “special” community of practitioners, rather than to the *cadres* of a national citizenry.

Even though the latter clarifies the overall notion, the underlying question remains mostly unanswered, where did China as a political subject comes from? Roger D. Ames and Zhao Tiyang (2023) have strived to provide an answer that moves away from western philosophical reflections and matches with the maxims of classical Confucian tradition. Once rejecting the misplacement of modern political language, both recognized that China has understood itself at once a state, a civilization, and a history. This is comprehensively under what Zhao describes as a centripetal whirlpool model to interpret the historic progression of Tianxia identity in the Central Plain of China, appealing to the archeological scholarship of Xu Hong, whose notion of “earliest China” is used as a point of reference. To do so, he challenges the ontological approach and recurs to what he and other eastern philosophers describe as Zoetology (Ames, 2023).

Borrowing Greek *Zoe* (life) to latinize the concept, zoetological thinking (*shengshenglun*) is no more than a new way of calling an old way of thinking: the self-so-ing. Its generative logic resorts to C.S Pierce’s conceptualization of abductive reasoning as it goes beyond the previously stated premises to contribute additional content and is then capable of generating new ideas. Applied to our current inquiry, zoetological approach to change has inclined thinkers such as Tang Jungyi to prioritize “whence” and “whither” than uniquely the “what is”, assaying the direction of existence rather than reveling the whatness of the experience. As clarified by Tingyang:

How is an “existent”²⁹ created? With respect to an entity that is self-conscious such as a human society or a civilization existence is no longer the natural existence of how something is as it is, but the historical existence of its historicity. For this reason, the question of “being” is changed to become equivalent to the question of “making or doing.” Making or doing is to go and create a history of existence, that is, it ensures that an entity becomes a historical entity that cannot be reduced to the ordinary concept of mere existence.” (Tingyang , 2016, pág. 2)

This foregoing beginning of chinese historical identity has effect on what Su Bingqi describes as a “sky full of constellations”, which refer to the multiplicity of cultures that also lived in

²⁹ Referencing life itself

the central Chinese plain previous to the so-called legendary³⁰ period. It then originated as a *relational ecology*³¹ due to the constant interchange and subsequent fusion, result of the expansionist behaviors of the time, pulling them “into the swirls and eddies of the whirlpool” (Ames, 2023, p. 41). Additionally, among a series of interrelated cultural attractors that drove identity formation forward, the most relevant and sophisticated were the written characters, which perpetuated a more defined cultural corpus by conveying a shared narration of history and the values of the common lineage. Scripture allowed the creation of a cosmology to which the mentioned groups could gather and organize around, for Zhao, as signaled by Ames (2023), it is not a place in itself, but a “taking place”. It is a metaphysical construction that amalgamated those diversities into a shared syncretic diversity.

Later to be fortified with the emergence of Confucianism, the whirlpool effect would not cease to exert its pulling force into this ecological panorama of ever-lasting continuum. The construction of the modern China derives from this anti-analogical theorization that rejects the “*being per se*” existence and categorical explanations of civilizational configuration and construction. Ergo, addressing the topic of unity and communitarian identity was of upmost importance before formally introducing Confucianism and its variants in this bachelor’s thesis. Zoetology can be considered the reason-to-be of Confucian studies, as the praised sacred old ways are based upon a processual cosmology where “generative living is not ceaseless and boundless, but is further elevated to serve the greatest capacity and highest value: life-force” (Ames, 2023); thus, explaining the centrality of harmony and relationality at the very center of Confucian dialectics.

2.2 Confucius and Confucianism

Transcendental philosophical and political doctrines require closer revision of their constructional pathways to comprehend the elemental cognizing processes more profoundly behind their *raison d’être*. The personal experiences and life history of their founders and upmost procurers permits us unveil into a certain degree a clearer vision on the original

³⁰ The period of Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties is often referred to as legendary or mystical due to historical imprecisions.

³¹ The foremost introduction to the term Ecology in social analysis was made by Thoreau in his essay “Civil Disobedience” (1849). Inspired by transcendentalism and believing in the fundamental goodness of human, he empathized the perennial quest to maintain healthy relationships with the immediate entourage, putting especial significance in human-human interaction.

intentions of their work: What were their inspiration? What path led them to illustration? How had they managed to impact those around him? The attempt to answer these questions entail an analytical branch of its own that certainly enable us not to be misled by wrongly inclined interpretations. On this sense and for clarifying purposes, Kong Fuzi's -or Confucius as was latinized- figure is going to be extraneously enshrouded in the subsequent pages. Extensively described by Ssu-ma Ch'ien in the Records of the Historian³² (Shih chi) and aligning with Joseph Campbell's motif of heroic quest, the life of the Master observably rests in the thinnest border of liminality, a dualistic crossroad between divinized myths and presumable accounts.

Born and lived under the Zhou Dynasty, Confucius early stages developed in a strongly polarized feudal system with around 70 small states that were headed by members of the royal court or anyhow awarded to those who did an outstanding service to the state. By recognizing the *Son of Heaven* as their ruler and head commander, the system uncoiled without any major complications while the grasp of the Zhou kings remained strong enough to subdue any undesirable pursuance of autonomy, territorial expansion or defiance to the royal edicts (Xinzhong, 2000, p. 22). As inevitably happened, nonetheless, eventual weaknesses upon the administrative apparatus were identified and interpreted by the liege lords as ideal conjunctures to unrestrainedly commence to compete one another for a bigger share of the imperium's vast riches. A faultless formula for chaos, the old order of social life was gradually destroyed and a new one advanced while the people were left in an endless maelstrom of misery: "husband being torn from wife, and wife being forced to leave husband; the rich enjoying their luxury, while the poor had nothing to rely on" (Legge, 1992, p. 117).

The untamed disorder led to the birth of many schools of thought who dedicated their efforts to elaborate and propose disruptive political and behavioral solutions to the current state of affairs. Confucius' contributions were the most appraised and respected on that regard, as he believed that chaos was the result of misusing rituals/property (li) and the music (yue) being subject to decay, making corrective efforts seem necessary to revert *Tianxia dualan*. Regrettably these re-aligning attempts could not be made under the frame of bad

³² although this manuscript has been numerously regarded as an almost fictional account, is commonly cited when studying the early stages of the Master's life.

government action, certifying that to overcome cruelty and punitivism it became necessary the *mise en place* of a righteous government under the power of moral virtues. Morally driven laws are capable of producing trust among the vassalry at the time that retributory justice only halts misconduct for a fixed -and certainly short- period of time, displaying once again that a force-driven system is narrowly successful when terror and violence dominate the deliverance of “order”.

To comprehend this Confucian maxim in westernized lenses, we are going to summon Hannah Arendt’s conclusions on her famous *On Violence* essay to signal that in the political realm it becomes insufficient to identify power exercise and violence as non pareil conceptual constructions. Power and violence are opposites, where one rules absolutely, the other is nowhere to be found due “violence appears when power is in jeopardy but left to its own course it ends by disappearing” (Arendt, 1969, p.56). This does not mean that Arendt nor Confucius advocated for the disappearance of violent means as these are inevitable tools of human condition, but that beyond its indiscriminated application to ensure control in domestic affairs, they are meant to be regarded as the ultimate medium to appeal on. Yet, what is to be expected by those who had seen nothing but violence in human affairs if not its deliverance as the normal course of action?

As cited in the Analects, a ruler “who governs the state through his virtue is like the pole star which stays put while the other stars revolve around it” (Xinzhong, 2000). The objective Confucius wanted to emphasize in the phrase is that the main purpose revolved around the restoration of moral excellence and cultivation of purity within the heart of individuals to build societal tissue that can function with harmonious syntony. For this, he was keen to transform government by influencing those in public service and, if possible, the Son of Heaven himself. The Master did hold a position in the governmental structure at 51 years of age (501 BCE) as magistrate in Zhongdu district and later as Minister of Construction in the Lu State for a brief period of time, even achieving the position of Prime Minister (499 BCE). Disappointed that he could not oversaw the application of the doctrine into practice, Confucius left to journey through the neighboring states and when asked why he wouldn’t seek to deepen his career in public office he replied:

“What does the Book of History say? “Simply by being a good son and friendly to his brothers, a man can exert an influence upon government.” In so doing a man is, in fact, taking part in government.

How can there be any question of his having actively to “take part in government?” (Lunyu, 2:21 as cited in Xinzhong, 2000, p. 24).

From that moment on, he travelled along his disciples for a period of thirteen years with the hope to apply those doctrines elsewhere. Unsuccessful on the task, he returned to a politically changed Lu in 484 BCE, where he dedicated the rest of his days to read the classic texts and to teach his disciples the upstandingness of the old ways, with the hope that the knowledge would be transmitted down the generations and gradually exert somewhat of a positive change in society. Confucius died in 479 BCE, but his spirit and ideas were not buried alongside him.

Is the sake of this thesis that before continuing into a more technical analysis of Confucianism, to conclude with the acknowledgement of the Master’s figure as the epicenter for understanding the directionality of the teachings by introducing his monomyth facet³³. According to Meili Pinto (2019), Confucius’s public recognition comes upon as a progression of the I Ching’s abstraction of the vicissitudes of the existential journey that appraised the sageness of Fuxi, King Wen, the Duke of Zhao and, additionally Confucius. This narrative that placed the Master among the rest of the myths, permitted that 500 years later the imperial scaffolding endorsed his teachings as the state’s official philosophy. An officialization that forever changed the cultural birthmark of Imperial China also led, indirectly and unintentionally, to de-mythologize Confucianism as fictitious accounts “had been interpreted by the modern intellect as a primitive, fumbling effort to explain the world of nature” (Pinto, 2019, p. 43). By solely focusing on the elemental teachings and ripping apart the symbolic suggestions, the stories are left with behavioral and moral codices that unpityingly derogate the fantastical components and institutionalize instruction.

Confucius apport was not just one of a heroic transmitter, but of an innovator of the old tradition due his series of commentaries and edition re-casements of the classical texts. Mainly concerned with the fundamental values of humanity, which according to his interpretation are the roots for social interaction, family engagement and the peace and prosperity of the state, he affixed two central ethical theses: i) goodness can be taught and learned and, ii) society can only be in harmony and at peace under the guidance of wisdom (Xinzhong, 2000, p. 26). Humanness here is at the very core of societal ordering, but as any

³³ allowing us to, as aforementioned, simultaneously acknowledge the duality of his persona.

other philosophical branch, in the intellectual richness and multidimensionality of the conversation, it is possible to engage in different understandings and interpretations. In the furtherance of our overview of Confucianism impact over the Chinese tripartite dimensionality³⁴, we will stay with Xinzhong's (2000) lecture of partition in the terms of Ru Jia (as a family), Ru Jiao (as a cult) and Ru Xue (as a form of learning).

But before going any further, we need to introduce the *ru* suffix to fully understand the analytical partition in those categorizations. For this, Dr. Bin Song (2017) denotes that Ru-ism is the most adequate and up to date way to describe Confucianism, as its current synthesis, descriptively problematic and Christian rooted, hyper centralizes the role of the Master by casting the doctrinal contributions as solely of his authorship and inspiration. But *Ru* is an antique concept often used to refer to ritual professionals of the pre-Qin, wardens of the civilizational code and insurers of the social etiquette performance that crystallized *Ren* (humanness) and harnessed social harmony. Kong Fuzi's contributed to the latter by pointing human civilization to the correct direction in describing the criteria to differentiate "good" rituals, converting Ruism in a form of virtue ethics whose practitioners were to be non-sectarian noble individuals that pursue rituals for self-cultivation and co-thriving (Bin Song, 2017).

Ethical cultivation being the ultimate goal, the Analects emphasize a broadly functionalist approach to ritual by often associating it with expressing and enforcing connections and obligations to others. Every and each step of relationality must endorse this softness performance of cultural codes -they are the distinctive elements of human civilization- by aiming to make the practice of *li* as essential as possible in social ordinary. While eating is the nurture of the body and ritual conduct is the nurture of the soul, some of the other-in line high esteemed rulings can be found in the upcoming:

"Ruists also emphasize aesthetic appreciation, intellectual activities aimed at making oneself a better person, caring for and helping other people, agent-relative obligations to those bound to one by ties such as kinship, taking part in family life, joy in the face of physical deprivation (because of the knowledge that one is living well), but also sadness at genuine loss (such as upon the death of loved ones). The Analects discusses many virtues, including humaneness, righteousness, wisdom, loyalty,

³⁴ Roger D. Ames's recognition of China as a state, a history, and a civilization.

trustworthiness, courage, and filial piety. Kongzi does not seem to have a list of the cardinal virtues” (Van Norden, 2007).

This concern with the well-being of the communitarian meta-space comes from Kong Fuzi suffering from a profound period of ethical crisis and de-harmonization³⁵. But Ruism didn't stop with his philosophical contributions and has importantly transcend with the inputs of Ruist thinkers such as Mengzi, Xunxi, Yi Zhi, Zhu Xi and Yongming, among the most influential. Hence, for now on and in the spirit of avoiding monointerpretation of the tradition, this thesis will use *Ruism* when referring to Confucianism to allow more openness and flexibility in the conceptual analysis³⁶.

When wishing to engage in the retrieval of earlier philosophical views it must be done in a credible and appropriate fashion. In the sense that it must be plausible in contemporary terms and a live option for thinkers to adhere it around our given knowledge, values and institutional forms (Lee Yearley, n.d, p. 140, as cited in Van Norden, 2007). Concomitantly, this appropriateness must be faithful and recognizable to the original source of inspiration at a fundamental level, evolution can only be feasible if understood as a ladder whose's steps are altogether the substratum and the path.

Yearley's (n.d) notations gain significance when chinese philosophy is being applied into a mostly western-scooped methodological approach, as is the case of this work. Qin (2018) cited Feng Youlan's 1922 speech in Columbia University to recognize the significance of culture for social theory building and its comparative implications. He argues that value systems generally meet the same conclusions through contrasting schemes to explain the importance regarded to scientific production in old western and chinese societies. For this, he resorted to goodness-seeking attributions on each, observing that, while western scholars place this attribute in a external regard, chinese mostly encounter it to be inside the human mind and inner self, hypothetizing that their viewpoint either regarded the control of the material work or to control one's own heart as the most important thing.

³⁵ An assessment that on its own is a truly pioneering piece, opposing to the legalistic overview of administrative reformation and more historically driven than any other proposal before, shows that it was the correct candidacy to uphold the Way out of the crisis. A solution that was always accessible to them, dusting in front of their own eyes or ignored in the mist of violent-driven programmes: the sagesness from the past.

³⁶ This thesis principally assumes neo-Confucian theoretical contributions to argument in regard to the hypothetical claim.

This argument, arguable as it is, is important to explain that the encounter of western and Chinese approaches is not meant to be an oppositive, but rather a complementing exercise. Feng argues: “I cannot refrain from saying that the West is extension, the East is intension, and that the West emphasizes what we have, the East emphasizes what we are” (Feng, 1991, p. 592). IR theorizing efforts are only seriously promoted if the endeavour casts itself under the sideliies of one specific type of discursive and intellectual hegemony, blindly following monistic principles that sterilizes debate, competency and constructive dialogue. By endorsing these type of encounters we can generate more plural, inclusive and disruptive initiatives.

Having clarified the latter, we will retake on Yao Xinzhong’s tripartition of the Ruist theoretical configurations. Ru Xia (as a family) intends for the Way of the ancient kings to prevail again, it intends a multidimensional vision of harmony, rules of propriety and methods for a benevolent government -that are enlisted in the classics- to correct disorder, walk away from chaos and bring peace and stability to everything under heaven. It transmits its teachings through the establishment of lasting learning bonds, performing rituals and playing music³⁷ properly under the guidance of a Master (Xinzhong, 2000, p. 27). Is the most customary and widely known academic expression of the tradition, nonetheless it has lost its practical application and its efforts have been deviated into research and modern entailment for political purposes.

After a large period of mockery and persecution from the Han Dynasty’s legalist scholars (*fu jia*), Ruism eventually turned into the State ortodoxy under Emperor Wu (147-81 BCE). Closely related to the religious sacrifices made at the time, it was reconceptualized as a Jiao, one of the three thriving at the time: Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. Pictographical aentology deciphered the antique hanzi³⁸ (chinese character) for Jiao to relate its meaning to filial piety education or doctrinal endeavour, but what is meant by *Ru Jiao* is “the cult of the learned or cultured, the continuous tradition of the scholars who followed

³⁷ “Music properly orders the internal state of a person, while ritual provides a tangible manifestation of this internal ordering. Music infuses the rites with a greater sense of purpose by giving the participants focus, forcing all aspects of the person to unite” (Xingzhong, 2000).

³⁸“The original form of ‘Jiao’ (𡗗) is a pictograph, consisting of ‘a hand holding a stick (|)’ and ‘beating (𠂔) a child (子)’. The later form of the character (教) consists of ‘teaching (educating, 攴)’ and ‘filial piety (孝)’ (Xinzhong, 2000, p. 28).

Confucius to take part in the interpretation and application of the doctrines explored in the classics” (Xinzhong, 2000). Emphasizing the importance and significance of ceremonies and entitling the Master as the Perfect Sage, worshiping and reverence of Confucius became a State’s official religious ceremonial activity. The dogmatic application of thy teachings and a divization of the Master’s figure led to the establishment of two re-namings for ‘Confucianism’: *Kong Jiao* (Confucius cult) and *Li Jiao* (the ritual cult) (Xinzhong, 2000).

Thirdly and historically departing from the latter, *Ru Xue* (as learning) recognized that its rationale lies on the ability and spirit to learn, either as state ortodoxy or philosophical tradition. Different to modern aceptions of learning, the Confucian terminology surpassed its academic subjectivity to highlight that the study of the Way of heaven was to be done in a dual inner-outer relation. The sole porpuse was continiously remarked by the Master and Mengzi to be the retention of social and individual virtuosity to further the ancient traditions, embody the classics and transform the world, thus being the labor of the scholar “to study virtue in order to love” (Lunyu; 14:4). Once more, Ruism emphasized that the path to good governance and *Tianxia duatong* needed a spiritual transformation of the ruler, the correct application of rituals and the accompanienment of music.

Disciplinary-wise, *Ru Xue* is the manner in which Confucianism expressed itself politically throughout the dynastical period in China, however, this faced multiple changes and contributions (Xinzhong, 2000). Either the Ruist scholars in the imperial court, the mandarinate structure or the Son of Heaven itself, shaped the Master’s teachings and fetichized the classical knowledge to justify decision-making domestically and the alterations to the harmony when expanding, countering agression or appeasing revolutionary uprisings. In the following pages, this thesis will explore the mentioned changes and some of the influential schools that framed foreign policy enactment during the Ming and Song period.

2.2.1. Evolution of Ruism: school changes through the imperium

The moral and political requirements of Ruism were crystallized as Three Guiding Principles (Son gang) and Five Constant Regulations (Wu Chong) around which the Ruist States were built upon (Xinzhong, 2000, p. 37). Kong Fuzi’s concern with political irregularities sought that to bring peace within and to restore the ancient ways, the doctrine must have recognized and technically addressed the discrepancies between names, reality, language, rights, and

duties. For this, he extended the moral boundaries to generate an ideological format to better equip rulers into decision-making dilemmas. If a ruler, a subject, a father, and a son are incapable to fulfill their natural duties, they will be inclined to abuse their titles and to violate the names that essentially defines them.

For this to be achieved in an ordered governmentally manner, Confucius insisted on fortifying the existence of a reciprocal relationship between the ruler and the subject-ministers. The first must employ and treat them with the strictest application of *li*, while the latter serve them with loyalty and obedience. Although a noticeably balanced theory³⁹ of alignment and government practice, it was latter misinterpreted as a conservative aphorism that legitimated absolutism and, as a sideline result, a guarantee to effective administration. Not holding this authoritarianism in a violent fashion though, this ultimate subordination was appraised as necessary, we would presume, as consequence to the sublevations that the imperial courts would be constant subject of throughout history⁴⁰.

This theoretical approach made that government bureaucracy and Confucian scholarship were practically undifferentiated due to the system of examination for officials, a system that allowed lectured candidates in the Classics and alleged virtuous practitioners to commence a career in the imperial officialdom (Xinzhong, 2000, p. 35). Although we are going to further analyze the civil examination system for its historical significance, this brief introduction shows that the practice of *Ru* was the highest form of political transformative action, as those who studied it were largely renowned and often searched to advice on policy application, decision making and rituality. Ruism became the operative foundation of the Zhongguo -apart from brief periods of stagnancy- until the fall of the Qing dynasty.

To further understand this, Theodore de Bary enlisted the existence of four types of orthodoxy assumed by Neo-Confucianism in late imperial China: educational orthodoxy, bureaucratic orthodoxy, philosophical orthodoxy, and liberal orthodoxy. Although a deep review of the programs applied to ensure the correct exercise of the neo-Confucian policies, it does not help us to explain the manner in which Ruism is particularly expressed during the Ming and Song periods. To do so, we need to beforehand adhere some of Anne Cheng's

³⁹ Theory of rectification of names.

⁴⁰ The author does not precises which event, dynastic period, or tendency lead to this theoretical fetishization, leading us to assume that the inner palace émuetes might be responsible for this attribution.

(1997) reflections on Ruism, the Way and the inquiries around governing placed by the Master himself.

According to her, and already briefly mentioned, the key notion to Confucian government is not that of power, but that of ritual harmony. The personal charisma of the sovereign, as a ritual expression in itself, possesses the capacity to harmonize the tensions and divisions among humans without the need to resort to any superior deity, as our inner force is the path to communitarian stability. Kong Fuzi remarked: “govern through the force of laws, maintain order with punishments, the people will contempt of obeying, without showing any shame. Govern by virtue, harmonize the rites, the people not only will not know of shame, but it will regulate itself”⁴¹ (Lunyu II, 3, as cited in Cheng, 1997). The title of Son of Heaven does not come lightly, it holds a responsibility above himself because he directly answers, just like the name suggests, to the Heaven itself; and his actions, positive or not, are to be judged and resolved upon. Although it will be further explored when explaining the Tianxia, the role of the Son of Heaven has somewhat of a divine characterization to scholars.

Otherwise returning to the practical political envisioning, the following conversation held between Zizong and Kong Fuzi illustrates some of the major implications when governing. Especially when regarding the insurance of trust from the population, we can argue it derives from the role and attitude that the Son of Heaven portrays:

“Zizong: “what is to govern?”

The Master: “is to ensure that the people have enough food, enough weapons and to secure their confidence”.

Zizong: “If one is to do without one of these three things, which would it be?”

The Master: The weapons”.

Zizong: “And from the remaining two? Which one would it be?”

The Master: The food. Men are always subject to death. But people who do not trust cannot hold”.”
(Cheng , 1997, p. 99)

In the political plain, education also becomes a central issue. In a government regulated through *ren*, the sovereign must be preoccupied to educate his subjects, an education that must be guided by the example and the imitation of models that are in conformity with the

⁴¹ Own translated from French .

norms and principles of Ruism. The art of governing can then be comprehended, not as a matter of political technique that requires specialization, but as a simple affair of personal charisma, possession, and self-cultivation. The adequation of the sociopolitical order along with the moral rectitude of the sovereign, does dirige all ritual significance towards the need of rectifying the norms. This theory, even though possibly unrelated to Kong Fuzi, permits us to identify that an adequation between name (*ming*) and reality (*shi*) entails the whole notion of Ruism when retrieving the conviction that there exists an inherent force in language. A force that explains the dynamic between ritualized human relations, the adequation can be effectuated appropriately when we are to act on the norms in such a way that they only apply to realities which deserve them, but also, to act on the reality of things in such a way that they coincide with the conventional names (Cheng , 1997, p. 102).

An explanation certainly better comprehended by Cheng (2019), it can be further clarified with the introduction of a conversation between Zilu and Kong Fuzi:

Zilu: “Supposing that the Prince of Wei counts with you to aid him in governing, what would you do in first place?”

The Master: “A rectification of names, without any doubt”.

Zilu: “Have I rightly understood? But, Master, you are not there! Have you said to correct the names?”

The Master: “Zilu, what a boor you are! When he does not know what he is talking about, a good man prefers to remain silent! If the names are incorrect, we cannot maintain a coherent discourse. If the language is not coherent, the affairs cannot be fixed. If the affairs are left undone, the rites and the music will not be able to thrive. If the music and the rites are neglected, penalties and punishments cannot strike justly. If the punishments are deprived of equity, the people no longer know which way to dance. This is why the good man only uses names if they imply coherent discourse, and only holds discourse if it leads to practice. This is why a good man is so careful in what he says”⁴² (Lunyu, XIII, 3, as cited in Cheng , 1997, pág. 102)

The act of naming is essential in the political realm, as all the state’s scaffolding operates in an echeloned manner for its correct functioning. Modern state governance attributes roles that are constitutionally enshrined, having legally established responsibilities, limited capabilities, and fixed periods of time. Either an elected official or a bureaucratically hired employee, the hierarchy is clear, and the functions should permit a smooth operation. Kong

⁴² Own translated from French.

Fuzi's aphorisms on name correcting theory had the objective to project this same idea, but on a more profound and socially binding level. If the king, the father, and the son are aware of their name (role in society), harmony and stability would reign, there will not be injustice nor wrongdoings in the deliverance of policy application and governance.

This search for ritual adequacy, if interpreted in that manner, can be recognized to be the Confucian dream of a world not placed under the aegis of government -even if ideal-, but rather one of self-balance. In Confucius there is a great nostalgia for the original adequacy of the human adventure to the natural course of things where the Dao manifests itself, without having to be explained in speech and in principles (Cheng , 1997). Ergo, even though he is setting the rules for good governance, the ideal is to inhabit a world that would not require a centralized force and that can socially manage itself, just as expressed in Lunyu II, 3.

In retrospective, Ruist perceptions on governing are varied but do follow a particular ritual directionality. First, recognizing the existence of chaos in the realm and its causes, the responsibility of the ruler to transform societal behavior through the example and the furthering of education. An education that should clarify the functioning of harmony, patriarchal hierarchy and family centrality through a clear language that enlist the correct placement of names. A placement that delineates normative alignments, responsibilities, and limitations. It is a mostly clear formula intended to be applied along the teachings of the classic texts to generate a humanness that permits peaceful co-existence and healthy relations under heaven: *Tianxia duatong*.

Having said this, just before moving into the description of Punitive or Exclusive Ruism, it is extremely necessary to, as we presented Ruism and its teachings, to visualize its critics as well. Even though we are choosing to explain Chinese foreign policy discursivism under this lens, and as in any systematic branches of knowledge, there can be critics and disagreements. Hence, for the sake of argument we are going to recover, among others, Wang Chong's and Mozi's defiance to Confucian and Neo-Confucian teachings and approaching's.

2.2.2. Critic and defiance to Ruism: Wang Chong's and Mozi's reinterpretations of the Way

Wang Chong (27-97 CE) is one of the most influential and independent thinkers of Chinese history. In a period where Ruism clearly dominated Chinese thought, he did not hesitate to

express ideas that were not in conformity with it, questioning the Master and his disciples' numerous times. In *Luheng*⁴³ (disquisitions), the seule book he wrote, he dedicated a chapter ("Ziji") to act as an autobiography in where it is expressed that even though he grew up in the sein of a poor family, his intelligence and tenacity permitted him to construct a solid educational path and the acquiescence of wide knowledge from an early age. Probably halting his career as a scholar due to unorthodox commentary and a scathing spirit, the ambitions he claimed were modest, not coveting wealth or honor above what he considered to be deserving of (Bottom Beja, Cervera, & Yong, *Historia Minima de El Confucianismo* , 2020).

Against Dong Zhongzu's methodological approach, Chong did not envisage the Master as an incorruptible saint, but as a common -state of the art- human being. To sustain the argument, efforts were dedicated to expose the various inconsistencies and contradictions in his work, most importantly remarking that the Master did not live according to what he taught. An attitude unworthy for a sage, Chong blames its procurement to his disciples since the majority of time- when incapable to understand allegories, lessons or aphorisms, no challenge was posed towards him for doubt dissipation (Bottom Beja, Cervera, & Chen, *Historia Minima del Confucianismo* , 2021). How could a man then reflect on his teachings when regarded as unquestionable? Even though an unintended consequence, self-reflection, as one of the core values of Ruism, must have been more seriously taken by its greatest exponent.

Kong Fuzi's approach on the Theory of degeneration do not convince him either. Once he extended the critics onto the Classics, an over exaggeration of the ancient monarchs' virtues was to be acknowledge, as he arguments, their teachings were placed as universal truths without any further comparison or extended example. He signaled that humanity, now and then, have the same essence under the sky and while antiquity is praised for its moral and orderly greatness, adversity and hardship was to be equally found. To cite his words:

⁴³ According to Alfred Forke, who translated Chong's work and consider him to be one of the best chinese thinkers, the *Luheng* was polemic because it served as a medium for Chong to express ideas, he considered wide of the mark. It was through this confrontation and discussion with alternative ideas that he was able to casually develop a philosophy of his own (Bottom Beja, Cervera, & Yong, *Historia Minima de El Confucianismo* , 2020).

“Men of previous generations drank blood, ate herbs and did not know the five consumable grains: the posterior generations dug the earth to elaborate wells, plowed the land to plant seeds, drank water from the well and ate grains besides knowing the usage of water and fire” (LH 56, as cited in Bottom Beja, Cervera, & Yong, 2020, p. 99).

Interestingly, this disputes with the traditional Ruist acceptions and the Master’s directionality of the classics revolved around a materialistic interpretation of the universe and a combat to superstition. By neglecting the intentionality of forces that lead humanity’s destiny and the intervention of spirits, he reconceptualized *tian* (sky) to be a material substance that was only capable of reproducing life due its expediton of *qi* (water/vapor) in great quantities above earth (Bottom Beja, Cervera, & Yong, Historia Minima de El Confucianismo , 2020). By separating the natural from the divine in *tian*, he reweighed the envisioning of sacrifices, augury and portents, so dear and culturally significant to Ruist practioners.

While completely discarding any communication between Tian and Man, he does recognize that changes in nature have effects on the living things. But the examples posed by him are natural phenomena capable of scientific explanation, certainly different from asserting them as visitations of Heaven in reprimand for the Emperor’s and officials’ misgovernment. Chang Chih-lien (1979) signals that while Lucretius raised questioning to Jupiter, protesting against his unfairness, Wang Chong asked himself ironically: “If tien could reprimand the ruler, he must also be able to appoint a wise prince. But it does the contrary: it first creates inferior princes who have neither principle nor virtue, and then reprimands them”.

Accompanying this disagreement to the anthropomorphic entailment of Tian, he argued that superstition was another fictitious instrument of the ruling class to frighten people and assure their obéssiance to the system’s operation. Either with the sake of leading them towards self-correctness -a Ruist conception-, Chong declared opposition to the theory of undestructability of the soul by claiming that body and spirit are extinguished after death. To succor the latter, he mentioned that every man is born with the *ying qi* (bones and flesh) and the *yang qi* (spirit), both mutually complementary and interdependent to the point that they cannot live by themselves, once *ying qi* fades, *yang qi* is incapable of sustainance (Chih-lien, 1979). The *qi* that accompanies *ying* and *yang* is the vital essence for life, retained in the bloodstream, at death it exhausts and ceases to function, thus fading the possibility of

becoming a ghost because the existence of the spirit can not transcend that of the substantial matter. But aside from its material improbability, why people claim having seen ghosts? Wang Chong explains: “the ghosts that are in the world are not the spirits of the dead; they are evoked by intense thinking and meditating” (Chih-lien, 1979, p. 17). They are nothing but illusions of men, products of a tortured imagination and a sickness of the confused minds. His criticism of superstition is important not only in theory, but in practice, as the belief that ghosts control happiness and misfortune - and thus the offering of sacrifices becomes necessary to ensure their blessing- is a mark of a declining society.

Wang Chong became a subject of interest right after the Cultural Revolution. Considered a rebel against the ideas of the landowner niche, who used the ideological weapons of materialism to implacably criticize idealist apriorism⁴⁴ and thus recognize his conceptual mélange with natural fatalism (Bottom Beja, Cervera, & Yong, *Historia Minima de El Confucianismo*, 2020). On the end, despite his eclectic categorization, Wang Chong is more inclined to Ruism than to any other tradition, to him, the Master’s teachings -though not to be considered as infallible- were the largest expressions of sage.

2.2.3 Mozi’s Defiance to the teachings

Having lived during the transition of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period, Mozi served as an overpass between Confucius and Mengzi’s traditional rituality. With the etiquette of “proletarian thinker”, hence the often-pragmatic character of his words and concern for the utilitarian criterion, was greater than his interest in Zhou’s high culture and elitist dynamics (Cheng, 1997). Similar to the Master’s quest -both in purpose and application-, he traveled from one country to another in the search of a sovereign willing to apply his doctrinal approach to Ruism.

Aside from Confucians, who deemed themselves -primarily and above all- a sort of moral elite, the Moist school from the fourth and third centuries created a strong organized community underwritten around his master’s theses on *The Analects*. From the outset, these theses strike by their willingness not to rely on the argument of authority and by refusing to integrate themselves into the orthodox of the tradition, therefore searching justification

⁴⁴ “The concept of the *a priori* is fundamentally a concept of *independence from experience*. The *a priori* stands in contrast to the *a posteriori* or empirical. Knowledge is empirical just in case it is derived from experience” (Martinich, A. and Stroll, 2024).

through rational foundations (Cheng , 1997). To reach a true rationality in the discourse, it intended to unchain itself from any subjectivity, that is to say, to reference and overly praise its enunciator. While the Confucian teaching is first and foremost about the very person of Confucius, the Moist discourse does not even bother to mention the author of a given thesis, sign of his rejection of the authority argument.

In a similar fashion to Wang Chong, Mozi and his disciples did not appreciate the sanctification of Confucius, as the Ruist tradition exists and thrives way above its reformative introduction. Moist school main preoccupations were then, apart from the aforementioned interest in rationalizing its discourse, to fundament the validity of its doctrine under the scope of three pre-established criterions. The general overview of these criteria is to be found in the following passage:

“Master Mozi said: “Firstly, it is necessary to establish the rules. Speaking without rulings is like setting the rising and the twilight from a potter’s turning wheel: the distinction between true and false, profitable and detrimental, will not be clearly acknowledge. Also, discourse must consider three criteria.

What are they?

Master Mozi said: “Every discourse must have a basis, an origin, and a utility. Where does that basis reside? It resides on the number of actions and gestures of the antique kings. Where does it reside its origin? It resides in endorsing the real testimonials apported by the ears and eyes of the people. Where does it reside its utility? It resides in the criminal practice and the politics, then we need to examine if it coincides with the interest of the people. This is why I mean by a speech that considers the three criteria” (Mozi 35 (*feiming, chang*), pg. 164, as cited in Cheng , 1997, pg. 121)”.

Following on Mozi’s critics, he also highlights his repproach to Confucian *ren* in its anchoring to feelings. In contrast to the subjective ritualistic reciprocity, Moism enhances the idea of a social contract, consequence of a mechanistic and telelogician philosophical outlook of social affairs. It is machine for the achievement of the greatest -calculated- common interest of all, bringing it closer to the mercantile-inspired legal positivism of the codifiers. Here comes into play their envisaging of love. Mozi’s “universal love” is regarded as different from Confucius’ “love for others” in a sense of common good and subjectivity of affection, the main difference lies in that the first does not share the radical confidence of confucians in the innate goodness of human nature (Cheng , 1997, p. 128). The whole thing

is to bring human nature to convert its individual interest into general interest, each finding his or her own account in the common good.

The most particular difference between both approaches into Ruism topple on their interpretation of music and pleasure, which are naturally combined in ritual aesthetics. Mozi sees it as a common tautology, but the deep contrast is between the search for harmony, which is paramount in the Confucian school, and the absolute character given to the Moist utilitarianism. It is in fact an obsession of functionality pushed to its peak, which makes us act only for a determined purpose, no action that is valid for itself and that has its foundation in subjectivity (Cheng , 1997, p. 133).

In the end, we can anewly conclude that Mozi's defiance is an expression of the existant plurality in the Ruist tradition. Different branches and interpretations of the teachings have added preponderance to the internal debate, thus enriching the existing conceptualizations, generating alternative political tools and foritying the discourses of peace, harmony and stability. The goal of this section of the chapter was to overcome the simplicity of Confucian-central assertions and to open the possibility of adhering contravening solutions to this thesis argumental problems.

2.3 Neo Confucianism

“Rather than seeing Chinese Foreign Policy as more or less consistent and culturally determined, we should see it as a product of the clash of several ideas of chineseness” (Waldron).

To comprehend Punitive or exclusive Ruism, it is plausible to commence briefly analyzing the origins and fundaments of Neo-Confucianism (as it is widely known). After Wei-Jin, despite the brilliant efforts of prominent scholars, Ruist learning started to fade in the face of the ascending popularity of Daoism and Buddhism among the population. Almost completely subdued in the religious and spiritual realms, its remaining in governmental practice would permit an arise when the historical Zhongguo was again unified under the Sui and Tang dynasties. Under this period of dynastical stability, the Ruist scholars paved the way to establish a new era by restoring the teachings of humane government and self-cultivation, insisting on the regulation of the family and social relations (Xinzhong, 2000). A full renaissance of the humanistic and ritualistic practices led to a time were great scholars such

as Zhang Zai, Zhu Xi, Lu Jiuyuan, and Wan Shuoren, stimulated their theoretical practice with Buddhist and Daoist teachings. But contrary to what might be assumed, this flourishing resided in an effort to contravene Buddhist teachings, which were considered selfish and of a desiring profit nature. As cited by Xinzhong:

The real value of Neo-Confucianism is not only in its 'return' to classical Confucianism, but in its fundamental transformation of Confucian doctrines which thereby enabled Neo-Confucians to construct a comprehensive and complicated doctrinal system containing an evolutionary cosmology, a humanistic ethics and a rationalistic epistemology. This system is built upon the influence of Buddhism" (Xinzhong, 2000, p. 116)

Therefore, Neo-Confucianism mainly stands in sharp opposition with the Buddhist doctrines of impermanence, anataman⁴⁵, and other-worldliness. This understanding of human insubstantiality, ergo, the absence of a soul, is averse to the Ruist most basic conceptions of life and self-construction. Neo-Confucianism opted to praise traditions, human relations, and social responsibilities over the superstitious worship of Buddha and their beliefs in Bodhisattvas and deities, thus assuring doctrinal dominance for the following eight hundred years and the expansion of its practices to other corners of East Asia (Xinzhong, 2000).

One of these re-directions lied on leaving behind exegetical⁴⁶ studies. Neo Confucian scholars argued that centralizing liberation from own's suffering was only construed by the practice of normative egoism. For the sake of transcendent goods, Daoist and Buddhist gave up this-worldly basic desires or forms of attachment to human relationships, attaining only to the achievement of "unsubstantiated" theories of the afterlife. A counterargument to the Neo Confucian view on the matter resided on the profound charitable action made and -even- required among Buddhist practitioners, a nonetheless controversial notion to Ruism, subordinating ethics to soteriology has problematic implications. As Tiwald (2018) mentions: "If all norms, including ethical ones, are justified to a significant degree by their contribution to one's own quest to end personal suffering, this will give a different shape to very notion of goodness" (p.134). Jointly, their address to meditative practices to control rowdy intentions and feelings was condemned through the Ruist impression to better lean on

⁴⁵ "Firstly, atman, can be translated as "self," "inner self" or something less physical such as the "core of individual identity". In terms of the "self", the atman is something that distinguishes the self from the physical body, and the real self, the intelligent self or the self of knowledge" (Hershock, Peter D., 2005).

⁴⁶ Critical explanation or reinterpretation of texts.

a combination of respect to reverence, self-cultivation, reflection, and study. Desire then became an intricate and serious matter of philosophical discussion at that time due to the influence of Zhu Xi, whose sharp distinction between permissible and impermissible desires amplified the array of the traditional outlook.

The naissance of this Neo-Confucian -or rather Neo-Ruist- conception can be traced back to the Northern Song period (960-1127), with Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi at its very core. The Cheng brothers solely developed a disruptive metaphysical framework, a sophisticated multi-faceted moral psychology, acuminated the objections to Buddhism and Daoism and advanced theories of governance and administration. Alongside Zhang Dao and Zhang Zai, -and sometimes Shao Yong, depending on the historian interpretation-, the majority of the scholars upheld charges in public service, often acting in opposition to the ideas and projects of Wang Anshi⁴⁷.

Although the precursors of the tradition, the most influential Neo-Confucian philosopher is Zhu Xi. Born after the dramatic fall of Northern Song and its subsequent relocation to the South in 1161, his life was undoubtedly marked by instability, violent interruptions, and a standoff between the two states. This forced co-existence was interpreted as a reflection of his dynasty's weakness, hence considering the military recovery of the historical Zhongguo as a moral imperative. In the words of Smorenburg, "accordingly, the topic of warfare permeated his work, featuring not only in those writings directly concerned with practical issues of contemporaneous political relevance, but also in his more theoretical and foundational works" (Smorenburg, 2017, p. 4).

As an anti-peace advocate, he stood in utter contrast with the notion of *Confucian Pacifism*, which regards the recourse to violent conflict as a sign of moral bankruptcy in the sein of a tradition that historically has privileged the civil over the military. The origin to this supposed pacifist tendency has its origin in Lunyu 15: I, a narration of a conversation between Duke Lin and Confucius regarding a discussion of military affairs in which he suggested his dislike. But contrary to the classical interpretation of the text, Zhu Xi implied that rather having an aversion to the topic, Confucius preferred not to tackle them with immoral leaders.

⁴⁷ Wang Anshi was a governmental reformer and minister who implemented highly controversial and unconventional idealist policies, "wanting to emphasize the practical application of the Confucian classics, Wang wrote original interpretations of several ancient works and instituted these as standard texts for the state examinations" (Smorenburg, 2017).

As he stated: “Duke Ling of Wei was a ruler who lacked the Way and, furthermore, had military aspirations. Therefore, he responded by saying he had not learned about it and left [Wei]” (Zhu Xi, 1313, as cited in Smorenburg, 2017, p. 10).

Aside from its interesting intakes on military thinking and formation, which are the foundation of Punitive Ruism -we are going to later deepen on them-, he also retook Cheng’s characterization of *li* and the (Buddhist) Huayan’s doctrine of “the one and the many” to argue that everyone under heaven is endowed with the same *li* and the same *taiji* (Supreme ultimate), metaphorizing it with the moon’s reflection over aquifer bodies to argue that *li* does not split when being infinite particularities (Feiran, 2023). This contribution can be said to be the basis of co-existence in Ruism, the ultimate connection between all the human beings that require harmony.

After the great influence of Zhu Xi, the Taizhou school proved to be an standing stronghold of neo-confucianism. Named after Wang Hen, this academic collocation distinguished itself by popularizing Ruism on the basis of Yangming’s fervent belief on the universality of innate sagehood. Not depending on a formal education or the access to learning by books, sagehood could be developed through everyday practices from the common folk, evidently farthing from Ruist orthodoxy and highlighting the important moral consonances with Daoism. To strengthen this resolve, Li Zhi and Luo Rufang theorized around the pre-socialized expressions of the heartmind to be the inbred and ideosyncratic expressions of authentic good, allowing virtues to be passed through generations. Consequencial to this essentialization, both philosophers advocated for women’s education due to their equal capacity for virtue and wisdom (Tiwald, 2020). Though, the Tianzhou school was not the sole established in the period, as the Yongjia⁴⁸ school appeared in the outlies of the philosophical tradition to proliferate on issues of governance and administration and in objection to the Cheng’s speculative metaphysics. Their practical orientation tended to measure the application of public policies and moral standouts by reason of public welfare and general social benefit, on their view, every action was to be judged by its consequences and not its desirable outcome. Again, remarking its strong practical orientation (Tiwald, 2020).

⁴⁸ Named after the county were this branch originated and where its most prominent scholars lived and thought.

This fertile and subsequential re-interpretation of orthodoxy saw the rise of the so-called “evidential studies” in the midst of the Ming-Qing transition (1640-1700 BCE). Principally led by the acquaintances of Gu Yangwu and Wang Fuzhi, this scholarship approached to the disciplines of philology⁴⁹, geography, mathematics and astronomy, beginning to doubt in the Ruist canon and eventually proposing numerous reforms. “New Confucians” (Xin Rujia) paved the way to a reconceptualization of the tradition and foresaw an increase on its application and popularity, not only in the Middle Kingdom, but along the vassal states of South East Asia. As Tiwald puts it:

“The thinkers of the Song-Ming period did so much to add philosophical depth and systematicity to the more laconic and fragmentary Confucian canon, it thus understandable that the scholars who are themselves philosophers or looking for philosophy in the historical Confucian tradition would be drawn to its greatest systematizers” (Tiwald, 2020).

Every great tradition has metamorphosical stages, rearrangements, reforms and new interpretations as the political and social conditions transit through time. The Zhongguo Kong Fuzi inhabited was predominantly different from that of Mengzi and the Xin rujia’s, proving adaptability to be necessary if the practical application of the previously mentioned philosophical notions were to thrive. Ruism has excelled this and many other tests along history, being this thesis a living proof of that achievement. The Neo-confucian concept of exclusivism -or punitivism- is going to be the central core to understand the manner in which foreign policy was conducted during Ming-Song and how those prerogatives can be found in the modern discursive constructions of the CCP’s justificative efforts. Ergo, this chapter will find its closure by rigourosly examining the origin of the notion, its development and more important characteristics.

2.4 Exclusivist Ruism

“By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart” (Lunyu 17:2).

Following and furthering Feng Zhang’s theses covering the contemporary introduction of Ruist notions into CCP’s foreign policy instrumenta, this thesis will idle on the author’s

⁴⁹ “The study of language, especially its history and development” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024).

overview of exclusivism to proceed with the identification of the replicable elements in the Ming and Song dynastical rigmarole purview. To understand its theoretical viability, we must equally resort to discursivism to chiefly elucidate the inconsistencies that Mengzi perceived in the philosophical tradition when identity, chineseness and cultural birth markers come up to debate. Ergo, what can be identified as exclusivism and to what extent it does impact on policy making? Surely an extensive inquest -which overall is the central axis of this bachelor's thesis-, the anchor of its response must certainly lie in ethnic-origin storytelling.

As boarded in the initial phase of this chapter, historic studies reveal that documentations of cultural origins may not reveal the objective facts but rather the -often-mythological assimilations of the “who we want to be”. Although we should avoid cognitive dissonance when associating the latter with the conceptions of national construction, the placement of certain examples and conceptual portrayals can match it to Western -and Modern- equivalent experiences. In this fashion, Benedict Anderson's “*imagined communities*” could be resorted to enlist three fundamental cultural conceptions that, once they lose their axiomatic grip on men's mind, could only permit the arise of the possibility of imagining a nation. In his words:

“The first of these was the idea that a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth, precisely because it was an inseparable part of that truth. It was this idea that called into being the great transcontinental sodalities of Christendom, the Islamic Ummah, and the rest. Second was the belief that society was naturally organized around and under high centres - monarchs who were persons apart from other human beings and who ruled by some form of cosmological (divine) dispensation. Human loyalties were necessarily hierarchical and centripetal because the ruler, like the sacred script, was a node of access to being and inherent in it. Third was a conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable, the origins of the world and of men essentially identical. Combined, these ideas rooted human lives firmly in the very nature of things, giving certain meaning to the everyday fatalities of existence (above all death, loss, and servitude) and offering, in various ways, redemption from them” (Anderson, 1991, p. 36).

Sidelining Fairbank's warning on the latter⁵⁰, we can argue that he shares Anderson's inclination to suggest culturalism as a scheme to approach the query. Although a possibility,

⁵⁰ “We would do better to apply the idea of culturalism and see ancient China as a complete civilization comparable to Western Christendom, within which nation-states like France and England became political subunits that shared their common European culture” (Fairbank, 1992: 45).

Jau-hwa Chen (n.d) cites Chang Hao to appraise it as too simplistic and amplified, the dynastical-subject identity revolved around its opposition with the Other, an ethnic Other: the barbarians. Ruism makes it clear through The Master's interpretation of sharedness-morality, that time and space must not be limitations to transmit the Way and extend the veil of harmony outside the traditional thriving socio-configurations. Not ever seeking to limit ritual apprenticeship, he mentioned: "It is, in retirement, to be sedately grave, in the management of business, to be reverently attentive; in intercourse with others, to be strictly sincere. Though a man goes among rude, uncultivated tribes, these qualities may not be neglected" (Lunyu 13:19). The passage assures that difference is not a valid reason to ostracize other human groups and that -at least that appears to be on the surface- everyone is equal Under Heaven. Nonetheless, by jointly acknowledging the existence of a yawning breach between those who followed the teachings of the ancient kings and those who did not, he questions the moral quality of their doctrines and practices, and probably those of their political organizations. A sample of this disdain for the foreign is traced by Chen (n.d) in Mengzi's comments on *Praise Songs of Loo*:

"He smote the barbarians (rong di) [戎狄] of the west and the north, He punished ging and seu" (gin seu) [荆舒], to argue that one should not turn away from the teaching of the sage kings of Yaou, Sun, Yu and Chow-kung, and follow the doctrine of rong di. He said: "...I have heard of men using the doctrines of our great land (Xia) to change the barbarians (yi), but I have never yet heard of any being changed by barbarians (yi)... Now here is this shrike-tongued barbarian of south (south man) [南蠻], whose doctrines are not those of the ancient kings. You turn away from your master and become his disciple...I have heard of birds leaving dark valleys to remove to lofty trees, but I have not heard of their descending from lofty trees to enter into dark valleys" (Mencius 3, Part I: 4).

The contradiction hence appears. Ruism doctrine is not strictly applied when approaching not "Chinese" peoples because their ways were pondered lesser in the eyes of scholars. Primarily justified by the brisement with the northern tribes, blood kinship and geography became important factors of unity in face of the aggression, allowing cohesion, strength, and potency. The challenge to the Chinese status was being, in their eyes, weakened by other ethnic groups, giving place to the popular yi/xia distinction, a distinction that is grounded - to a certain degree and with nuances- in both culturalism and speciesism.

It is important to refresh the fact that Ruism seek an ideal social and political order based on humanness, proper ritual practice and moral emulation, and those outside Zhongguo -yi (East), man (South), rong (West), and di (North)-, unknown or undismayed by their existence, were portrayed -as signaled- uncivilized. Ruism on its agglutinant three-dimensional conception of Xia, Jiao, and Xue, unequivocally exerted the impregnation of exemplarism among the “Chinese” society and the reinforcement of stigma towards any dissimilar credence. The insemination of this exclusivist tendency led to a hyper fixation on family-centric social operations that has impel certain academic circles into assigning the tradition the label of ‘consanguinitism’ (Poust, 2024, p. 2). The concept of a family of practitioners then appears to be the originating point of communal identity, now the geography, the ethnicity, the culture, the political system and the moral guideline transcended into a unique formula. As consequence of the latter, we can observe that:

‘The Chinese language might reflect a certain contempt for such bordering tribes’, with the Di tribes classified under the dog (quan 犬) radical, the Man tribes classified under the beast/ insect (hui 虫) radical, and the Mo tribes classified under the reptile/beast (chi 豸) radical” (Ames and Rosemont, 1998, as cited in Poust, 2024, p. 3).

According to Zhang (2015), the transition from the cosmopolitan and inclusive society of Tang to the exclusivist and secluded nature of Song-Ming is due to one major and two contributing conditions. The first accounted for the presence of serious foreign threats -at least those who jeopardized regime’s survival- and the following two for the dynastical material conditions (defense capabilities, composition of the army, economic capacity) and the presence of a weak executive in domestic decision-making (either a child emperor or ministry position). When adjoining these elements and identifying the existence of a crisis around governance capability, exclusivism could be disaggregated into two strategic approaches: idealpolitik and realpolitik. Each of the latest concepts modeled foreign policy and can certainly be identified through discursive criteria. To identify each of them in a clearer manner, we will define them through the following:

Table 2. Differences of Idealpolitik and Realpolitik as exclusivists foreign policy approaches

	<i>Idealpolitik</i>	<i>Realpolitik</i>
Approaches	Those strategies that are primarily based upon moralistic and ideological premises rather than on calculations of interest and necessity.	A strategic approach that combines the presence of cultural prejudices with policy pragmatism. “If, however, the threats are powerful enough to destroy dynastic survival, rulers will usually turn to realpolitik policies of survival, despite continuing a culturally exclusive and politically comforting discourse for internal ideological legitimation” (Zhang F. , 2015).

Zhang, F. (2015). Foreign Policy Traditions in Chinese History. *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Summer 2015, Vol. 8, No. 2

Zhang’s and Poust’s definitions on exclusivism finally allow us to clarify on this particular branch of Ruism as it breaks from the traditional orthodoxy of inclusivism. As mentioned, social and political conditions oblige philosophical theoretical initiatives to navigate the interstices of change and contextual interpretation. During this particular period of history, the unity of the traditional Zhongguo was threaten by the advancement “non-chinese” peoples who were considered culturally and ethnically lesser as consequence of not practicing Ru and not being politically organized under the dragon throne. As it will be explored in the following chapter, Song and Ming dynasties suffered from these conditions and therefore applied exclusivist foreign policy actions. The history of these dynasties and their aftermath would enable us to understand the CCP’s strategy of legitimation and their urgent need for re-unification as the axis of that discursive reality.

Chapter 3: Ming and Song Dynasties: History, Foreign Policy, and Exclusivism in Tianxia's Constitutional Structures

“The historian progressively realizes that the use and abuse of history in China by intellectual and political oligarchies becomes a powerful weapon to legitimize and redefine the new political situation of China. From the past until the present day, the acknowledgement of a long-lasting and unique civilization serves to legitimize the political direction and the nation's aims” (Pérez-García, 2021).

The following Chapter dwells upon historic processes that are essential to comprehend the development course of Ruism in policy deliverance and governance frameworks amidst the most controverted contemporary dynastical cycles. By commencing with a discussion around the conception of Chineseness, the considerations to establish a common identity and the forging of a lasting unity around Confucianism as the identifiable cultural banner, we set the pieces to comprehend Zhongguo's vision of itself and the role it played in the East Asian International System. By doing so, alongside the application of Reus's Smith Constitutional Structures, Ruist exclusivist tendencies can be more easily remarked when particular domestic and foreign decisions were undertaken by the Mandarinate, Provincial Governors and the Song of Heaven himself. The following pages account for a comprehensive summary of the Tang (618-907 CE), Song (960-1279 CE), and Ming (1368-1644 CE) periods, with a focus on the overall decisions that particularized their acumen and the strategies that ultimately sealed their fates, which were, at least during this momentum of Zhongguo's history, usually related to the management of their foreign policy advocacy.

3.1 Discourse, Hegemony and Nation-building in Imperial Zhongguo

Confucianism and Chinese dynastical history are figurately and acutely interwoven into each other. Rulings, policy enactment, governance frameworks and empire-wide decision-making criterion delved in a constant dichotomic injunction to harmonically accommodate the strictest exertion of *Ru* along the ever-changing conditions of the international system. A downfall of the unchallenging domination of the Middle Kingdom and the gradual ascendance of the Northern Tribes tipped the scales unfavorably to the discursively led “divine corrector” for the first time, uncoiling an unprecedented crisis that made necessary a

transitional re-structuring from an inclusivist to an exclusivist political regime. To understand the department and presence of these exclusivist tendencies being applied into Foreign Policy, it then becomes of utter importance to revise the different events that required the *mise en place* of directives that possessed one or more of the characteristics presented in the previous chapter.

The Ming and Song Dynasties'⁵¹ sociopolitical panorama are outstanding examples of the multipolarity that succeeds hegemonical centrality, a concept that Robert Gilpin presents on a realistic perspective by elaborating on the Tucedian concept of "Hegemonic War"⁵² as a general law of dynamics of the international relations for the West. Hegemony, as understood in the IR disciplinary umbrella, is based on the ability of a dominant group to be presented and perceived as the carrier of general interest. Hegemony operates through two primary mechanisms. Firstly, when a dominant state, through its demonstrated successes, becomes a model for emulation and draws other states into its own developmental trajectory. This process of emulation, often driven by a desire to achieve similar levels of prosperity and security, contributes to the hegemon's influence and expands its sphere of dominance. Secondly, a hegemon exercises leadership by actively shaping the international system, guiding it towards a direction deemed beneficial to the collective interest (Gilpin, 1998).

In the case of China, this conception is asserted subtly differently. As stated by Rihua (2011), in ancient Chinese both "hegemony" and "lord" are synonyms for the portrayal of maximum status among the feudal entrants, a sigil that its transliteration into the macro conceptual arena aligns with Wallerstein's "Primus inter pares". However, as the author also refers, during the Pre-Qin this reference is often alluded and interchangeable in the ancient texts with "great state". But as expected, the concept suffered certain alterations and evolutions that over time arose debates over its connotations and philosophical affiliations:

⁵² According to this *Anschauung*, wars of hegemonic court, unlike those described by Kenneth Waltz as wars of escalation, imply the threat and transformation of the structure of the international system as a whole. Such conflicts involve the confrontation of the hegemonic power and a rapidly rising contending State and are the consequence of important alterations in global political, economic, and strategic affairs.

“Mencius was the first to understand the way of the hegemon and the way of the sage king as two different political routes, thus giving rise to “the conflict between sage kings and hegemons. “In contemporary Chinese, the term lord of the hegemony refers to “the person or group with the most prestige and power in a given field or geographical area,” while hegemon, hegemonism, and a hegemonic state begin to be associated with words with negative connotations, such as arbitrary, control, oppress, and invade” (Yan, Bell, Sun, & Ryden, 2011, p. 183).

This ancient Chinese school holds that the main factor of hegemony revolves around political power, whose core resides on the ability to govern and exert influence. Hence, the fate of the hegemony depends solely on the extent of virtue and self-cultivation that the ruler’s manifest in governing activities, pushing Rihua to cite Mozi when establishing that: “the theory of political hegemony proposes “worthy princes and enlightened prime ministers,” and firmly believes that “when the worthy person is present, then all under heaven submits; and in the use of one person, all under heaven will obey” (Yan, Bell, Sun, & Ryden, 2011, p. 185). This obedience, as furtherly signaled among the pages of this thesis, must rely on a solid moral Ruist basis that fosters conveyance and a sense loyalty among vassals and undermined contenders. That is why that following on the contemporary assertions, this captaincy, when effectively executed, fosters a sense of shared purpose and stability within the international order. However, the pursuit of a collective interest must be carefully balanced with the distributional aspects of the system, as is articulated by Parsons. A hegemon's ability to maintain its position and ensure the long-term stability of the system hinges on its capacity to guide it towards new forms of inter-state cooperation and division of labor (Arrighi & Silver, 1999). This requires a proactive approach that transcends the "tyranny of small decisions," where fragmented interests and short-term considerations undermine the collective good. By fostering a framework for shared benefits and equitable distribution, a hegemon can certainly mitigate the risks posed to its position and maintain it as long as possible.

The Son of Heaven was capable of exerting that systemic influence and -to a certain degree- control through what Stephen Krasner describes as organized hypocrisy. This means that the Imperial apparatus infringed in acute contradictions when noting the normative claims that were to embody the Tributary System and the real behavioral approach to the vassalry of this world order. It is maintained by a symbolic recognition of the emperor’s

superior status and a hierarchical regulatory system of cooperative relations. As it was explained that the patriarchal figure was to govern by the example and moral virtue (Wangdao⁵³), the same scheme was maximized into the cultural sphere of influence, where Zhongguo acted “as the superior moral power, responsible for maintaining and harmonizing this order with the examples it set, with institutional innovations and with force if necessary” (Zhang Y. , 2001, p. 12).

The tribute system has its origin in the very formative years of Zhongguo’s international relations during the Han Dynasty and it surpassed its primitive characterization as a trading network or an international economic system, its purpose and operation had deeper political implications and cultural significance. Even though it was not formally institutionalized until the Tang Dynasty, tributes had already taken an active role in directly and indirectly deterring external threats to the Empire. But as Zhang (2001) clarifies, this allied-like configuration of the neighboring international space paled in comparison with its mature expression of *Pax Sinica*, an extension of the domestic political patterns to ensure a wider co-existence between the conforming entities of such meta-space, that is: the nomadic tribes, peripheral organized communities and, later on, the European States.

“Within the empire, the myth of world suzerainty was a useful ideological instrument for ruling China and as Shahrukh's ambassadors and the khojas found, it was not to be compromised. But in foreign affairs the myth often proved a hindrance. Then quietly, the emperor practiced what he pleased, not what he preached. Relations on an equal basis with Herat, Lhasa, Kokand, or Moscow were not exceptions to Chinese practices at all. They were customary dealings on the unseen side of a long-established tradition” (Fletcher, p. 224).

Nonetheless an invigorating and interesting parallel, the situations which are to faithfully emulate a hegemonic cycle were established around the principles of the World System Theory⁵⁴ and, as of our historic dimension, China is not yet to be thought in contemporary

⁵³ The Way of the ancient kings

⁵⁴ The theory of the world system clearly analyses the formation and evolution of capitalist production as a system of social, economic, and political relations. This post-Marxist critique focuses on the hierarchical inequality that results from the concentration of multiple types of production in specific geographical areas, which become sites for capital accumulation that allow the strengthening of state structures. This dynamic shows the existence of a heterogeneous world market expressed in the deterioration of the terms of trade, where centres of monopoly predominance take advantage of peripheral production diversity. This is possible because new transport technology allows remote markets to be maintained, and military technology ensures the power to enforce the terms of trade that favor them (Wallerstein, 2005).

notions. The latter has led some scholars to frame-up the systemic challenges faced during Ming-Song around Huntington's "Clash of civilizations" intellectia rather than on the narrow hegemonic logics. To this, Huntington posits those differences in the terms of "background knowledge" and cultural values, which are supposed to foster mistrust, antagonism and ultimately lead to confrontation. Huntington suggests that coincidences and cultural differences are the issuers of interstate interests, rivalries, and alliances in a multipolar and multi-civilizational world, thus resting on the premise that conflict stems primarily from difference, he asserts: "they [the states] are much more likely to see threats coming from states whose societies have different cultures and hence which they do not understand and feel they cannot trust" (Huntington, 1966). This perspective suggests that the post-Cold War era would be characterized by escalating conflict between civilizations, particularly those identified by Huntington as Confucian, Christian, and Islamic. However, this rigid and binary framework, while a recurring theme in Western international relations theory, fails to capture the full complexity of human interaction.

The "self-other" dichotomy, while a powerful tool for understanding conflict, does not encompass the multifaceted nature of human relationships and their interaction with the environment. A more nuanced understanding requires a departure from the Hegelian dialectic's binary framework and an exploration of alternative perspectives. The concept of Zhongyong biazhenfa (中庸), a Ruist principle emphasizing balance and harmony, offers a contrasting lens through which to analyze self-other relations, moving beyond the limitations of a binary framework and embracing a more multifaceted understanding of human interaction. Even though "The Clash of Civilizations" is a quite unique thesis on post-cold war power relations and conflict, using examples as the Balkans war, its approach on the understanding of the self-other relationship continues to be framed in a thesis-antithesis dialectical construction. This limited and either-or oriented perception of reality unable western theorists and policymakers to find a new and invigorated alternatives to conflict resolution in a cross-cultural-civilization context; being Ruism the only recommendable approach for the matter.

In the sein of these unraveling contradictions and theoretical incompatibilities, Zhang commends us to resort to Reus Smith's constitutional structures to donate a clearer nuance to our argumental line. These structures operate as complexes of metavalues that define the

social identity of the state in a sense of legitimization in three main components: i) hegemonic beliefs in the moral purpose; ii) organizing principle of the state and, iii) pure procedural justice (Zhang Y. , 2001). Their historical contingency bestows them with the capacity to contextualize the standards of each of the latter and more precisely identify a political discursive construction which, in the current analysis, revolves around the Ruist's conceptions on political organization, moral guidelines, social relations, family constituency, patriarchal hierarchy and cosmological order. Besides Zhongguo's contemporaries during Ming-Song, it can be argued that it was the sole that based Smith's constructional platform maxims around a philosophical system and not an organized religion. As mentioned by the author himself:

“As the Confucian conception of the world is civilizational, the organizing principle of sovereignty is concentrically hierarchical, with China sitting at the core and others assigned a place according to how 'civilized' they are. An elaborate set of rituals (li) are designed and evolved as an ancient standard of 'civilization', which define the norms of procedural justice and the observance of which decides the places of others in the hierarchy of the Chinese world order. It also enables others to participate in this order. Seen in such a light, the tribute system is the fundamental institution that embodies both philosophical assumptions and institutional practices within the Chinese world order and that structures relations and ensures co-operation between China and other participants in Pax Sinica” (Zhang Y. , 2001, p. 57).

But to faithfully achieve its intended application, Smith signaled the necessity to posit the understanding of these structures under the scope of institutional rationality. But to what extent do institutions exert influence in the habitus of systemic ordering? Although different approaches could be borrowed to aggregate filtrated responses, recovering the constructivist theoretical core of this thesis permits the diaphanous identification that different spheres of the social tissue are reflected in the major institutions. This is made in a dual-mode rationality projection whose' complexity encompasses rule-following behaviors and purpose-seeking behaviors. At least to what thought processes respects, Hodgson (1985) emphasizes the capacity that institutions hold to mold perceptions and behaviors to excerpt their main role to control attention and cognition, thus, justifying their sustainability to the extent that they shape the actions that serve to maintain them. Institutions are organized instruments of

control, and their constitutional structures portray the socio-cultural conditionings that sustain them.

These behavior habits inhabit a long-term memory alongside rules, allowing institutions to permeate a strong sense of stability reflected in the practice of ceremonial values that, in concurrence and alienation, generate natural static systems. As *li* is comprehended in Ruism, the correct and continuous application of rituals transmits to the Tianxia's vassalry a sense of sturdiness and solidity, ceremonial acts operate similarly in the West because it is a respected duty and the reason-to-be of governmental institutions to overlook, systematize and guarantee the exercise of societal -certainly contractual to an extent- traditions. A sense of cultural obligation is what justifies their operation due to their stability contributes to the predictability of the actions of others in the international system: expectations that generate trust and hence efficiency when handling interactions.

Social capital is the backbone of institutional scaffolding and the prime axis of its operational logics as it engages through predictable and reliable behaviors, letting human emotion to be added as a binding factor when internalized norms and habits are invested into a larger scheme from which emanates a sense of belonging and identification. That is why “when an individual violates group norms, the reaction of others frequently involves a sharply negative emotional response. Thus, the mind reinforces established institutions with a binding force which is emotive” (Redmond, 2004, p. 185). Ergo, in a subtle and brief manner to answer the lastly posed question, it can be argued that rationality acts as the central outill of institutional stability and replication, being through its most orthodox conventions that it allows a long standing perpetuation of hegemonic logics or, at least, the casting of rule-following patterns when it comes to the perpetuation of social hierarchies and instrumental and technological foundations. Rationality, inscribed under the lenses of constructivism is what ensure the way in which constitutional structures are a valuable resource to resort when explaining the interstices of the Ming and Song tributary system.

Having said this, the adherence of the following table helps us to easily compare the natural composition of three different models of relational operation:

Table 3. Constitutional structures and fundamental institutions of international societies: a comparison.

<i>Societies of states</i>	Ancient Greece	Imperial China	Modern Society of States
Constitutional structures			
Moral purpose of the State	Cultivation of <i>bios politikos</i> ⁵⁵	Promoting cosmic and social harmony	Augmentation of individuals' purposes and potentialities
Organizing principle of sovereignty	Democratic sovereignty	Sovereign hierarchy (civilizational)	Liberal sovereignty
Systemic norm of procedural justice	Discursive justice	Ritual justice	Legislative justice
Fundamental institutions	Interstate arbitration	Tribute system	Contractual International law Multilateralism

Note: Zhang, Y. (2001). System, empire, and state in Chinese international relations.

Having explained this, Krasner's theoretical roundabouts on organized hypocrisy can be associated with Smith's constitutional structures by focusing our attention on the normative frameworks that govern state behavior. The dynamic around discursive engagement, publicly espousing the system's dictations while simultaneously contradicting them, is a crucial dynamic to understand the manner in which the states navigate the international system (as they seek to maintain legitimacy and avoid censure from the engaged actors). The Chinese tribute system serves as an early example of a constitutional structure that established a set of norms governing interaction in East Asia, creating, as previously mentioned, a hierarchical schema in which the states acknowledged the Son of Heaven's authority in a subtle effort to analogously pursue their own interests. Such behavior outstandingly exemplifies organized hypocrisy, as the states adhered to the norms of the tribute system to gain economic benefits and maintain regional stability even as they operated in self-serving ways. Smith's theory emphasizes on the role of legitimacy in shaping state department due that suggests that states engage with normative frameworks to secure their normalcy along the stanchions of the

⁵⁵ "The definition of human being by Aristotle shows that *bios politikos* is the one which makes the specificity of man in the midst of so many other animals, social and gregarious. The *bios politikos* has two dimensions: praxis, that is to say action and lexis, to say the word. These two dimensions are opposed to force and violence. For Aristotle, man is a *zoon logon ekhon*, that is to say a living being capable of language. This is to say, he observes by casting a social gaze on his society, that slaves and barbarians for example are excluded from this world of conversation because they are incapable of any free speech. They are therefore analogous, muets, because absent from the polis. The latter being the place that guaranteed freedom of speech and equality among citizens.

international order, just as modern states similarly seek to maintain their legitimacy by publicly endorsing norms that resonate with global expectations, despite potential discrepancies in their actions.

Furthermore, Reus-Smit highlights the process of socialization, wherein states internalize norms and values that shape their identities and interests. This socialization is what helps explain why states engage in organized hypocrisy. Just as states within the tribute system internalized norms of deference and reciprocity, leading to behavior that reflected the hierarchical structure, contemporary states adopt international norms through socialization processes, resulting in instances where their actions diverge from the very principles they publicly champion (Zhang Y. , 2001). Ergo, we could conclude that this linkage between Krasner's "organized hypocrisy," the Chinese tribute system, and Reus-Smit's constitutional structures theory offers a provoking understanding of how states navigate the intricate interplay of norms, legitimacy, and power dynamics in international relations. Thus, revealing that state behavior is often characterized by the necessity to reconcile public adherence to norms with the pursuit of national interests, underscoring the complex and sometimes contradictory nature of international politics.

Although scooping into 595 years of history requires a profound level of straining and fractalization of the contrasting yet interconnected approaches over these pivotal periods for the national narrative, the chapter will center its analytical lenses around specific strategies - employed by both dynasties-, including military campaigns, diplomatic negotiations, and trade relations. By comparing these proceedings, the chapter aims to shed light on the complex discursive dynamics set up by the Mandarinate, the Son of Heaven, Ministers, and Court advisors over supra relations and their lasting impact on the development of a contemporary, nationalistic-inclined, and historically driven Neo-Confucian Foreign Policy.

3.2 Tang Dynasty's collapse: culmination of cosmopolitan Zhongguo

Mark Edward Lewis commences "China's Cosmopolitan Empire" by emphasizing a fascinating yet apparent fact: "Most Chinese regard Tang dynasty (618-907) as the highpoint of imperial China, both politically and culturally". Certainly an earned nickname, cosmopolitanism permitted an age of unparalleled transformation for the Empire along the lines of economic and political institutions, poetry and literacy, philosophy and religion and

military conquest and operations. But as any great empire, the steadfastness came to an abrupt and inevitable descent which, marked by rebellions, political turmoil, and administrative crisis, led it to pass as the “last great Chinese dynasty”. As for the second half of Tang’s mandate, the geopolitical realities of East Asia shifted slowly into what was to later characterize the international scene until the ascendance of Qing: a vague memory of greatness dissipated by the incapability of honoring their historic strength and unrivaled cultural hegemony. What once belonged to the reclaimant of Heaven, was to be shared among the states that strengthen from the sucked blood of a moribund apparatus. But how is the greatest time in history so quickly be overturned into an era of fading shadowiness? An intricately complex question that would usually require an equivalent intricate answer can be, curiously enough, easily responded.

Tang’s permissiveness to alien structures is arguably the trébuchet of its preeminence and the cause of its posterior collapse. By self-proclaiming as the heirs of the imperial unifiers, their relations with the outer world -hoping to emulate Sui’s and Han’s greatness- primarily set around the task to reincorporate the lost territories and restore the ancient ways. As the main focus of Foreign Policy agenda, they devoted an important amount of time and resources to fulfill that historic endeavor at the time they also profited from the plurality that settled the great walled cities of the central planes. It is highlighted by Lewis in the following extract that:

“Expansion into northern Vietnam, wars against the Turks, the occupation of the oasis kingdoms of Central Asia, and expeditions to restore former Han colonies in southern Manchuria and Korea were the result. Emperor Yang’s vision of matching the Han led to the abortive invasions of the Korean peninsula that destroyed the Sui dynasty, and Emperor Taizong of the Tang almost suffered the same fate. But just as the Tang dynasty could not avoid incorporating numerous institutional features that had evolved during the period of disunion, so the Tang emperors’ dream of restoring the Han world had to adapt to a new international order” (Lewis, 2009, p. 159).

Under Han, Chinese geopolitical panorama was characterized by existing along the borders of plural tribal communities whose cultures and socio-political structures were stringy disparate. This systematic contrast between China and its neighbors has become a key feature of Han’s civilizational notion, one which transcended throughout all the echelons and stages of dynastic history. Nonetheless, the defining lines of ruling capability of the East Asian

international system blurred over time as the ruling capacity of China faded. Familiarity with the Turkic cultures of the steppes allowed the establishment of a Sino-Altaic system for diplomacy, patrimonial political engagements, and diplomatic approaches that served the dynasty to benefit from the fissures of their relatives and permitted to enrich Tang's armies with foreign personnel. Effective to demonstrate superiority, but harmful enough to provoke domestic rebellions that will later destabilize the very core of governance providence, again, the general outlook signalizes the same lack of procurement that Kublai Khan would also regret in the future (Lewis, 2009).

To the East and Southwest, the dynamic was more complex because unlike previous dynasties, Tang confronted states in line with Zhongguo's idiosyncratic values and beliefs. Although vassals and respectful admirers of their cultural and political influence in the region (Japan, Vietnam, Korea and Nanzhao), these entities operated in full independence from dynastical control and, in some cases, they were treated in terms of equality and fair neighborliness. This change of momentum in the regional level of operations was also influenced by the advancement of Buddhism, thus portraying a refreshed pattern of foreign relations that acquired its upmost expression during Song with the distinctive: "China amongst equals" (Lewis, 2009). But this Sinicization of the East, simultaneous to the Islamization of Central Asia, caused the already mentioned rebalance in the international system to suffer a large-scale re-focus, leading the authorities to transit into a mainly ocean-based silk trade that integrated Zhongguo into a larger sphere of global-sighted commerce arena that dramatically changed the proportion on their foreign affairs management.

This shift in the approach was reflected in the words of Emperor Taizong in 627 CE when announcing: "Although I have conquered the world by military action, I should, in the end, pacify this world by civil virtue". This statement followed upon Tang's court claims regarding that their main foreign policy goal was to revolve around the *spread of virtue and righteousness* to foreign lands, a bright moralistic motto that, nonetheless holds a discursive glow, it might not have been of pure-hearted intention, but rather a post-conflict strategy, since those principles were only feasible when Zhongguo's military excursions proved successful and when dealing with friendly or weaker neighbors. In fact, as mentioned by Zhenping (2013), moreover, Tang dynasty relied more on the usage of direct force to forestall threats than its predecessors, -even when appealing to third-party aid when weak or internally

unstable-, leading the author to reconceptualize the Chinese comprehension of virtuosity and righteousness around the lines of Ruism:

“In policy discussions, the meaning of *de* is therefore better communicated in English as “in virtue of,” “efficacy,” or “power.”. Frequently associated with *de* is the word *yi*, which is conventionally translated as “righteousness.” In Tang diplomatic vocabulary, however, *yi* was not as moralistic as the English term righteousness would imply. The term was synonymous with efficacy and was cognate with “appropriateness” and “fitting,” both also pronounced *yi* in Chinese. The gist of *yi* was the appropriateness of an action taken in a specific situation. An appropriate action was one fitting to the situation and to one’s status. No universal moral judgment was to be passed on actions taken by people or the state. A Tang military campaign against another country, for instance, could be considered appropriate if this country was a vassal state that refused to fulfill its obligations to China, if it harassed Chinese borders, or if it had long been an enemy to China (Zheping, 2013).

In policymaking, that statement subtly refers to a ruler’s ability to swiftly respond to a specific context situation in a manner in which they would ultimately promote the well-being of the constituents, attributing accountability for organizing governance along the lines of an adjustable and certainly -state-inclined- subjective scale of appropriateness. Following that example, the ruler should aim to influence a foreign people rather than forcing them to change their costumes for the sake of improving local administration and without the need of disturbing the existing customs, a practice called by Emperor Taizong to be the ability of: “aligning people’s desires”; showing that any diplomatic activity required a certain degree of understanding of non-Chinese cultures and lifestyles to handle conflicts more effective and straightforwardly (Zheping, 2013). This pragmatic decision-making, characterized by timely and context-sensitive actions, not only maintains stability and support from citizens, but also enhances diplomatic ties. Furthermore, during this period it can be overly observed that the interconnections between external pressures, such as droughts or conflicts and interactions with nomadic tribes, significantly underscored the dynamic nature of Tang’s foreign relations, illustrating that a strategic understanding of those relationships -and its implications- was essential.

Tang ruling apparatus seemingly understood the last concept almost to perfection, because even though they tended to degrade foreigners and their cultures, they hold significant information regarding their language, desires, and attitudes towards the Middle

Kingdom. In fact, as a result of this archival research, it was shown that certain of the interstate relationships -that could be dated back into antiquity- reflect that the majority of members of their contiguous sphere were influenced by the virtuous of the Sage kings and took part of Zhongguo's defenses on several occasions due to a faithful admiration and an intended emulation of their political systems and way of life. The main conclusion from the aforementioned statements regarding exclusivism being practiced (although unaware) as the ulterior approach at the time, came from a letter of Taizong's favorite concubine, Xu Hui, who stated that: "Territorial expansion brings no eternal peace to China [...] Policies that easily overburden the people are often the root cause of domestic upheaval" (Zheping, 2013).

Caution then became the epicenter of discursive construction along the Dynasty's governing institutions, as continuing to emulate Sui's overambitious policies would have led them to suffer a quite similar fate. As Wen Zheng, a widely respected "prudent" minister insisted on, maintaining harmonious relations with neighbors and the exercise of restraint was in Zhongguo's best interest to benefit from a growing and peaceful international ambiance (Zheping, 2013). Regrettably, this early receptiveness and quasi inclusivist tendency ended abruptly when Emperor Taizong notoriously commenced an aversion to external counsel or catechizing, a situation that would inherently escalate after the death of the Empress, the sole rampant balance over the emperor's ravenous attitude towards policy discussion. The following extract from Wei Zheng with Emperor Taizong in 637 CE incarnates the desperate spirit of such a brusque changeover:

"At the beginning of the Zhenguan reign period, Your Majesty desired demonstrations by the ministers. You often admonished them to speak up. In the middle [of the reign period] you happily accepted [criticisms]. You are different now, for you only reluctantly accept [opinions differing from yours]" (Wang Wungyu, as cited by Zheping, 2013).

Wei Zheng, assuming the late Empress duty on statecraft moderation, thus acted as an ultimate -yet wavy- barrier of restraint for the application of a truly cosmopolitan and inclusivist foreign policy agenda, a sorrow fact that was confirmed after his death, when Emperor Taizong lost ties with peaceful diplomacy and set in motion a series of extended military campaigns: Koguryo in 644, 647 and 648, Xueyantuo in 646 and Kucha in 648

(Zheping, 2013, pág. 263). Fueled by the dream of constructing a “Greater Tang”⁵⁶ (Da Tang) and thereby wielding the title *of parent of all living mankind* (cangsheng fumu), a subtle sense of responsibility for the well-being of all peoples was developed along the imperial lineage in conjunction with the patronizing of a periphrastic “holy” design that, along the lines of Tianxia logics, granted them enough alibi and cautionary preceding’s to continue their expansionist machinations. A formula that has been mentioned thoroughly in this bachelor’s thesis once more appears to confirm Ruist theorization on foreign policy: policy capabilities and political circumstances in the Middle Kingdom would incline the Mandarinate, the ministries and the Son of Heaven to find a way to disguise their discursive outills into a plea for inclusivism, even though the factual revision loudly reveals that a moral-lead political system -at least in our Ruist focus- is notoriously not applied and serves only to be a rational-like key in foreign affairs.

Nonetheless an early confirmation and interesting argumental line, it does not answer the main inquiries of the current section: the manner in which Tang mistakes open the door to Ming and Song periods and the extent on which Taizong’s model would continue to mold on their governance execution. To further in these inquires though, it is necessary to comprehend that the length of Tang period also meant the existance of variant vertients of policy based upon the ruler’s envisage of policy direction and the inner and external circumstances that the Empire faced. After Taizong, one of the major roundabouts was applied by Emperor Dezong, whose understanding of the world centered around the idea that military prowess and dominance were no longer suitable to the reality of such a parabolic period of time. Instead, they needed to accept fluidity and uncertainty as the norm in international relations and to reimagine the intricate vassalry system along the lines of alliances -even with unpleasant and opportunistic partners- to sustain long-lasting harmony Under the Sky (Zheping, 2013). A memorial submitted to the imperial court in 793 by Lu Zhi, a Hanlin academician, proposed a manner to properly maintain and protect Tang borders that paralleled Dezong’s fluidity-centered logics by stating that:

⁵⁶ A political entity that would encompass foreigners into a larger and prosperous family. As early as 626, Emperor Taizong announced that he “regarded countries in the four seas as one family and peoples within the [Tang] territories as his children.”

“Those who support the established [world] order assert that virtue should be used to edify people in remote regions. They, however, fail to realize that virtue without [the backing of effective military] power cannot subdue [the foreigners]. Those who prefer military solutions argue that without force ruffians cannot be suppressed. But they fail to understand that one cannot rely solely on force without cultivating virtue. Those keen on forging marriage alliances claim that such alliances would create harmony with one’s neighbors. But they do not understand that, although we may initiate an alliance, they [the foreign rulers] could always abandon it. Those who admire the Great Wall believe that fortifying natural barriers would enhance the country’s defense and deter invaders. But they fail to see that no one can hold on to a natural barrier with insufficient strength and a poorly trained army. And those who place high value on punitive expeditions insist that expelling and deterring [invaders would] stop their harassment and violence in the future and free [people from the burden] of the labor services and taxes [needed for an all-out war]. They, however, do not realize that without well-trained soldiers and well-built fortresses, they would succeed in neither deterring nor expelling [the enemy]” (Zheping, 2013, pág. 291)

The passage stimulates a dual encouragement in policy that recognizes the blatant necessity of maintaining peaceful relationships while also acknowledging a punitive approach when required. On one hand, proponents of the established order advocated for the use of virtue to influence distant regions as a suggestion that moral leadership can foster cooperation, a quite traditional Ruist principle that, as mentioned in the last chapter, focuses on benevolence (*ren*) and righteousness (*yi*) to inspire respect and loyalty from followers and allies. However, Lu Zhi overlooks the reality that without the backing of military power such virtues may fail to assert control over those who resist, while convergingly, such advocacy on a force-driven solutions to suppress threats is neglecting the long-term benefits of cultivating strong diplomatic ties. Again, circling around the same discussions from the Dynasty’s early days, doubtfulness and suspicion over the non-Chinese continued to be the daily grind that might had certainly been the fall of cosmopolitanism: one cannot fully benefit by engaging with those not considered to be trustful. Ergo, -and still following on the memorial’s main points- even though marriage were seen as a means to achieve strong and harmonical stages, the inherent risk that supposed that a foreign leader would not honor their agreements, demonstrated the fragility to rely upon fluidity to be an alternative to Taizong’s punitive ventures, thus making Zhi’s contribution to be such of pivotal importance in the history of

Ruism and Chinese international relations theory⁵⁷. Despite such a seemingly hopeless conclusion, Lu Zhi continued his efforts by proposing a “three-scenario” analysis of the world where he carefully scrutinized different probable scenarios regarding foreign affairs and proposed strategic paths to successfully overcome them:

Table 4. Lu Zhi’s Three Scenario Analysis of the world

	First Scenario	Second Scenario	Third Scenario
<i>Scenario</i>	Hegemony: foreigners submit to Zhongguo’s authority by pledging their loyalty. In such a context, maintaining peace with and accepting foreigners should be Tang’s guiding policy.	Foreign countries with the dominant position: such wretched situation would force the dynastical authorities to act unprovocative towards its neighbors where the indication of threat is not imminent.	Military equilibrium: “This situation implies that China should “strive for safety but not take the initiative.” China should “fortify the natural barriers to strengthen its defense and train and ready the troops for a foreign invasion”
<i>Justification</i>	According to Lu Zhi: “refusal will frustrate their willingness [to adopt] our culture. If we terrorize them by force, we will be guilty of killing captives. How can we not accept and comfort them, and incorporate them into our system ...”	This logic follows the principle that when military strength renders Zhongguo incapable of defending itself, relations must undoubtedly turn to be humble and condescending. Seeking friendship and not enmity to still thrive in a context that would not favor the overall Tang policy approach.	In this situation of evenness and equipoisy, the country must be always ready to defend itself from foreign threats. History has taught us that moments of impasse are tense and usually lead to conflict.

Note: Zheping, 2013, Tang China in Multi-Polar Asia: A history of diplomacy and war

At first glance, this three-way strategy proposal is not fundamentally following upon Zhi’s basis to acquire and practice equilibrium and strict halfwayness in foreign affairs, but on the contrary is enhancing the application of exclusivism. This tendency is, however, understandably ulterior in this period of time due to the previously mentioned circumstances that Zhongguo faced. Ascension, economic thrive, military expansion and an augmented vassalry also meant an increase in security threats (borders were larger and easily breachable), governance (more territory equals plurality and policy challenges) and a loose

⁵⁷ The text illustrates the need for a balanced approach that integrated moral diplomacy with the readiness to use force only when necessary, highlighting the complexities of withholding through a singular strategy.

of respect that translated into aversion and resentment from the conquered tribes and fallen kingdoms. The challenge of every rising hegemony is to counter the consequences of the enlisted situations while not losing the grip, a dualistic yet incompatible approach to clasp in the long way.

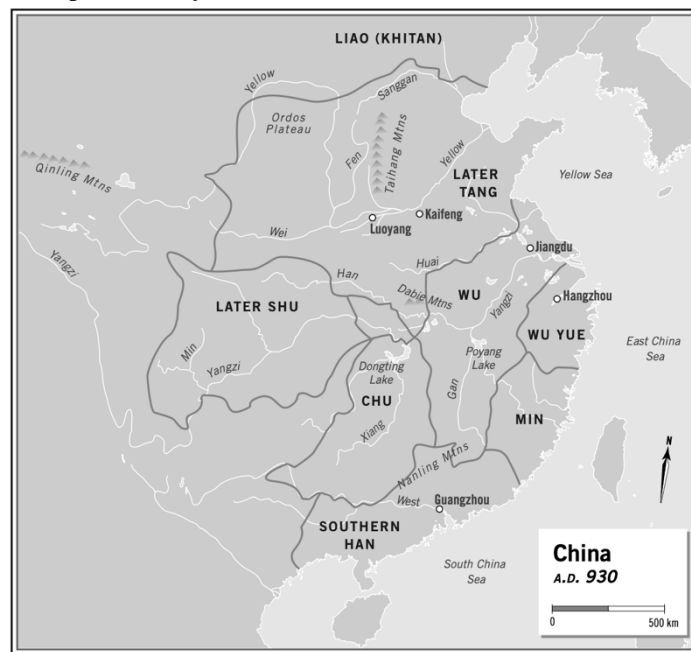
In the last stages of Tang ruling over the Middle Kingdom -and certainly its weakest point politically and militarily- Chen An added a new layer to the philosophic assertion of Chineseness by coining the term “with a Chinese heart” (huaxin), which suggested that apart from the origin of the upbringing or cultural inclination, those who adopt the ways of rituality and righteousness can be considered themselves Chinese. This concept was recuperated by the Policy Advisor Wang Qi with the hope to influence foreign policy into a Sinicization of foreign hearts and not a seizing of their lands, a procurement that would allow to continue and augment their cultural influence without the need to persist with brutal expansionist campaigns. At this point, it was also done with the objective of recasting respect and desire for the emulation of their ways as a means to counter foreign invasions and to survive from a lasting period of peace⁵⁸. This approach was not taken in high regard by the last generation of Tang scholars and courtiers, whom among Sikong Tu, claimed that only through military ordeals it was possible to achieve Zhongguo’s external goals: “to supplement virtue with stratagems and to complement stratagems with deceit. Only this [approach],” he said, “could bring longevity to our country” (Zheping, 2013, pg. 301). Curiously enough, Sikong’s dilemma proved wrong sooner than expected, as Tang Dynasty collapsed in 907, one year earlier than Sikong’s own death.

After the fall of the Tang Dynasty Zhongguo became divided into northern and southern regions, with each area fragmented into further competing entities (see map. 1). This era, known as the Five Dynasties, (907-960) was marked by significant changes as any other early phase of division, with a particular focus in the decline of the powerful families that once dominated imperial governance and society. These families lost their influence because they had become fully tied to high ranking positions in the Tang imperial court, abandoning their local roots to establish themselves in the capitals of Chang’an and Luoyang, where they acquired new properties. This relocation left them vulnerable during times of

⁵⁸ Wang wrote: “Foreigners will settle down by themselves if we edify them by Chinese moral influence.” In this wishful thinking, a Chinese emperor would “gain the respect [from foreign rulers simply] by cultivating civil culture (QTW, 769, p. 3596.).

crisis, and the subsequent sacking of the capitals led to the deaths of many prominent family members, the collapse of their dynasty, and the loss of their wealth. Another less obvious factor in the decline of these powerful families was the increasing number of their descendants over the years. Many provincial elites in late Tang and tenth century China, as indicated by funerary inscriptions, were from less successful branches of these prominent families and were not locally rooted. The leading Tang families, like those from the Northern and Southern Dynasties, often crafted genealogies that recognized only those branches that continued to produce officials in the capitals, excluding less successful ones. However, these lesser branches did not vanish; instead, they sought new opportunities for advancement, either by aligning with military governors in the northeast or pursuing roles as local officials or businessmen in the south. The posterior map showcases a map of the geopolitica entities established during the chaotic period that preceed Song unification after Tang’s demise:

Map 1. Five Dynasties Period



Note: Zhang, 2001, China’s Cosmopolitan Empire

Alongside the mentioned patterns of political service and increased geographic mobility among elites, late Tang also sought a sustained shift of the Chinese civilization towards the

southermost parts of their dominion. This trend, that had an early commencement in the fourth century and the southern dynasties, had a deepening due to a longstanding attraction to fertile lands and more reliable rainfall that was bolstered by improved water transport on the river's region and the Grand Canal area, which connected agricultural hubs to northern economic centers. After the An Lushan Rebellion, this allure of southern prosperity was enhanced by the natural and military desvastations of the northern regions, a phenomenon that implode large migration waves. In fact, as mentioned by Yongjin (2001), between 742 and 1080, the population of the north grew only by 26 percent, while the south experienced an staggering increase of 328 percent. The ongoing economic development in the south during the late Tang, coupled with the turmoil in the north, also contributed to the decline of the less successful branches of leading families.

In conclusion, the decline of the Tang Dynasty's established landholding patterns, urban designs and commercial practices paved the way for significant changes in the tenth century, notably the end of the great families and the emergence of a merocratic ethos. In accordance with the latter, it becomes of utter importance for this bachelor's thesis to highlight and insist on the impact of exclusivist policies, which not only strained the population, but also fostered a climate of constant turmoil as the central government alienated local elites and marginalized less successful branches of the nobility. This exclusivity extended outside the domestic domain towards vassals and neighbouring tribes and kingdoms, leading to weakened alliances and increased tensions. As a result of this constant disillusion and lack of procurement, the demographic and economic shifts towards the south were accompanied by instability and conflict, underscoring the challenges of governance in a rapidly changing landscape. Ultimately, this dynamics set the stage for new geographic, social and political institutions that would not just the later affect Song Dynasty, but all the continuity of imperial China, revealing the complexities and costs of mantaining hegemony through exclusionary practices.

3.3 Song dynasty: From vassalage to equal-termed international relations in East Asia

3.3.1 Northern Song Dynasty

The transition from late Tang to early Song Dynasty in the 10th century represents a pivotal break in the history of imperial China. The ancient context of hereditary aristocratic families, with lineages spanning centuries, finally crumbled amid the chaos and civil confrontations between 880 and 960 CE, a movement that led to the loss of the traditional statecraft (Kuhn, 2009). This vacuum at the very cusp of imperial institutions permitted the rise of a new class of scholar-officials educated in Confucian principles and trained through a competitive civil service examination system, which emerged in readiness to take on the task of redefining the longlasting corruption inherited from Tang's corps of courtiers and local officials. This new generation of civil servants understood that the continuity of the dynastic lineage depended upon the restructuring of policy deliverance and the guidance of the rulers through the Master's path, as the loosening of ritual practice during Tang was, in a certain degree, considered to be the main cause of their descent. Upon this light, the scholar-officials contributed widely in politics, ideology, philosophy, culture, literature, arts, technology and science; establishing Song Dynasty as a remarkable transformative era. Few periods in Chinese history illustrate so clearly the intention to incurse in profound reform with such effectiveness and spirit. Signaling the beginning of modernity in the Empire, some historians refer to this changes to be a Chinese "Renaissance", as solely under this paramount stage of Confucian-lead doctrine, thought, writing, governance and administrative practices became accessible to a broader audience⁵⁹ (Kuhn, 2009).

The Han Empire (206 BCE-220 CE) was established under the territorial and administrative unification achieved by the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BCE), and the Tang Empire (618-907 CE) benefited from the advancements made by the Sui Dynasty (581-618 CE). In contrast, the Song rulers confronted a more challenging landscape: re-establishing the lost administrative scaffolding after the shatter of Tang was a challenging task to the rising elite. The dynasty's founder, Emperor Taizu, did not inherit the same favorable conditions that the Sui had provided for the Tang, he and his brother/successor, Emperor Taizong, had to lead the

⁵⁹ a concept that Peter K. Bol captured by translating Confucius's term *siwen* as "this culture of ours."

task to conquer various kingdoms in Sichuan, Central China and Shanxi province to achieve a true reunification along the lines of Jianxiong's historic Middle Kingdom⁶⁰ (Ge, 1994, pág. 184). For its part, Zhenzong -the third emperor- undertook significant efforts to consolidate centralized authority and developed a foreign policy of coexistence that would significantly influence future generations. Aspiring to create a lasting dynasty, these three emperors recognized the need to establish precedents for their successors, thus focusing on defining the dynasty's "inner nature" and emphasizing on the importance of Confucian ideology and cultural values. They formulated new statecraft policies rooted in these principles by clearly outlining the roles of government officials in their implementation while they consulted Confucian scholars for guidance; also incorporated their own military experiences into governance. This blend of traditional Confucianism with pragmatic military insights led to a unique form of governance: a new militarocracy which certainly merited to be a new aphorism for exclusivism. However, this intake to blend military might and civil servanthood resulted in a filtered version of Ruist exclusivism that, in many ways, would disguise to be a practice of strong inclusivism⁶¹:

Hailing from a military background and aware of the disastrous consequences of military force during the past eighty years, Emperor Taizu realized the need for a powerful civil government. Following his lead, the Song emperors deliberately strengthened the civil principle (wen) over the military principle (wu). They negotiated bilateral agreements and peace treaties in response to the military challenges of the alien Liao, Xi Xia, and Jin regimes on their borders. To strengthen civil society, the Song emperors imposed economic, tax, and monetary reforms. Song scholars were encouraged to investigate nature, conduct experiments, and invent new technologies in agriculture, textile and ceramic production, iron refining, ship building, armaments manufacture, and many other fields" (Kuhn , 2009, p. 2)

Hence, and with the objective of not falling over Tang's deceitful practices, a classical education became essential for attaining influence, power, and wealth, as the new officials emerged from the children of the scholar-official elite, land owning gentry, and affluent merchant families. In such a dynamic environment, the political and moral tenets of Ruism

⁶⁰ See Chapter 2, pg. 3 (Ge, 1994, pág. 184)

⁶¹ Due to the nature of expressed policies during this period, it would be neglectful to extendedly framed them as exclusivist due to their prime intention to seek pacifism, that is why it was decided to acknowledge them as a form of strong inclusivism. Inserting this liminal concept is done with the hope that the readers does not pre-emptively bias themselves until furthering developing on Song's notion and approaches.

began not to only regulate public behavior, but the management of the upper class's activities and schemes. The aspiration to succeed civil examination thus became a goal for countless educated men throughout the dynasties from that moment onward, remaining influential until Emperor's Puyi abdication in 1912. But despite the opportunities for upward mobility, even nowadays in China and all around the globe, the stratification of society, the marginalization of a struggling lower class and a small elite that benefited from immense luxury, assure that most of Song populace would never take part of the official class⁶² (Kuhn , 2009).

But while the Song enjoyed remarkable advances in civil society, it faced significant military challenges. The period that followed the dismantlement of Tang lasted 450 years, a period that led to the encirclement of Han territories which imposed a lasting burden over the young and fragile Song Dynasty, making the government apparatus to regard their neighbors as an unparallel threat to their dominance and ethnic superiority; even after consolidating power, the Song elite struggled to reconcile their empire with the territorial achievements made by the illustrious Han and Tang dynasties⁶³ (Kuhn , 2009, p. 4). Many Song intellectuals perceived the tribes on their borders as vastly different from the Han Chinese, lacking shared language or any similar cultural values. Their clothing and hairstyles further emphasized the existing divergence and more importantly, they did not adhere to the rituals of status differentiation that were a central phase to Chinese society. From the Chinese perspective, these groups existed almost on the periphery of civilization, despite being politically comparable to the Song and militarily superior, a cultural disdain was reflected as a broader feeling among the Han Chinese, who regarded these tribes as culturally inferiors (Kuhn , 2009).

Such attitudes not only alienated potential allies but also provoked hostility from neighboring regimes -which could have been engaged in more constructive relations-, a narrow view that ultimately contributed to a geopolitical landscape characterized by isolation and conflict that undermined Song's ability to consolidate its influence into a more constructive projection. This dynamic illustrates the inherent tensions between maintaining

⁶² The rich literature and poetry of the period reflect the conditions of both the common people and the affluent. Song poets expressed sympathy for laborers and criticized corrupt officials for their oppression. However, they ultimately accepted the plight of the masses as a given. Luo Ye, a lesser-known figure from the Song era, noted in his work that society was divided into two types of people: the cultured and the unlearned.

⁶³ At its peak, the Song empire spanned just over 2.6 million square kilometers, significantly smaller than both the Tang empire and the modern People's Republic of China.

a cohesive national identity and acknowledging the diverse realities of a multifaceted empire. The inability to integrate and engage with the surrounding non-Han cultures not only hindered the Song's diplomatic efforts but also left the dynasty vulnerable to external threats, revealing the complexities and pitfalls of an exclusivist approach in a rapidly evolving historical context. Once more, in the way of a general outlook, we can observe that from the very foundation of the dynasty, the same mistakes that Tang committed were emulated by an elite that considered itself at the center and which disregarded any type of foreign influence or advancement that could have been introduced.

As frustrating and stagnating as this might sound, the position acquired by the Song Dynasty in the treatment of neighboring nations turned to be a very particular one. According to Endo Satoshi (n.d), based on the research of Huang Chun-Yan, it is possible to observe that Song politically inserted themselves to manage over a continuity left by the middle Five Dynasties administration regarding “vassalage”, which internally contemplated various levels and dimensions in their approach. Those cataloged as “peerages” (jiedushi, 節度) were *China Irredentas*, a set of places that were supposed to be once more included after the unification processes, but that military resisted; Jiaozhi and Tangut among them. Due to the fragile situation and the spread of Song influence at the time, the official stance was to let them remain in such a position, this, while the Empire possessed direct control over appointing provincial governors, a stitch that did not maimed the nature of Tianxia logics and thus allowed partial control over the exercise of public policy and the manipulation of domestic politics to their alignment with those of the High Court (Yamazaki Satoshi, 2010).

This set up was regarded as an impressive opportunity to advance their governance deliverance modus operandi for being more productive, as it accomplished more tactical control with less resources and direct intervention. Ergo, during the reign of Emperor Huizong, Song began to approach their international relations with powers in Southeast Asia and Southwestern Zhongguo as an extension of its connections with the *China Irredentas* by altering their administrative terms. Such was the case of the kingdoms of Champa, Chenla, Java and Dali, whose Jiedushi's categorization, unlike the previously mentioned ones, were classified as vassal states under the emperor's own peerage, meaning that these entities lied over the dynasty's direct control and transcended the lines of decorative or limited appointments:

“In this way, the characteristics of the Song dynasty’s “vassalages” were that they treated peripheral countries as “jiedushi,” and positioned them within post-Tang dynasty China’s administrative system. Although they had a similarity to “international order,” they were an extension of the domestic political order, as previously emphasized. Naturally, this type of political order was established conceptually, based on the Song dynasty’s own subjectivity. However, based on the Song dynasty’s subjectivity, this type of political order does not necessarily mean that the order had no effect on reality. As YAMAZAKI Satoshi points out, ideals and reality appear as a phenomena of reciprocal action, and ideals are also a phenomenon that occur when they act on reality” (Yamazaki Satoshi, 2010).

Having said this, it can be acknowledged that claiming the title of “Jiedushi” -or appointed provincial governor, on its effect- certainly seem to have been an overture to the Song Dynasty for effective regional control. Simultaneously, it amounted as a manner to restrain peripheral powers that could have been a threat to their existence. Accept and swerve to Song’s superiority represented the quintessential overview of basic geopolitics, as by benefiting from adhering to the vast commercial and cultural network the newly empire provided, while attaining a limited degree of autonomy, a deal of greater benefits than by standing alone. This, at the time that -and as already highlighted- Song slowly broadened its frontiers, ameliorated ministerial duties, and experienced a regulatory relief in comparison to Tang’s over centralized management circumlocutions (Endo, n.d, pg. 7). For instance, Nong Zhi-hao, who held power in Guangyan—zhou -situated on the border between Jiaozhi and the Song dynasty- initiated a rebellion against Jiaozhi. In his bid for legitimacy, he sought the Song dynasty’s recognition as a “provincial governor.” Satoshi (n.d) mentions that, as is noted by Kawahara Masahiro (1984), when Nong Zhi-gao invaded the Song territory, that he expressed willingness to surrender on the condition that Emperor Renzong appoint him as the “Yonggui qizhou jiedushi⁶⁴.” To achieve this, during his campaign he aimed to seize Guangzhou and declare himself “king,” aspiring to establish an independent power in southeastern China, but ultimately, he failed to capture Guangzhou and was not granted that or any adjacent title. Nonetheless, it may not be an overstatement to suggest that his demand is to be considered a strategic move to gain the Song dynasty's approval for his control over

⁶⁴ Translates as: “Military governor of the seven prefectures of Yonggui.”

the region. In essence, he seemed to be seeking a way to enter the Song political framework while negotiating for a degree of autonomy.

This example in particular can lead us to evocate two preliminar conclusions: i) the fragility of imperial control over distant regions -where local leaders ought to carve and maintain their own power basis-, and ii) that Zhi-hao's desire to be integrated into a hierarchical system that prioritized loyalty to a central authority can be interpreted to be a consequence of Song exercising exclusivistic policies while pursuing control of peripheral regions (Satoshi, n.d). Revealing a certain fluidity in the political identity, this challenge to the official narrative was an attempt to reimagine the singular cultural and political identity that centered around the Han Chinese. It is, undoubtedly here, and with these kind of situations that this bachelor's thesis encounters sense on its argumental line, as it would seem that Ruist policies might inherently revolve around an ethnocentered exceptionalist discourse. However, as the last chapter showed us, it is just the result of misinterpretations and Neo-Ruist tendencies over policy that gave such an impression. The traditional teachings and *melangés* with Daoist and Buddhist interpretations on this very age is what has lead to important discussions nowadays.

But the state of affairs, as in any dynastical cycle, did not stayed permanent, and in the case of Song, the beginning of the end laid around the unsuccessfulnes of Wang Anshi's reforms. At the time, multiple views on institutional reform emerged among influential figures, with conservatives like Sima Guang and Su Shi focusing on the revitalization of Confucian values to restore societal ordering, and a more radical faction, led by Anshi, that advocated for comprehensive reforms around the examination system and legal and military matters (Kuhn , 2009). This period -and the reason why a reform package was thought necessary- was marked by significant military tensions and shifting alliances among the Xi Xia, Liao and Song, creating and unease among court officials. Though following a fragile peace with Xi Xia in 1044, Song administration attempted to ignore internal military shortcomings despite the burden of mantaining a sizeble army and the additional forces placed along Liao borders, a situation emphasized by Anshi's 1088 memorial to emperor Renzong that, although strongly resonated among the reformist circles, it was not seriously accounted due to succession matters that dragged the emperor's attention (Kuhn , 2009, p. 55).

In 1067, after the ascension of Zhao Xu as Emperor Shenzong, a period of necessary and celebrated reform was ushered. Eager to reinforce military defenses, reclaim lost territories and persist over his ancestor's legacies, Shenzong sought reliable advisors, which led to the appointment of Wang Anshi, whose previous accomplishments made him a suitable choice. Once with the title of Vice Chief Councilor, he seized the opportunity to implement his so called "New Policies", a series of reforms dedicated to fortify the state through economic, military, and educational initiatives that directly supported farmers and merchants⁶⁵ (Kuhn , 2009). This reformative efforts were aimed in every corner of the imperial administration and also were extended to the civil service examination system by shifting the focus around classical literature apprenticeships to further the focus on the *enseignement* of practical administrative skills. His Militia Act, following this same directionality, aimed to modernize local military forces by organizing households into militia units, thereby reducing reliance on the costly standing army, a proposal that encounter certain concern⁶⁶ over its effectiveness in comparison to the maintenance of a professional standing army.

But despite the intention and ambition of such reforms, they ultimately laid the foundation for future difficulties. For instance, the decision of engaging with Xi Xia proved disastrous, an opprobrious campaign that resulted in substantial losses, exposure on the shortcoming of the military reforms and paved the ground so that by 1082, the dynasty experienced severe setbacks and a critical juncture in its ability to maintain control over its northern territories (Kuhn , 2009, p. 57). Thus, amidst the growing political tensions that followed the death of Emperor Shenzong in 1082 and the assumed regency of Empress dowager Gao, Sima Guang, leading opponent of reformation, was called upon to advise the regential government to steer through the rough transitional landscape. The ongoing -and natural- tensions between reformists and traditionalists that ensued such an appointment underscored the fragility of Song's dynasty political structure and foreshadowed the challenges that would later contribute to the collapse of its control over the north.

As cited by (Kuhn , 2009):

⁶⁵ A key component of these reforms was the "Green Spouts Act" of 1069, which provided low-interest loans to struggling farmers in an effort to mitigate cash shortages and stimulate local economies

⁶⁶ It was Emperor Shenzong himself who demonstrated concern, to which Anshi's responded that counting upon well-trained local armies would enhance the empire's defense capabilities.

“During the final years of the Northern Song period, the government was absolutely powerless in fighting the rebels. This is because the policy-makers were not capable of assessing the true needs of the times. The Xining reign period reform of [Wang Anshi’s] government policies was adopted in a time when the government and the society at large were overly relaxed and inactive. The historical force caused them to take the inevitable measures of reforms. Unfortunately, their reforms were not in accord with the Way” (ZZYL, 24:599).

It would seem that from the author’s perspective it was this lack of correctment along Ruist values that led to the failure of the reformative era, however, that analysis lacks from the fundamental focus that this thesis has been insisting on from the beginning around exclusivism on every level, as the main reason around the political and military cornering of the dynasty to this point. More traditional approaches, even in the absence of innovation and anticipation, ought to maintain a certain degree of constraint with regard to their foreign relations, a trend whose regulations could had provided enough leverage to fortify for longer and to benefit better from cooperation.

A more detailed explanation on that fact can be found on the last emperor’s reign, which, contrary to the traditional narrative that attributes the fall of the Northern Song to the *French pareil* extravagance displayed at court, it can be alluded to a more complex bunch of decisions regarding diplomacy and military reforms. Although not outnumbered in the military engagements at the time, the poor leadership and overconfidence of the imperial court failed them to recognize the strategic and tactical weaknesses that thrived at every level of the apparatus (Kuhn , 2009). Huizong’s councilors and generals, blinded, were not capable to mobilize the fiscal and human resources needed to defend Zhongguo from an emperor that aggressively pursuit expansion. His campaigns against Xi Xia between 1103 and 1106 CE, and again from 1113 to 1119 CE, were aimed at reclaiming territories lost under Shenzong and Zhezong. However, despite momentary gains during the endeavor, these efforts proved not successful because their forces stretched too thin and were bad coordinated, which, on the end, in conjunction with their inability to capitalize on early victories not only weakened the empire but underscore the strategic miscalculations (Kuhn , 2009).

These same mistakes were repeated almost immediately afterwards when confronting the Khitan Liao -who controlled the sixteen prefectures- in an even more poorly equipped manner. The region held by Liao was coveted by Song’s emperors since the founding of their lineage -thus firing the ambition to reclaim them in 1109 CE- caused Huizong’s court to seek

an alliance with the Jurchen Jin Dynasty, whose growing power was already threatening the Liao from the north⁶⁷. However, the large scale “Fang La Rebellion” (1120 CE) diverted Song attention and resources, delaying the campaign, and causing a terrible number of setbacks by the time they decided to commence their mobilization. This triggered the Jurchen to quickly subdue Liao with minimum assistance from the Song and an augmentation of diplomatic tensions between the former partners, ergo causing a punitive invasion of the Jurchen in 1125 CE (Kuhn , 2009). The raider’s forces broke through Song’s defenses and captured key northern cities in order to quell the dragon throne to meet their territorial and tributary demands. Emperor Huizong, on the verge of a full-scale invasion and in an attempt to salvage the situation, abdicated in favor of his son, Qinzong, a change of leadership that did little to alter the chain of events that were to be unfolded as a vacillation between appeasement and resistance in the newly formed court ultimately permitted the establishment of a peace treaty in 1126 CE (Twitchett & Smith, *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 5, Part 1: The Sung Dynasty And Its Precursors, 907-1279 AD*, 2009, p. 615). Such diplomatic miscalculation only intensified hostilities and ignited a second Jurchen invasion a year later, whose forces swiftly penetrated the dynasty’s defenses until the sacking of the imperial capital at Kaifeng. This event, with also the capture of Huizong and Qinzong, merited the dismantlement of the leadership structure and accounted the end of the Northern Song Dynasty. Kuhn’s ensuing map displays the administrative -and political- division of Northern Song:

⁶⁷ Together, the allied forces planned to divide and conquer the enemies’ territory.

Map 2. Provinces of the Northern Song Dynasty



Note: Kuhn, D, 2011, History of Imperial China.

As previously mentioned, the collapse of Northern Song was the consequence of a large number of decisions and policy pathways along various imperial administrations that slowly paved the way to the encirclement that accounted its finale. From the management of their vassalage, the inability to positively wield their international influence, their foundational expansionist tendencies, the cultural mistreatment and the succumbing of reformation - among many other enlisted statements-, the Court's glorification of Ruist Exclusivism as the backbone of the dynasty's agenda pulled the strings enough to suffocate its capabilities around self-defense, fiduciaries', and local administration to a degree where foreign perception translated into a situation that essentially turned the entire country into a corpse waiting to be devoured by hungry vultures.

3.3.2 Southern Song Dynasty

According to Denis and Smith (2009), the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279 CE) stands as an emblematic period in Chinese history marked both by remarkable cultural achievements and profound cultural challenges. Emerging from the already described devastation suffered under Jurchen Jin invaders, this newly emerging second stage of Song was tasked not only with rebuilding a fractured state, but also with navigating along a complex interplay of ever-growing military threats, internal strife, and a quest to redefine national identity. Under this

light, the ascent of Emperor Gaozong in 1129 CE heralded an era of reform and resilience amidst the ongoing chaos. Such recognition for immediate stabilization made the administration's early decisions to be crucial ones for setting the tone on policy making, foreign affairs, local autonomy, and administration, and, more importantly, settlement for upcoming succession. Following the accounts of 2009 *Cambridge's V Volume History of China*, one of Gaozong's first acts was a symbolical one: the reinstatement of the regnal name "Jiayuan" and the issuance of a general amnesty; intending to unify a demoralized populace under a completely fresh mandate.

This political maneuvering was beyond only a ceremonial flamboyance, because it aimed to foster loyalty among subjects who witnessed the catastrophic loss of their land, this, by the hands of a people they deemed inferior in any specter of the cultural and ethnic range and whose presence in the north remain large. Such a fragile context, probably unparalleled in dynastical history, necessitated an imperial scaffolding which blended military readiness and diplomatic acumen: no longer does the dynasty bend over an *Idealpolitik* strategization pattern regarding their foes and neighboring states, but rather relied in a *Realpolitik* centered approach in a context that required it⁶⁸. Alongside the latter, the following passage underscores some of the major actions undertaken by Emperor Gaozong to restructure military governance and organization among the southern entanglement of Song:

"Most important to consolidating the new regime, a beginning was made in reorganizing the new government structure to remedy its military and administrative weaknesses. In the fourth month of 1129, a reform of the bureaucratic structure of the Sung central government was carried out. This reform, proposed by the chief counselor, Lu I-hao, simplified the structure of the bureaucracy in order to better cope with emergencies. The traditional three departments, the Secretariat (Chung-shu sheng), the Chancellery (Men-hsia sheng), and the Department of State Affairs (Shang-shu sheng), were merged into a single organization, still called the Department of State Affairs (Shang-shusheng). It was headed by two chief counselors serving the emperor directly, whose titles were chief counselor of the left vice-director of the Department of State Affairs (Shang-shu tso-p'u-yeh t'ung chung-shu men-hsia p'ing-chang-shih) and chief counselor of the right vice-director of the Department of State Affairs. The chief counselor of the left also concurrently held the position of commissioner of the imperial encampment, which gave him control of the imperial army. This measure greatly broadened the power of the chief counselors, who for most of the Northern Sung period had not participated in military

⁶⁸ These conceptual guidelines were explained and could be found in Table 2 of the second chapter of the current thesis under a Zhang's citation.

decisions” (Twitchett & Smith, *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 5, Part 1: The Sung Dynasty And Its Precursors, 907-1279 AD*, 2009, p. 653).

Above the issuances enlisted on the previous citation, in his endeavors to consolidate power, Emperor Gaozong took significant steps to diminish the influence of eunuchs at court, who had wielded considerable authority during the last stages of Northern Song⁶⁹. His reforms also included a strategic relocation of the imperial court from Hangzhou to Jiangning - renamed Jiankang-, which acted as both a tactical decision to enhance military coordination and a bold statement of defiance against the invading forces. This decision had a strong impact along the imperium as it demonstrated the ruler’s determination to reassert the dynasty’s dominium and to enhance the protection of the nation’s cultural heritage. For the first time, we might argue, there was a strong sense of deep seatedness relating a common Chinese background knowledge and assemble of traditions that were worth of defending; undoubtedly the characterization of a foreign threat was essential to reinforce a narrative that sought to unite the citizenry and the advocated vassals under one banner: a core set of historic values that exemplary mirrors the foundational statements of Confucius and the entire Ruist tradition.

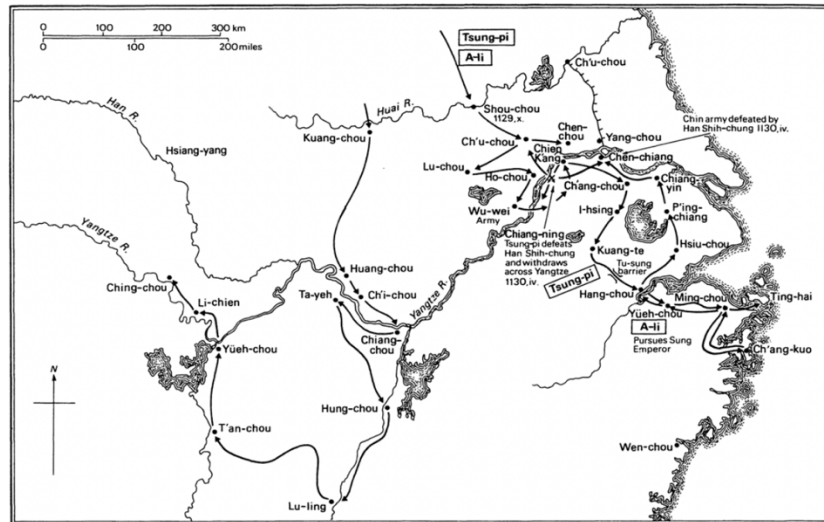
Aside from such an invigorating and quite hopeful sentiment, the political landscape, which became distinguished from a notorious precarity over administration and rule of law, is described by Twitchett and Denis (2009) to be one were Generals often led independent private armies funded through looting -which further altered the efforts to centralize authority-, the southward advancement of Jurchen forces, and the struggles to maintain a unified military response. Then 1129 CE thus proved to be a turning point to the dynasty’s new settlements as the Jurchen executed a two-pronged invasion that easily captured multiple of their most important urban strongholds and, despite General’s Yue Fei valiant efforts, the Song forces were compelled into a retreat that ultimately culminated with the fall of Hangzhou:

⁶⁹ The execution of the powerful eunuch Tong Guan had set a precedent that Gaozong sought to reinforce.

In the eleventh month of 1129, the crisis became acute. The Chin army and its Chinese detachments invaded Huai-nan in two columns, one of which, under general Wan-yen Wu-chu (d. 1148), rapidly advanced through Hochou³ and Huang-chou and forced a crossing of the Yangtze at Ma-chia-tu, upriver west of Chien-k'ang, inflicting a smashing blow to the defending forces.¹⁸ Although Yueh Fei fought a desperate rearguard action to halt the "Chin advance on the city, Tu Ch'ung decided to abandon Chien-k'ang, and surrendered to the Chin, whose army occupied the city. At the same time another column made a crossing at Chiang-chou, still farther upstream, and struck south into Kiangsi, where the dowager empress had been sent for safety. They took the major city of Hung-chou on the fourteenth of the eleventh month and continued to move south down the Kan River valley" (Twitchett & Smith, *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 5, Part 1: The Sung Dynasty And Its Precursors, 907-1279 AD*, 2009, p. 657).

Nonetheless, the loss of Hangzhou and the cited campaign were not the only expeditions of the Jurchen and their new founded puppet state, the Chin Empire. All along the Yangtze southern areas, from Ch'u-zhou to Lu Ling, the Mongol invaders sought to diminish any state-building efforts and, primarily, pursue the Song emperor in an effort to easily subdue the entirety of the loyalist territory. For example, about the same time, Chin's western forces penetrated the Kiangsi region and northern Hunan, where in 1130 CE they sacked and massacred the city of T'an-chou and its population. (Twitchett & Smith, *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 5, Part 1: The Sung Dynasty And Its Precursors, 907-1279 AD*, 2009). Along this, their raiding parties continued their activities in the silver-mining center of Ch'en-chou and as far as south of the Tung-t'ing Lake, while the northwestern host delivered advancements further into the coastal line. Without a doubt, Gaozong's Court had to idle in a catastrophic context where the force of its enemy doubled at the time they needed to establish a governing apparatus that could resist such a volatile and particular situation of continuous invasion. To define this period of Song history as the "era of survival" is pivotal and essential to comprehend the experienced vicissitudes. The following map extracted from Cambridge's *History of China* perfectly visualizes the extent of geographical takeover around this stage of Chin's offensive:

Map 3. Chin's incursions in South Yangtze Area



Note: Twitchett & Denis, 2009, Cambridge History of China.

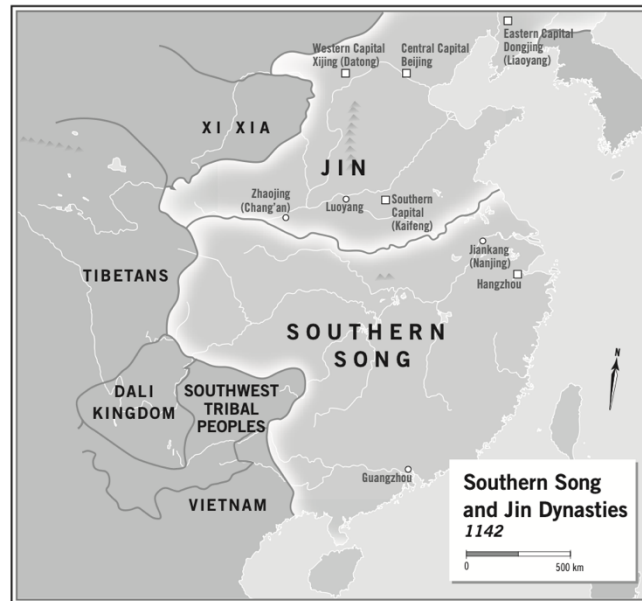
In the face of these challenges, the southern Song governance positively evolved and began to be characterized by improvising and adapting. By 1130 CE, with regime continuing with the foreign incursions, the central government procured a list of reforms aimed at consolidating military command and enhancing administrative efficiency. For example, the abolition of the position of imperial encampment commissioner and the empowerment of Chief Councilors who oversee military affairs, represented a shifting in governance that allowed officials to assume direct command amidst crises, as exemplified by Lu-Yihao's appointment as commander-in-chief on the lower Yangtze in 1132⁷⁰ (Twitchett & Smith, *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 5, Part 1: The Sung Dynasty And Its Precursors, 907-1279 AD*, 2009, p. 667). In equal manner, the southern Song faced financial challenges that constantly threatened its stability, especially because the regime's economic strategies for sustaining the defensive military efforts, the establishment of internal order and to address fiscal shortfalls, were introduced as a series of new tariffs and monopolies on essential trading items and commodities, such as: salt, tea, liqueur, and silk. Such undertaken efforts to reform the dynasty's monopolistic architecture -particularly in regions as Sichuan. were made in addition to the introduction of trade certificates that aimed the curbing of smuggling activities and the securing of vital resources, were maintained under the central government's scope

⁷⁰ Such measures were crucial for fostering a more coordinated military response to the ongoing Jurchen threat.

and fiscal control. By 1130 CE, the efforts for the increment of tributary gathering succeeded and began to augment significantly -principally by deriving from the wealthier southeastern provinces-, thus providing the government with essential financial support to endure the already mentioned conditions. Moreover, the southern Song sought to expand the arable land as a means of increasing the already high tax revenues while exempting refugees and new farmers from them, while on the contrary, granting them loans and supplies to facilitate resettlement; a strategy similar to that executed by Tang Dynasty when the massive migration to the south commenced as a consequence of the augmenting raiding incursions from the northern tribes (Twitchett & Dennis, 2019). This policy resulted in a substantial increase in cultivated land and population growth in Hunan and Hubei, however, this expansion also led to unintended land engrossments that furthered social inequality and eroded the taxpayer base (Twitchett & Smith, *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 5, Part 1: The Sung Dynasty And Its Precursors, 907-1279 AD*, 2009, p. 595).

In 1138 CE, aside from the government administration's positive features, the general situation became unsustainable to the Song's apparatus. Hence, Hsiao-Tsung, the imperial successor, was granted authority to negotiate an appeasement with the Jin Dynasty, a decision that certainly encountered fierce opposition from the military leaders and key government officials (Twitchett & Dennis, 2019). This made that figures as General Han Shizhong contended that any agreement would embolden the Jin and tarnish the empire's dignity, but despite the resistance, the emperor formally edicted his willingness to meet the enemy's demands to alleviate the suffering of his subjects. The subsequential treaty was ultimately signed in 1142 and stated Southern Song as a tributary of the Jin and the alignment of new borders. It is said that the when the envoy presented himself to Gaozong with a document on the matter to be signed, the reply on the matter was the following -an utter example on the end of Song exemplarism on the East Asian sphere: "Our insignificant state" pays "tribute" to "your superior state." Emperor Gaozong called himself "your servant [Zhao] Gou" (Kuhn , 2009, p. 78). The following visual illustrates the established borders after the peace agreement:

Map 4. Southern Song in 1142.



Note: Kuhn, D, 2011, History of Imperial China.

But while the Song navigated domestic stabilization and experienced external pressures, the leadership of Gaozong and Hsiao-Tsung became increasingly pivotal. The emperor's abdication in 1162 CE was a testament of personal and political factors that, among the death of his son and the pressure to secure a line of succession, led to his adoption of Chao Potts'ung and a rampant dynastical swift. In this light, the ascending emperor continued his predecessor's diplomatic efforts at the time he consistently faced challenges when dealing with the Jin Dynasty. In particular, the apprehensiveness surrounding the ceremonial protocols when receiving Mongol envoys arose, a subtle message that the fragile nature of that diplomatic interactions hindered with the emperor's intention to assert the dynasty's dignity while avoiding a second wave of military confrontation between the two entities. Said caution when referring to the receptionary procedures is also a declaration of the Court's careful implementation of *Realpolitik*, even pushing the dynasty to acquire an inclusive approach that was deemed necessary to the survival of this Northern Song descendants. It seemed that, to a point, Lu Zhi's *Three Scenario Analysis of the world* materialized on its second hypothetical approach, where to guide policy under a context of foreign superiority, relations must undoubtedly turn to be humble and condescending (Zheping, 2013). It was Song's true acceptance over the loss of their central status and commencement of a political

survival maneuvering that would allow them to thrive by accepting a position of partial vassalage to the new established regional hegemon.

Later, as the Song entered the 13th century, the rise of the Mongol empire became an existential threat than anything faced before. The riveting confrontation at Yai-Shan in 1279 CE epitomized the dynasty's tragic finale, as although it profited from a large period of peace, growing and stability as consequence of the pacted peace, this updated unleashing with the overpowered Mongol forced seemed to be unsustainable. Dwindling resources and logistical constraints led to unmountable losses as the advancing forces exploited the vulnerabilities of Song's navy and general defending forces, however, unlike ever before, the theme of loyalty to the dynasty's cause emerged. Thousands of loyalists, including the child emperor and his guardians, chose death over the dishonor of a capture, a final and ever-lasting testament to their unwavering commitment to the cause. The following passage briefly comments on the passing of the last Song emperor and his burial site:

“After the fall of Yai-shan, the body of Chao Ping, the child-emperor, was reportedly retrieved from the ocean and buried in the vicinity of modern Hong Kong, and a small temple was erected on the site. Dowager Consort Yang and Lu Hsiu-fu were both buried, in unfitting simplicity, near Yai-shan. In the late fifteenth century, during Ming-dynasty China, a series of temples. some of them impressive in grandeur, were built at Yai-shan in honor of those who perished there. As for members of the imperial family who died in captivity, they were afforded honorable burials in the north” (Twitchett & Smith, *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 5, Part 1: The Sung Dynasty And Its Precursors, 907-1279 AD*, 2009, p. 959).

Following this calamity, the aftermath of the dynasty was controvertly characterized by desecration and plundering of national treasures by the invaders, a set of actions that revealed a profound disregard to the rich history of the dynasty. This blasely shown disrespect towards their symbols fueled an even deeper anti-Mongol sentiment among the Han population, allowing scholars and intellectuals to maintain and assert their primordial values under the following dynasty's control. Such efforts to uphold Ruist ideas and practices in face of foreign aggression and dominance certainly laid the groundwork for future resistance against the Yuan Dynasty (Twitchett & Smith, *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 5, Part 1: The Sung Dynasty And Its Precursors, 907-1279 AD*, 2009). With this in mind, and in the manner of a subtle reflection around Southern Song, it is clear to appreciate the presence of

a complex tapestry of resilience and disruption that reveal the strengths and vulnerabilities of its governance. Despite its ultimate tragical collapse, Song's legacy remains to be one of endurance and striving spirit when maintaining and defending civilizational status, a poignant reminder of the manner of their governance and the difficulties to navigate in a world with unfavorable conditions. We might recognize, due to the defining historic parallels, that this stage of Zhongguo's history can be regarded as a "*third Tang descend*" (another fall of cosmopolitanism).

3.4 Ming Dynasty: restoration of Confucian rule and foreign interphasing.

Between the downfall of Song and the ascension of Ming there is a 241 years' period of Mongol rule under the banner of the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368 CE). As reported by McLoughlin (2014), this hierarchical ordered state had been distinguished by a harsh and discriminatory rule that conceived four levels of citizenry: "with Mongols at the top of Yuan society; followed by Central Asian peoples from the Mongol empire (1206– 1368); then northern Chinese which included Han, Khitan and Jurchen peoples linked with the Mongol world; and finally southern Chinese, who had remained under the rule of the Southern Song". Such stratification of society, constant famines, and the appearance of the Bubonic Plague in 1334, brought sectarian and millenary groups to grow as a threat to the dynasty's marked stability. Ergo, in concurrence with the widespread of lawfulness and banditry, by the 1330's CE there were various anti-Yuan groups uprising all along the central planes' quadrant and all throughout the southernmost dominions of the empire, a formula that permitted the Red Turban army⁷¹, led by Zhu Yuanzhang, to succeed in expelling the Mongol host from the Northern China all the way back to the steppes. The following table highlights a simple typology of defiance that, along with the previous explanation, help us to distinct all the involved expressions of political dissidence during Yuan's mid-fourteen century period of decline:

⁷¹ "A popular name for a millenarian Buddhist group whose soldiers were identified by red headbands. The Red Turbans believed that at the moment of humanity's greatest darkness and despair, the future Buddha, Maitreya Buddha, would appear, to bring about a reversal of humankind's fortunes" (McLoughlin, 2014, p. 1)

Table 5. Forms of Political Dissidence under Yuan Dynasty’s rule

Yuan Regional Leaders	Local leaders	Bandits	Sectarian Movements
By alternating between nominal allegiance and autonomy, their quasi-de facto warlord description declares their preference to the self-interest over the crown’s.	They assembled all the limited resources available to them in order to assure their defenses without the authorization of the central government.	Notable smugglers that used their power to influence local politics and establish themselves -and their organizations- as regional military powers with titles that the Yuan Dynasty gave them in exchange for cooperation.	“They defied the normal sources of authority and displayed capacities for conspiratorial cohesiveness and for uncompromising relations with the government, thus making their behavior more extreme than that of conventional rebels”.

Note: Twitchett D & Fairbank, J. 2008. Cambridge History of China Volume 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part I.

By doing so, with the collateral aid of the table’s mentioned groups, he was able to erect the last Han dynasty in Chinese history: the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). By naming the new dynasty, *Da Ming*, -meaning “Great Brightness”-, the Hongwu Emperor found himself with the enormous task of reforming and governing over the Han Chinese with an invigorated, energetic, and efficient fashion. Under such circumstances, it became of essential to purge “barbarian” Mongol influences by inserting regulations and prohibitions to the practice of any related cultural expressions. But to practical purposes, much of the government organization remained mostly untouched, notably preserving the ministerial organization and provincial structure: revenue, personnel, rites, war, punishments and works⁷² (Twitchett & Fairbank, Cambridge History of China Volume 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part I, 2008). This “empire-building” stage that aimed to emulate pre-Mongol glories was, on the

⁷² To a certain extent, this sixth ministerial ordeal is a remanent of Tang government organization.

other hand, followed by what we can call a stage of chaos and disarray that commenced with the execution of Hu Weiyong and followed to a series of purges that ended with the lives of 40,000 people supposedly connected with the schemes and treacheries that led to the Chancellor's own demise. This despotic and cruel governing attitude marked the first phase of Ming's public life, an era that certainly required a more integrating and healing approach regarding policy enactment and deliberation (Twitchett & Fairbank, 2008). After the hardships endured during Yuan's rule, Han society deserved a peaceful and tranquil transition process that reinserted them in government practices, administrative roles, and decision-making processes, not a vengeful campaign that wasted thousands of lives, fragmented the social fabric, and economically ruined multiple provincial sites around Zhongguo.

The following decade sought to be a period of consolidation of Ming power and authority. One of the emperor's first policies on the matter regarded the establishment of a system where the crown members were the ones to rule over the provinces and districts of the Empire, a structure that wanted to emulate Tang's aristocratic lineage governing model (Twitchett & Fairbank, 2008). In that sense, in 1369 CE, anticipating the prince's investiture the following year, the emperor regulated and defined their powers and responsibilities in a compendium known as the *Ancestral Injunctions* (Tsu hsiin lu). The Injunctions, aside from emphasizing loyalty and obedience, reflected the Ruist values that the emperor sought to instill in the royal family and in the empire's administrative system: such a structure would certainly solve -at least initially and to a certain degree- the allegiance challenges that Song and Yuan dynasties experienced along their years. This governance model was deeply intertwined with the emperor's spiritual activities as *Son of Heaven*, a role in public policy that was not granted the traditional importance since the collapse of Northern Song, performing ceremonies to gain the divine favor and to enhance his legitimacy with the overall populace. In addition to these particular duties, he intended to regulate popular religious practices -banning unorthodox sects as the White Lotus- and to restrict a series of performative rites that were to be directed to the Heaven and Earth, only allowing the general public to exercise those made towards the ancestors (Twitchett & Fairbank, 2008, p. 122). This intellectual engagement with Confucian values revealed an ulterior alter to his approach

over a more benevolent governance style, this, after reflecting and recognizing the limitations that the sole pursuit of harsh punitivism has.

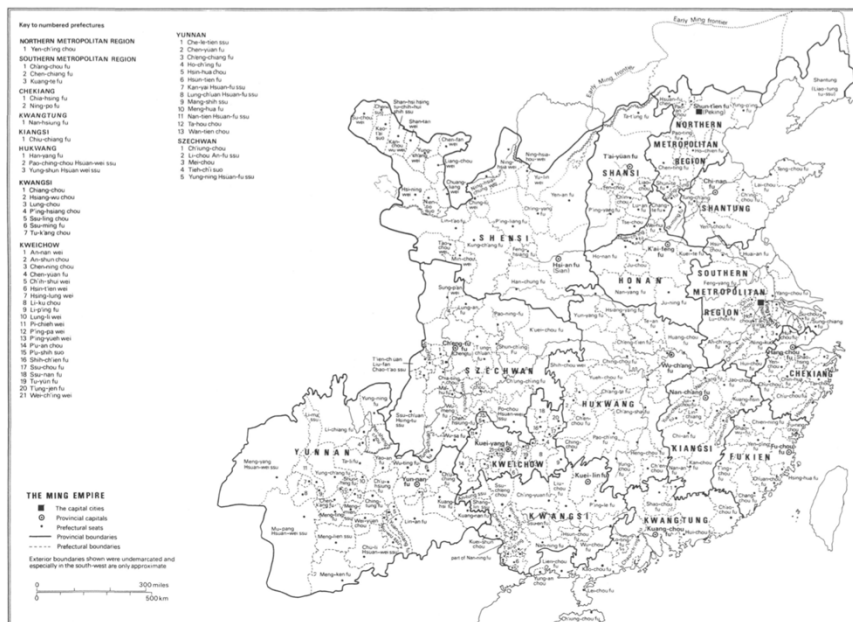
But although there existed an augmented interest over Confucian intakes, once more -as this thesis has insisted on- this did not translate into a diversion from his military interest to dismantle Mongol power with a northern expedition. After realizing the required appointments, the forces were organized into two divergent armies that aimed to breach the Great Wall and pursue the remaining Yuan leaders across the desert, a strategy designed to prevent mutual support from the factions and isolate their forces (Twitchett & Fairbank, 2008). The campaign proved successful -a moment that sealed the end of Mongol control over the historical Zhongguo and marked the full return of Han control over its territory- achieving a significant victory and reducing the threat posed by the remanent pro-yuan forces over the Ming territory. But besides this ongoing territorial recuperation campaign, the emperor aimed to establish diplomatic relations with neighboring states, particularly Japan, whom with in 1371, after an earlier envoy's failure, Chao Chih achieved that Prince Kanenaga agreed to recognize Ming suzerainty as the following passage illustrates:

“Eventually Kanenaga agreed to call himself a vassal of the Ming ruler and sent his envoy Sorai, a monk, to accompany Chao Chih and other Chinese prisoners back to Nanking. In response to Sorai's mission, the emperor sent the Buddhist monk Tsu-shan (fl. 1360—73) to lead a mission to Japan in 1372. Preparations for this were made in 1371, and in the spring of 1372 an elaborate Buddhist ceremony for all souls (p'u-tu hut) was held at the T'ien-chieh Monastery in Nanking. The emperor personally took part in the ceremonies, which lasted three days and involved a thousand monks” (Twitchett & Fairbank, 2008, p. 128).

The passage is of great importance when analyzing Ming foreign approach during the initial stages, as the intention of the Hongwu Emperor was to recuperate Zhongguo's international influence and hegemonical statue by reinstating Tianxia patriarchal logics, where the divine mandate of civilization is bestowed upon the Son of Heaven's to be transferred with its contiguous entities (Twitchett & Fairbank, 2008). This Han Dynasty locution that permuted the idea that the center of humanity's laid over the dragon throne sought to be recuperated, and in doing so, a combination of both inclusive tendencies and military exclusivism were merged, hence the reason that Ming Dynasty was chosen to be a comparable dynastical cycle along Tang and Song. Approaching the second largest regional entity and securing its

vassalry was the first and most acute proceeding to achieve the mentioned ordeal. After centuries of chaos and confrontation, an individual Han banner that again appeared to reclaim its ever-lasting position among the *East Asian Community*. To fortify this discursive principae, the emperor engaged with a more syncretic approach to governance by blending various religious traditions into a cohesive ethical framework that reflected a broader vision of unity among the empire. In sum, the realized efforts during the first decade of dynastical control were marked by a multifaceted approach to consolidate power and establish stable governance through diplomatic initiatives, military campaigns, and religious rituality. He sought to reinstore authority while navigating the complexities of princely power and administrative reforms, and in doing so, he successfully laid the groundwork for a centuries-long lasting Dynasty. The following map showcases the political and administrative divisions of the Ming Dynasty, which serve as a visual tool to comprehend the extent of their influences and geopolitical limitations:

Map 4. Political Divisions of Ming Dynas



Note: Twitchett, D & Fairbank, J, 2008, Cambridge History of China Volume 7.

After this laid stability and lasting peace which characterized the first half of Ming's dominium, the second half would not experience such a hopeful fate. Again, and faithfully repeating on the previous dynasty's mistakes, decentralization, courting political imbalances,

failure on reform and peripheral lawfulness commenced to pave the way towards destabilization. But according to McLoughlin (2017), the catalyst towards dynastical decline was sealed in 1449 CE at Tumu, where at the behest of a eunuch led court, the Zhengtong Emperor led a host of 500,000 Ming forces to combat a smaller sized army of Oirat Mongols, where: “the Ming force was almost totally annihilated by the Mongols, and the Zhengtong emperor was taken hostage in Mongolia. When news reached Beijing, some officials fled south in the resulting panic. The Mongols then attempted, unsuccessfully, to ransom the captured emperor and eventually released him after four years.” The emperor’s capture and defeat caused an unparalleled constitutional-like crisis on the Ming apparatus, a reflection that passivity, corruption, and poor administration were at the very core of the mid-fifteen century political life.

Another defining point in this category is attributed to the reign of the Wanli Emperor (1573-1620 CE), who, with the time, became not interested of his duties and relied only of intermediaries -particularly palace eunuchs- to conduct state affairs. This passive form of governance caused frustration in the imperial court, administrative disarray, and the abandonment of many official positions with the years. Such isolation extended in the economic realm, where financial troubles commenced to exacerbate due to the undertaken burden of ever-growing military expenses: one of them was the long and costly campaign against Japan during the *Imjin Wars* (1592-1598 CE), where Ming forces intervened to protect the Korean Peninsula from an invasion led by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (Twitchett & Fairbank, 2008). Although it was a successful intervention, the mobilizations required immense resources that nearly depleted the treasuries and contributed to the dynasty’s fiscal stress for decades. Meanwhile, the foundations of Ming economy were being tested by profound geopolitical changes as from 1530’s large quantities of Spanish colonial silver started to fill Ming coffins’ as they coveted the exchange for Chinese goods such as silk, tea, porcelain, and tea. However, as this influx tempered an initial economic boom, over time it began to cause taxation problems, inflationary rises, and an erosion on the currency’s purchasing power, that, together with diminishing revenue, obliterated a formula that incapacitated effective governance (Twitchett & Fairbank, 2008).

Going forward, the early 17th century brought a confluence of natural disasters, economic hardships, and social unrests in an unseen scale in modern dynastical history⁷³: a period that certain historians term the “*Ming-Qing Cataclysm*” witnessed widespread droughts, famines and floods that decimated the rural population and financially devastated the Empire (McLoughlin, 2014, p. 8). In face of these tribulations -lawlessness growing rampant as famished citizens turned to rebellion-, the rebel leader Li Zicheng emerged from the chaos to organize and rally his large base of followers on a quest to dethrone the dynasty and demand justice on the moribund apparatus, a task that was completed in April 1644 CE, when his forces surpassed Ming defenses by capturing the Capital and entering to the Forbidden City; this, at the time the Chongzhen Emperor, realizing the dynasty was lost, decided to take his life on a tree near Coal Hill, symbolically marking the demise of the 276 years’ long Ming Dynasty.

Due to the analytical scope of this thesis, we will not continue to cover the vicissitudes faced by the remnants of Ming imperial forces in the southern Chinese territories over the following decade, where they managed to establish an itinerant court, whose movements depended upon the advancements of the Manchu invasion forces⁷⁴. The interesting story of this interphase is the extent of its comparable material, albeit on a much smaller scale and limited timeframe, to that of Southern Song. But as an overall conclusion to this era, we can underline that the Ming empire was characterized by numerous transitional stages, adaptations, and redirections of their domestic and foreign policies that showed a constant shifting between inclusive and exclusive Ruist approaches. Even though certain points of Ming governance were shaped upon the lines of an *Idealpolitik* when dealing to restructure the Tributary System and the increasing of their regional influence, the final decades of its reign marked a notable shift on discourse as the weak emperors and court policies prevented the *mise en place* of a clear structure to counter invasions or domestic threats.

⁷³ and which immediate effects can be comparable only to the later Qing rebel uprisings.

⁷⁴ Undoubtedly the cause remained strong and retained a significant number of loyalists during this period, even when the relocation to their ultimate stronghold began: Taiwan.

Chapter 4. From Reform and Opening up to Xi Jinping’s administration: evolution of foreign policy discourse and Chinese Communist Party intakes on Confucian doctrine.

“Yet the combination of words we express are also a reflection of the processes in our minds [...] meaning is contextual; meaning is networks”. -Elad Segev.

The following chapter contains the methodological application of this thesis. By combining qualitative and quantitative approaches for the enrichment of discursive criteria, Holtzeister’s Macro-Structural approach will accompany Semantic Network Analysis to disaggregate Deng Xiaoping’s 1974 *address to the Sixth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly* and Xi Jinping’s 2017 *report on the 19th National Party Congress*. Both, with the main purpose of identifying an inclusivist or exclusivist Confucian tendency over the messages conveyed around foreign policy construction. Along the presentation of a sample of the corpus, the Semantic Networks were complemented with historic context of the speech deliverance itself and the Macro-structure insights with Qin’s relational theoretical elements.

4.1 Semantic Network Analysis

According to Atteveldt (2008), Content Analysis has historically acted as the main methodological approach to revise the content of messages due its purpose revolves around to determine the value of theoretically driven variables. Messages, as collections of symbols, attain their meaning through the manner in which they are used and interpreted by the One and the Other in the discursive reality⁷⁵, just as we mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis. Scholars proceed towards it with the subtle mélange of qualitative and quantitative methodologies which, even though are seamless, constantly overlap in their focuses and alienation as quantitative research rely on the directions and decisions of qualitative maxims. But multiple drawbacks can be identified along the application of Content Analysis, among others: i) the need of human coders to categorize documents via a predetermined

⁷⁵ As such, Content Analysis centers its efforts into deducing the relevant meaning of messages along their contextual placements by defining both significance and appropriateness.

classification scheme, ii) the result of large datasets⁷⁶ and, iii) variations in how concepts are operationalized. Hence, this thematic oriented approach is not always suitable for addressing numerous research questions or to ensure reliable results (Segev, 2022, p. 3). Sheer abundance of information creates a need for tools to guide analysis -especially because researchers often struggle to identify focal points or focus areas along the corpus- and that are capable to trace roadmaps to navigate complex databases, thus signaling relevant actors, recurring themes and obscure topics can result efficient to retain valuable insights.

In this sense, Semantic Network Analysis -also known as Relational Content Analysis- is presented as a plausible alternative. According to Borgetti *et al* (2009), this methodology can be traced back to the 18th century when it was solely a subfield of the mathematics to more contemporary developments around numerous study fields, finding a certain augmentation on its usage after the 1990's hyper hatching of internet users. Currently acting as a research paradigm of its own, it broadly encompasses the study of relationships and betweenness of words, concepts, and meanings. Elad Segev (2022) mentions that while Content Analysis aims to classify content into categories, the central axis of Semantic Networks is to focus on the interactions between nodes and conceptual structures:

“The core idea behind network analysis is to focus on the interactions (sometimes called “ties”, “links”, “connections”, or “edges”) between nodes (sometimes called “actors” or “vertices”), and the structures that they entail. Thus, many studies employing network analysis attempt to identify, quantify, and understand the structure of the network, the impact of the strength of the ties between nodes the position of nodes within the network, and the patterns of densely connected clusters” (Granovetter, 1977).

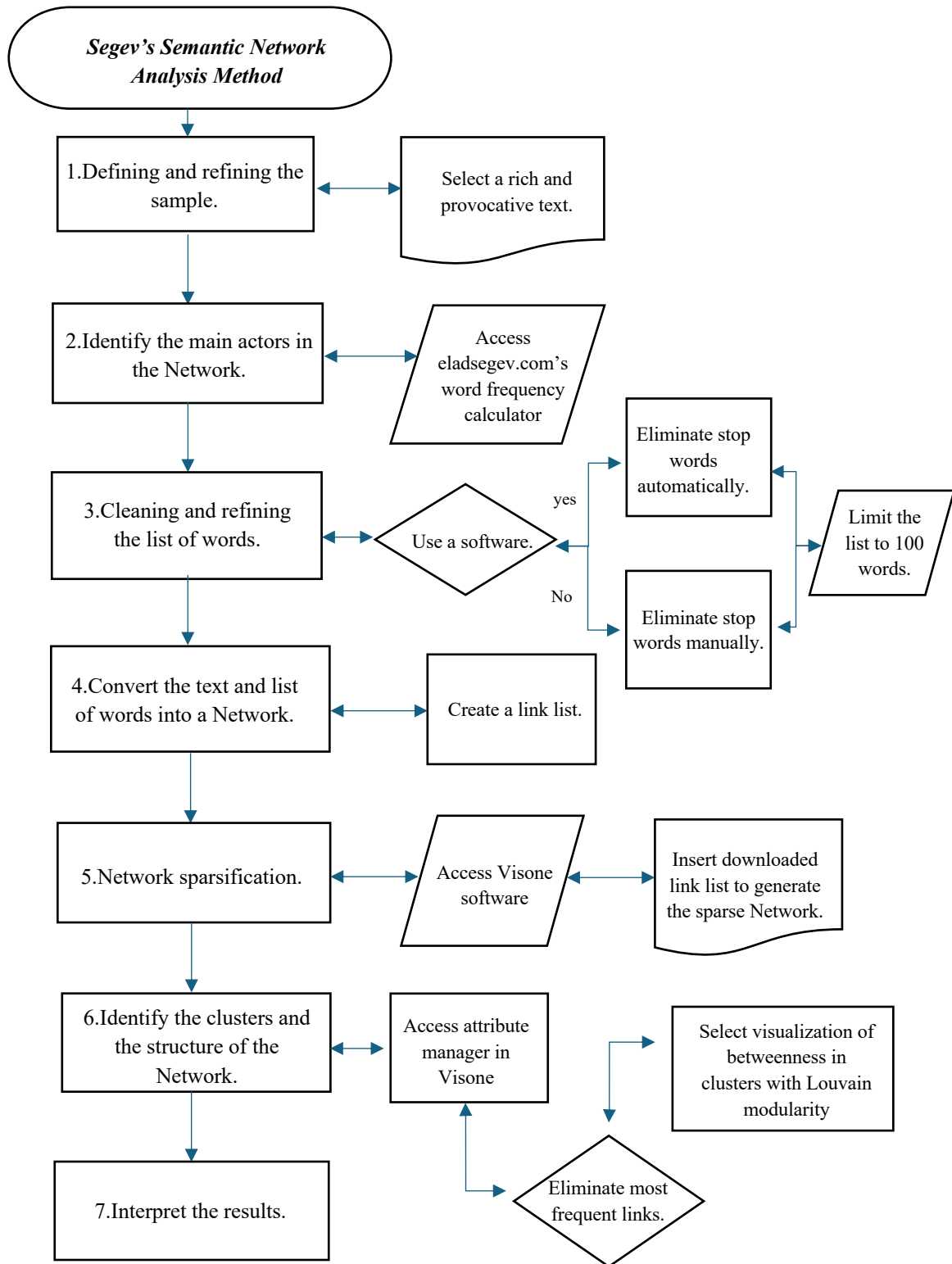
The strength of this ties is measured by the time and frequency of interactions and the centrality of a node by its number of connections, its distance with other nodes, or its ability to mediate between others. Beyond words pairing, SNA facilitates a broader view of a text, allowing researchers to interpret it as an interconnected structure of composed concepts, narratives, and ideas that lies in separation of content extraction and querying. This flexibility certainly overcomes the rigid coupling between posed research questions and measurements found in Thematic Content Analysis. However, as mentioned in the text, the absence of

⁷⁶ The matter gets more complicated when the available text gets larger. Manual reading of text for qualitative and quantitative purposes is time-consuming (Segev, 2022).

standardized definitions for network nodes and defining measurable patterns, complicates the integration of data and the replication and expanding of findings (Atteveldt , 2008, p. 5). This bridging between qualitative and quantitative methods enables the representation of a continuum in which clusters of words overlap and relate to demonstrate the relative position of categories within the discourse. It is a less expensive and consuming bottom up-process than manual coding or the sole application of discourse theory in the qualitative tenor, due to its capacity to be replicated in any language without the need to train computer algorithms with grammatical structures, needing only few resources and mostly providing straightforward results.

But before continuing on the subjected analysis, how does Semantic Network Analysis is conducted? In a summarized manner, it comprises an extraction and a construction phase, which breaks-up the text into small elements -concepts, words, phrases, etc.- and interprets it by providing theoretical meaning on each of the resulted clusters. In the academic community there are different modalities to integrate this methodology, but we chose to rely on the scheme delineated by Elad Segev on his 2005 *Routledge's "Semantic Network Analysis in Social Sciences"*, due to its precise and clear layout, and the establishment of an own tool software package that will enable us to conduct the conceptual linkage and nodding structure of each of the selected texts to, consequently, as equally signaled in the book, aggregate such values into Visone for indexing and grouping the data into a visualizing map. According to the author, the process would be mapped as following:

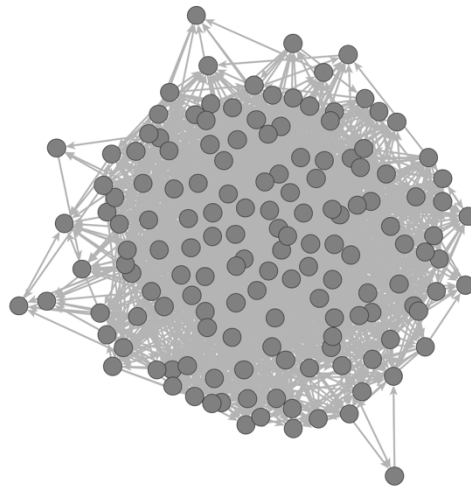
Flowchart 1. Segev's Semantic Network Analysis Method



Note: Self-elaboration based on: Segev, E. (2022) Semantic Network Analysis in Social Sciences.

The flowchart above aims to visually trace the steps that the chosen methodology requires to follow to successfully develop a readable and usable Network. In order to detail and further clarify it, is necessary to separate the process in two main phases, as previously explained, into one that allows the researcher to prepare their Corpus (main text) and disintegrate it into a link-word spreadsheet in Segev's tool software and other with its uploading into Visone for the generation of a sparse Network. The first parts require not only automatization, but a series of qualitative decisions to reduce the analytical scope, as a saturation of nodes and links would not permit the reader to comprehend the connections, their origin, widthness, and strength. In the following image is an example of a saturated Network that has not undergone the reduction of conceptual entries:

Network 1. Saturated and Unfiltered Network



Note: Self-elaboration using Visone.

Ergo, the extraction phase proves to be essential to successfully construct an analyzable Network. Once applied, and the CVS file has been uploaded to Visone, it becomes necessary to further filtrate it by eliminating the most recurrent links and by choosing to cluster the Network through the usage of Louvain modularity. According to Traag, Waltman, & van Eck (2019), the Louvain method or algorithm, is a simple solution that starts from a singleton partition in which each one is in its own community, thus moves them to other communities to find a partition on which an aggregate network is established. The individual nodes are

then also moved into the aggregate network until the quality cannot increase further: “the algorithm yields partitions for which it is guaranteed that no communities can be merged” (Traag, Waltman, & van Eck, 2019). Therefore, by eliminating the maximum number of links -also assuring that there is a balance- it becomes easier for the algorithm to separate communities and aggregate them into the overall Network. These revealing of the main themes and their relative position enables the researcher to inspect the most prevalent paths between the selected concepts, thus unveiling the main narratives contained in the Corpus and proving that the strenght of the Semantic Network Analysis lies in its ability to extract customary themes, especially when the selected words demonstrate theoretical relevance (Segev, 2022, p. 4).

Having explained the Semantic Network Methodology, its applications and conduction, we are going to procede to apply the mapped structure into the following speeches in order to identify the presence of narratives that contain hinges or references to the appliance of exclusivist or exclusivist tendencies in contemporary CPP’s Foreign Policy. This interpretation of the Network, aside from the aforementioned macro-structural approach, will be accompanied with Neuchlertain’s matrix of intensity of interest, which was presented in the 1.1 of this bachelor’s thesis.

4.2 Speech by Chairman of the Delegation of the People’s Republic of China, Deng Xiaoping, At the Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly

4.2.1. Historic Context

The cultural revolution marked the longing degradation of Mao Zedong’s national leadership. The discourse of puritan nationalism and strict socialist policy led to an era of *terroir robespierrean* that corroded institutional scaffolding and shattered social fabric. Once a true revolutionary and national founding father, Mao’s figure and ideology became the catalyst of a purged war for party control, one that disintegrated the same apparatus that he so fearlessly fought to establish in 1949, one where checks and balances enabled any central committee to exert autocratic tendencies in public administration. This apparatus revolved around a tropicalized theory of socialism, a version with Chinese characteristics.

This tropicalized alignment exerted a political metamorphosis, and a movement that characterized contemporary China oblige us to revise his philosophical doctrine and tendencies which, theoretically and practically, acted as a subtle *mélange* of Leninism and Stalinism. It can be defined then, as a transcended and enhanced focus on the “*mechanical interpretation of Marx’s theory of history and [...] materialist dialectics*” that served the solving of internal contradictions and opposing tendencies on the Chinese-inclined panorama (D’Mello, 2019, 40).

Julia Lovell (2014) describes it, in overall terms, as a way to refer to “the successful Chinese Communist programme from the 1930’s to the present day”. A programme that evolved as the contingency of the matter demanded it, and generally insisted on i) armed insurgency; ii) mass mobilization and, iii) strategic alliances as the natural outils to capture state power. Despite having a symbolic core on Mao’s own figure, Maoism has taken multiple variations over the years, being contradictory or purely aligned with the inscriptions of the “Red book”. But as Kissinger highlights, never before in Chinese history, the holder of the mandate of heaven -as allegory of political leader, in this case- intended to dismantle the traditional ways of societal ordering, neither so in such a violent and troublesome manner. As he described to Andre Malraux in 1965:

“The thought, culture and customs that brought China to the point where we find it today have to disappear, and arise the thought and customs and culture of proletarian China, which do not exist yet [...] Thought, culture and customs must be born of struggle, and struggle must continue as long as the danger of returning to the past remains” (Malraux, 1967 [1992], 373-374).

An admirer of Qin Shi Huang, he commenced his governmental journey establishing a campaign against Confucian teachings and traditions. Inimical to the notion of universal harmony and the cosmological diagram as the axis of Chinese thought, he idealized rebellion and confrontation in its discourse for inner and foreign policy construction (Kissinger, 2011 [2019], 113). Following the socialist tradition, he deeply criticized the doctrine of the mean and its conceptions on gradual reform and adaptation by asserting that transformation must be upheld in radical and immediate terms; as continuing reproducing the past would enable them to materialize their future.

Mao's abhorrence of Confucian teachings can be traced back to his early formative sessions in Shaoshan. Confucianism, as previously explained, was the omnipotent moral guidebook of China for more than 2,000 years and its classic texts were praised and thought in every academia across de imperium. Its maxims were challenged only -and briefly- by western philosophical doctrines; thus, from a young age, Confucianism was a constant in the young Mao's everyday activities. Mao Jen -Mao Zedong father- was a devoted Confucian and faithful family figure. His level of commitment transcended, and, in an effort to transmit the Master's teachings, Jen usually conveyed his choler after lasting sessions of reflections in the local temple. Richard W. Riost cites Mao on the latter:

“My hatred towards Confucius began when I was eight years old. In the village there was a temple dedicated to him and my only idea was to completely destroy it. At first it was because I hated my teacher and because my father quoted Confucius against me. Only much later did reason support my hatred (Riost, 1976, 13).

The future of the country's axiological core was to revolve on a deep sense of anti-Confucian doctrine based upon Mao's childhood trauma and familiar distress. To his view, his anti-Confucianism was a sign of defiance⁷⁷, of rebellion, of revolution. That is why, according to Kissinger, Mao's China was one of dialectical contradictions. He identified himself as an inveterate anti-Confucian and a believer of radical confrontation, but his administration latter became the mirror of the imperial mandarinat as it followed on the notion of running the state and its institutions as a joint ethical projection (Kissinger, 2011 [2019], 113). Nonetheless now focused on proletarian transformation, the idea of a *permanent revolution* centered his fundamental national program, where a constant and intensified renovation was required in order to distance themselves from the traditional paradigm.

To his understanding, Confucian-lead cosmological doctrine of harmonization, being placed as the philosophical core of political tradition, had weakened the nation and slowed its advancement. In his vision, constant movement and renewal was the path to reach a more just and equal society for all, therefore setting up large initiatives such as the Great Leap Forward was, once more, a way to distance the new paradigm from decadent and invirtuous

⁷⁷ The passage on Mao's first lesson whirls around Confucianism, as in a long session of Confucian lecture examination, the young student was reverting his attention into action novels. Once caught, he was subject to punishment and later paternal confrontation.

perspectives. In foreign policy making, Mao replicated the same principle and recognized the obligation of “*the awakened China*” to export its revolutionary doctrine worldwide. Overall, unrest, instability and confrontation are the main characteristics of Mao Zedong’s legacy in China.

In contrast, Deng Xiaoping paved the Chinese future by dismantling Maoist material and ideological debris and commencing a gradual process of Reform and Opening Up. But recognizing the need for transformation requires acknowledging the need to learn and adapt to the ways agreed by the international community. In his 1977 speech, he exhorted the Chinese people to hop on alongside him to “work in a larger effort than the Meiji Restoration in Japan” as their proletarian agenda transcended any incipient bourgeois initiative” (Kissinger, 2019 [2012], 347). He carved national Chinese traditional priorities as “the need to achieve consolidation, stability and unity” and emphasized -insistently- on upgrading the country’s capability of technology and scientific development (Kissinger, 2019 [2012], 347). For Deng, the key to achieve modernization on westernized standards relied on education, as disposing of capable and knowledgeable personnel would allow them to compete with their Euro-American counterparts in any desirable field.

Without a doubt current Chinese economic capabilities are the legacy of pragmatism, pioneering and visionary qualities embroidered in Deng Xiaoping’s leadership approach. Anyhow, consolidating a strong national authority resulted in a political challenge as Mao’s inheritance, irrespective on its viability, revolved around a discourse of cultural upheaval, economic advancement, and social unity. *L’État c’était lui*, therefore, his strong personality cult, when surpassed to emblesedned figure after his passing, posed a tough barrier to anyone interested in defying his principles.

Notwithstanding, Deng’s trajectory and sturdy party positioning allowed him to transite towards modernization on his own terms. Once more, as Kissinger brilliantly denotes, political direction and policy making were the result of stewardship in governmental management:

“Mao had ruled as a traditional, majestic emperor. He personified the myth of the imperial ruler who established the link between heaven and earth and was closer to the divine than the earthly. Deng ruled in the spirit of another Chinese tradition: he based omnipotence on omnipresence, but also on the invisibility of the ruler “(Kissinger, 2019 [2012], 349).

Deng retrieved a traditional vision on public administration. As the mandarin dictated, and contrary to western tradition, political guidance and policy application were to be issued in private, just to be legitimized by their results (Kissinger, 2019 [2012], 349). He did not rely on its figure to gain support, but on an ideological and reformative pathway that was to guide the nation into modernization and economic ascendance. That was Deng Xiaoping's China.

4.2.2 Discourse Context

The sixth special session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) was held between April 9th and May 2nd of 1974 with the convening objective of studying the problems of raw materials and development, as they were recognized to be the most important challenges faced by the international community at the time. Hence, the members of the Assembly worked arduously to deliver a resolution that aimed at the establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) that would have sought to correct inequalities, redress existing injustices and, in the possible extent, eliminate the widening gap between the developed and developing countries (International Legal Materials, 1974). As the Resolution A/RES/3201 delineated on its opening statements, since the 1970's a series of grave economic crisis plagued the international scene, having special repercussions in the developing nations due to their greater vulnerability to the external economic impulses. Thus, recognizing the existence of an interdependent reality, the world necessitated equal and full participation of all its members to formulate and applicate the decisions taken in the United Nations' forums. International cooperation for development being recognized as a common duty for the social well-being of present and future generations, the fourth point of the Resolution stated that this proposed NIEO was to be held under the principles of: i) sovereign equality of states; ii) self-determination of all people's, iii) inadmissibility of the acquisition of the territories by force, iv) territorial integrity, and v) non-interference in the internal affairs of other states (United Nations General Assembly, 1974).

Among the proposed clauses, the *h*) and *i*) particularly stood out due to the social and political characteristics of the international dynamic in the 1970's order. The first recognized the right of the developing countries and the peoples of the countries under colonial domination to achieve their liberation and to regain control of their resources and activities and, the second mentioned clause, while similar, extended its scope to foreign occupied

countries, and racial discrimination and apartheid regimes to be subjects of international assistance for attaining the subordination of their sovereign rights and to end neo-colonialism in all its forms. Alongside the latter's, the sixth clause of the declaration faithfully encompasses the spirit of the session and the active energy of the assisting delegations to advance the international economic development:

“The United Nations as a universal organization should be capable of dealing with problems of international economic co-operation in a comprehensive manner and ensuring equally the interests of all countries. It must have an even greater role in the establishment of a new international economic order. The Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, for the preparation of which the present Declaration will provide an additional source of inspiration, will constitute a significant contribution in this respect. All the States Members of the United Nations are therefore called upon to exert maximum efforts with a view to securing the implementation of the present Declaration, which is one of the principal guarantees for the creation of better conditions for all peoples to reach a life worthy of human dignity” (A/RES/2301, 1974, Pg. 719).

The Vice-Premier's speech was one among many other of the representants of the international community. Nonetheless this dictamen was technically bestowed in the Mao era, it can be seriously argued that Comrade Xiaoping held de facto control of the external affairs of the People's Republic of China. This assumption might be controversial as Mao himself appointed Deng after considering that Wang-Hong Wen and Jiang Qing were unseasoned and unexperienced to face such an important opportunity to catapult China's influence, especially when the spotlight would revolve around their positioning on the various themes of the agenda. On this, Ezra Vogel (2013) highlighted that the crucial role that Deng played was because it was just since 1971 that Mainland China replaced Taiwan's seat at the United Nations, being himself the first CCP official to formally address the organization's quorum; an event that elevated his preeminence internationally and whose words counted with the full support of the Politburo.

Once delivered, Deng's speech received an unusual round of applause as the delegates of the developing countries were particularly pleased with the Vice-premier's statement that China “would never become a tyrant and that if it were to ever oppress or exploit others, then the rest of the world should expose China as a “social imperialist” country and, in cooperation with the Chinese people, overthrow the government” (Vogel, 2013, p. 84). According to the

43rd CPC's "100 CPC stories in 100 days" video, the main message of the speech revolved around the "never seek hegemony" axis, a seemingly fresh declaration that stood in the face of the Cold War domination dynamics and across the multiple movements of national liberation worldwide. This so-called "great disorder under Heaven" was awakening a global transformation as the foundations of the international economic order were gravely shaken, thus making it a discursive approach that came in hand with the 7th item of the Sixth Special Session agenda on "problems of raw materials and development".

While in New York, Deng held separate meetings with international leaders whom, along with the western press, expressed him a marvelous reception. He also had the opportunity to meet Henry Kissinger to express him blatantly direct messages from Beijing regarding the soft tenure that Zhou Enlai had dealt the United States with, and that, from that moment onwards, they would not let them continue to stand on their shoulders to reach détente with the Soviet Union (Vogel, 2013, p. 85). Kissinger's (2012) own accounts on the visit reaffirm the notion that unlike Mao or Zhou Enlai, Deng was a truly practical, direct and unwasteful politician who centered in the essential matters of public policy construction and cooperation without the philosophical entrées provided by Mao's in the minister's previous visits to China. Even though he affirmed to be a "rural man", his approach to reform and modernization also captivated American attention, as the tendency since the revolution was that of seclusion and backwardness.

Having detailed the context of the speech, it then becomes essential to remark that this particular moment will pass to be a transition in the history of Chinese foreign policy, a direction managed and executed by Deng Xiaoping with a clear set of policies that will shape the path that the CPP will choose for the conduction of the country's international relations. Being this the reason that this thesis chose this particular moment as the one that marked the commencement of a post-Maoist era in -at least- external affairs, we will proceed to apply the previously presented methodology in order to determine the Ruist political inclination among the analyzable discursive criteria.

4.2.3. Interpretation of Deng Xiaoping's speech

As mentioned in the last section, the speech is an integral piece of diplomatic admiration and Chinese global commitment, however, in order for it to be semantically decipherable, it

becomes necessary to center our attention into a reduced number of qualitative selected narratives. The following extract will serve as a sample to overall analyze its contents beyond the international perceptions and shared CPP's perspectives and impressions, as the way to elucidate conceptual relationships that glimpse the rustic trends require us to isolate the speech from its presented context and focus it, for a moment, on its conceptual nodes and clusters. Even though the entirety of Deng Xiaoping's 1974 address to the United Nations was passed through our Semantic Network Analysis software's, the sample of the text we will center our qualitative notations on, is the following:

“Mr. President,

The Third World countries strongly demand that the present extremely unequal international economic relations be changed, and they have made many rational proposals of reform. The Chinese Government and people warmly endorse and firmly support all just propositions made by Third World countries. We hold that in both political and economic relations, countries should base themselves on the Five Principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. We are opposed to the establishment of hegemony and spheres of influence by any country in any part of the world in violation of these principles.

We hold that the affairs of each country should be managed by its own people. The people of the developing countries have the right to choose and decide on their own social and economic systems. We support the permanent sovereignty of the developing countries over their own natural resources as well as their exercise of it. We support the actions of the developing countries to bring all foreign capital, and particularly “trans-national corporations,” under their control and management, up to and including nationalization. We support the position of the developing countries for the development of their national economy through “individual and collective self-reliance” (Xiaoping, 1974).

From a macro-structural point of view, the last two paragraph summarize plainly Deng's message to the world: power relations need to be shifted and the economic dynamics change. But latter to be further analyzed, firstly it is relevant to present the results of the Semantic Network Analysis we conducted, through the application of the method flowcharted in Figure 1. Now, having seen a sample of the selected corpus, from a list of 4,165 detected words using Microsoft Word, the resulted CVS file was uploaded into *neTxt* software for the creation of a list of frequent words. Among the 20 more frequented words are: “countries”

[87]⁷⁸, “developing” [50], “economic” [27], “people” [27], “independence” [23], “imperialism” [22], “national” [21], “superpowers” [20], “international” [18], “struggle” [18], “superpower” [16], “country” [16], “should” [16], “one” [15], “own” [15], “economy” [15], “colonialism” [14] and, “political” [14]. For the lemmatization -also known as stemming-, (Stage 3), the same software was used to automatically eliminate 90 stop words and to manually merge families of derivationality, resulting on a significant reduction that reached 2,626 words. The ensued spreadsheet was reuploaded into the “text>network converter” functionality, where a total of 150 words were selected for the elaboration of the link list (Stage 4) that acted as the data source for the establishment of the preliminary network. The following table shows the 10 most common conceptual links contained in the corpus:

Table 6. Concurrency and linking in Deng Xiaoping’s speech.

<i>Node 1</i>	<i>Node 2</i>	<i>ID</i> ⁷⁹	<i>Strength</i> ⁸⁰
National	Economy	0	13
Imperialism	Colonialism	1	12
World	People	2	10
Independence	Political	3	9
Economic	Political	4	8
Imperialism	Hegemonism	5	8
World	Superpowers	6	8
Colonialism	Hegemonism	7	8
Raw	Materials	8	8

Note: Self-elaboration using neTxt software.

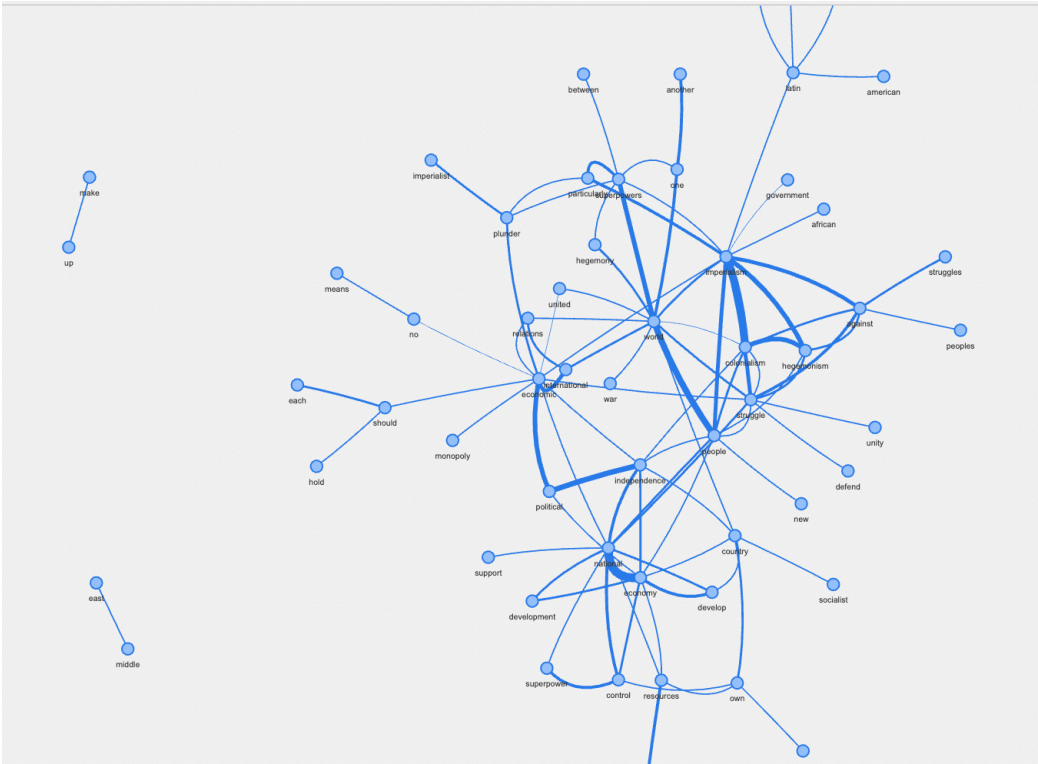
⁷⁸ Number of frequencies presented in the corpus.

⁷⁹ Categorization number for organizing purposes.

⁸⁰ According to Segev (2022), the strength of the tie can be measured by the amount and frequency of interactions.

From Table 6 and the previous filtration, we obtained a total of 94 direct conceptual links that were used to map the semantic relationships contained in Deng Xiaoping’s speech. The preliminary network developed by neTxt was the following:

Network 2. Preliminary neTxt Network from Deng Xiaoping’s 1974 address.

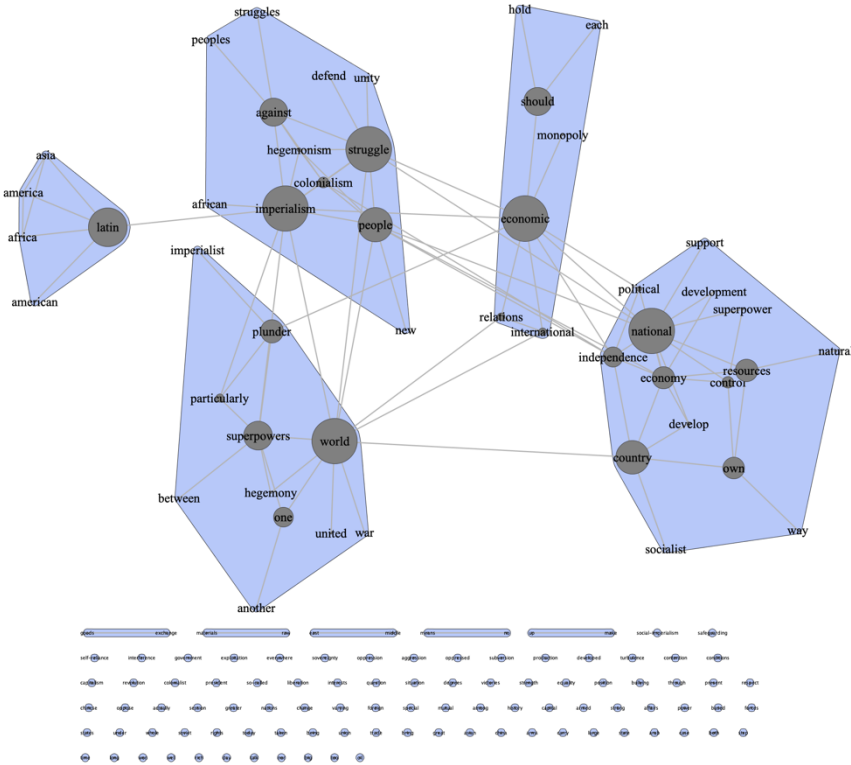


Note: Self-elaboration using neTxt.

This preliminary network, although lacking sparsification, is a helpful resource to identify the main themes along the corpus. In the center quadrant of the Network 2 the words “world”, “people”, “imperialism”, “superpowers” and, “hegemonism” appear to be the concepts with larger nodes, more quantity of links with other narratives and a higher strength (represented with wider connection lines). In particular, the axis traced between “colonialism”, “hegemonism” and “imperialism” seem to have numerous linkages, a logical result in face of the UNGA’s main thematic units during the Six Special Session and with the stand China wanted to transmit as a leader of the Third World, this, in opposition of the binomial dispute for international power. It is not a surprise either, that the second largest upstanding module of linkages contains “political”, “independence”, and “economic”, as it acts as a

counternarrative in the overall construction of the discourse. In the presented sample we can encounter proof of the latter when the Vice-premier asserts that “the people of the developing countries have the right to choose and decide on their own social and economic systems”. Certainly, an engagement to and for the international community seems to be the tendency along the corpus by supporting the national liberation struggles, the recognition of a failed economic system -and the necessity to replace it-, and by condemning neo-colonial practices. For this to be included in a visual representation, Visone calculates Louvain modularity by automatically inserting the formula: $Q = \frac{1}{2m} \sum_{ij} \left[A_{ij} - \frac{k_i k_j}{2m} \right] \delta(c_i, c_j)$. Once selected and applied, it only becomes necessary to procure that, if not previously done, proceed into suppressing the most recurrent linkages. For Deng’s speech it was left a serial value of 4 to 13, with 53, 21, 10, 4, 1, 1, 1 links respectively. The visual representation goes as follows:

Network 3. Deng Xiaoping’s address to the Sixth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly



Note: Self-elaboration using Visone.

Network 3. marks the completion of the 5th stage of Segev's SNA methodology. In it, we can identify the presence of 5 thematic clusters, with their central nodes being: "world", "national", "economic", "imperialism", and "latin". Though similar identifications to those of the unspare sample of *neTxt*, this visualization of the network aggregates a much complex outlook, because it will allow us to dirige the qualitative analysis into smaller and clearer sections, as semantically intended by the author and not through the pressure of our aprioristic contextual connaissance. The first -and largest- cluster prominently centers its narrative on the theme of national economic independence in developing countries, vividly represented in the second paragraph of the sample, which asserts that: "we support the position of the developing countries for the development of their national economy through 'individual and collective self-reliance'" (Xiaoping, 1974). This statement not only captures the ideological foundation of the cluster but also establishes a clear connection to the broader context of postcolonial struggle for sovereignty and economic autonomy that thrived in the first half the 1970's, proving to remain a pivotal focus throughout the first half of the network.

Notably, the second cluster's emphasis on economic strategies seamlessly integrates into the critique of imperialism articulated by the third cluster. This linkage reflects a dynamic dialogue between the clusters, where discussions on economic independence evolve into an interrogation of the structural mechanisms of global imperialism. Furthermore, this interconnection sets the stage for the fourth cluster's exploration of the world superpowers perpetuation of economic exploitation and plunder, where to this point, together, sets the fourth enlisted clusters to generate a cohesive narrative arc that traces the trajectory of developing nations' aspirations around self-reliance, their critique to the Tucedian trap the superpowers have fell into, and their constant resistance to the neo-imperial forces.

The fifth cluster with "latin" as its central node and the closely associated "Asia", "America", and "Asia", introduces a geographical and geopolitical dimension to the discussion. The cluster highlights the interconnectedness within the Third World⁸¹ and their shared experiences under the yield of European rule, c'est-a-dire, territorial dispossession, resistance, and colonial administration. By foregrounding these regions, these cluster operates as a bridge between the principles of economic independence of the first and second clusters and the broader third and fourth cluster's critiques of the World-System dynamics.

⁸¹ Nowadays referred to as global south

The following self-made table allow to identify the main observable axis of Deng’s speech as graphed in the sparsed network:

Table 7. Node linking outlook in Deng’s 1974 address.

<i>Hierarchical Progression</i>	<i>Circular Influence</i>	<i>Integrated Feedback</i>
The first two clusters -from left to right- establish foundational ideals and strategies, while the following three mingle around a critique over the extractive nature of the international system’s power dynamics.	While the logical progression might seem a linear one, there is a persistent cyclical quality in the cluster’s dialogue. For instance, the already signaled critiques of the third cluster reinforces the strategies outlines in the second cluster. This, simultaneous to the practical embodiment that the fifth cluster’s regional envisage donates to the economic independence envisioned in the first. All the thematic <i>encheminements</i> seem to mutually impact each other, as their mutual dependence is traced in the very core of the system’s governance model.	This circularity is enhanced by the formed loop of inter-clustering information nurturing. This feedback whirlpool enriches and complexifies the thematic edges, as it is the binding thread from which the reader is able to construct a viable path for interpretation.

Note: Cejudo, T. (2024). Own elaboration, based upon Network 3 modularity.

The three motifs conveyed in the table are intended to be regarded as a general outlook of the existing dynamic dialogue along the five clusters of Network 3. For continuing the analytical path to fulfill the objectives that drive the current thesis, we are going to follow through into subtly amalgam our semantical insights, alongside theoretically driven principae (as delineated in the introduction), in order to deliver the intended discursive macro-structural approach. The constructivist lenses delivered by Yaqing Qin’s relational theory, alongside the theoretical Ruist components already presented in Chapter 2, convey the formula that constitutes the fundamental essence and ontological core of this research: determination over

the evolution of imperial internationalist doctrines and their contemporary replication or rejection. To commence such a task, we will firstly resort to our first chapter’s approach of the “intensity of interest matrix”, a tool that, according to the author himself, hinges on understanding that its “ purpose [of this framework] is to step back slightly from the point of decision-making and analyse the basic values which condition the attitudes of government leaders before they are faced with a crisis” (Nuechterlein, 1976). In this case, we are adapting its original purpose to a panorama of historic discourse analysis, where the linearity of Foreign Policy has been recorded and thus the nature of the decisions can be thoroughly studied. State behavior depends on the leaders’ perspective over the location and degree of the capital gains that will ensure their survival, a certain subjective but palpable reality that Nuechterlein and other IR scholars have tried to quantify or, at least, systematically explained. Hence, as already discussed⁸², the following matrix will place China’s interest into an ascendant category to -as has been the tendency in this chapter- visually represent where does the focus of national interest lied around during this epoch:

Figure C: Intensity of Interest in Deng Xiaoping’s 1974 address

Country: China		Issue: Deng’s address to the Sixth Special Session			
		Intensity of interest			
Basic interest involved	<i>Survival</i>	<i>Vital</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Peripheral</i>	
Defense				<i>x</i>	
Economic			<i>x</i>		
World Order			<i>x</i>		
Ideological	<i>x</i>				

Note: as adapted from: Nuechterlein, D. (1976).

Deng Xiaoping’s main focus was semantically proved to be the economic implications of an uneven international system to the developing nations. In the matrix, it can be argued that with the purpose of gaining leverage with Soviet and American detractors, China wanted to use this first high-level address at the General Assembly to be considered as a viable model

⁸² Further development of this subject can be found in 1.2 of the current document.

of resistance, self-sustenance, and self-determination. Ezra Vogel (2013) notably identifies through Kissinger's accounts of his reunions with Deng after the UNGA⁸³, that this augmented interest to stand out had, just as their interlocutor, a pragmatic design. The following extract brilliantly summarizes Deng's strategic abilities in the context of building alliances, reflecting a Chinese desire to carefully navigate its position between the hegemonic disputeres carefully, specially being wary of the implications of American foreign policy on his country's own security at the time:

“He also repeated Mao's view that the Soviet Union's strategy was to “feint toward the East” in order to strike the West, that is, that the United States should be on its guard against the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union, Deng told Kissinger, was then anti-Chinese but its real target was the West. Deng also expressed the fear that the United States no longer regarded the Soviets as its key adversary and might encourage China to fight the Soviet Union, thereby weakening both socialist adversaries.” (Vogel, 2013, p. 85).

Overall, it is possible to assert that China was searching to reconcile its ideological ambitions with its practical circumstances. To attain survival and to maximize their gains, it resulted necessary to convince American policymakers that to counter their shared rival, a further diplomatic rapprochement was of major interest. Thus, by presenting its urgent desire for an alliance with the United States as a campaign for greater openness beneficial to the international community, China sought to achieve their most intense national interest. Such a particular read certainly seems to help us understand the motivation behind the CCP's main message for the Member States of the 1974 General Assembly to be, overall, a persistent commitment over the maintenance of harmony. Harmony can be equally translated into shared interest, a concept that in relational theory is understood as “always shared in coexistence and that it is therefore realized only thorough reciprocity” (Qin, 2018, p. 136).

⁸³ Not directly relevant for the current discussion, but certainly for the thesis as a whole, Ezra Vogel (2013) cites the following: “When Deng said that Confucius was conservative and that to emancipate people's thinking, Confucius needed to be criticized, Kissinger asked if that view had any practical relevance for contemporary individuals. Deng replied that criticism of a conservative ideology does in fact have implications for those individuals who represent those ideologies.¹⁰³ The message, though indirect, was loud and clear. Deng was not assisting Zhou but replacing him.

Based on the ontology of self-existence, individuality -especially the most bottom-down on Maslow's pyramid- and its necessities are characterized to be the exclusive referents of relationality, this, while those interests laid on the advancement of common ground are ought to be positive enhancers. Based upon Mencius' philosophy over collectivity, relationality accentuates that the interest is shared because of the context, one that was confirmed to be common as was mentioned in the Fifth Cluster of the Network 3, where the nodes geolocate the regions where such conditions of economic exploitation were endured. This theoretical identification finally allows us to resort to Feng Zhang's (2015) descriptive outils on Confucian -Ruist- vertients of foreign policy traditions, as presented in the second chapter of this thesis. In his descriptions of exclusivism, "the presence of serious foreign threats -at least those who jeopardized regime's survival- and the presence of a weak executive in domestic decision-making" are the most important elements to consider when evaluating the possibility of its encasement under this paradigm.

1974's People Republic of China was characterized by: i) an augmented dispute with their Soviet counterpart that, according to Kissinger (2012) was the cause of their diplomatic regulation with the United States and alignment with the Third World; ii) their need to restore chinese international reputation after the culmination of the Cultural Revolution; and iii) a politically and physically weakened Mao Zedong. Such volatile and fragile position for the Chinese required Deng's early application of its posteriorly famous 24 characters strategy: "observe calmly; secure our position; cope with affairs calmly; hide our capacities and bide our time; be good at maintaining a low profile; and never claim leadership" (Xiaoping, 1990). In this regard, we can argue that Deng Xiaoping's 1974 address to the Sixth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly can be enclosed under the scope of an **Idealpolitik-Exclusivist Ruist approach** on its discursive configuration.

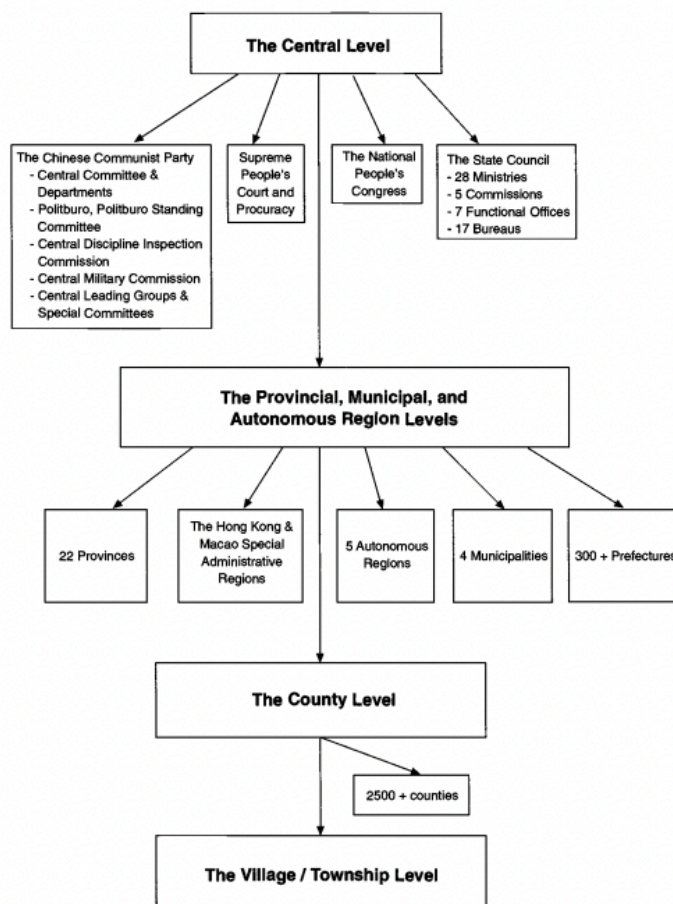
4.3. Xi Jinping's report at 19th CPC National Party Congress

4.3.1. Historic Context.

David Schambaugh's (2000) chapter on *The Chinese State on the Post-Mao Era* commences with a resonating and insightful phrase: "when discussing the "state" in the People's Republic of China, scholars almost always refer to the hybrid "party-state" because of the organizational penetration and political hegemony". A reality since the victory of the

revolution, the existence of commensal relationships between the main power-exerting institutions in the country proved to be the constant line of decision-making criteria or, at least it was until Deng Xiaoping's transformative period, where the scope of state was apparently downsized. The following figure captures a waterfall chart where the hierarchy of the ruling and administrative apparatus of the People's Republic of China is detailed over its central, provincial, and county levels:

Figure D. China's political organization.



Note: Schambaugh's, (2000). Modern Chinese State.

In order to comprehend the operational linkages that determine the directionality of policy enactment nowadays, Figure D permit us to delineate our argumentative path prior to the discussion of the general context circling around the ascension and consolidation of power

of Xi Jinping. As we will center our efforts into briefly outlining the manner in which the modern Chinese state was built, the logistical echelons of the operative partitioning certainly help us to comprehend the extent of the political action of each ramification and the complexity of their bureaucracy. But alongside the interplay of these traditional operative scaffoldings, the People's Republic of China's has also had similar synergies between the CCP and the People's Liberation Army -dissimilar to western traditional separation of professional and corporate identities- that resulted a matter of utmost attention during the post-Maoist era due to the long-standing implications of such symbiotic embedment for the civil-military dilemma. In the *Soldier and the State* (1953), Samuel Huntington discusses that for successfully maintain military and civil coexistence, the application of an objective model to ensure civil control over the military results necessary. The domains of authority and exercise of duties must have a clear division in order to isolate any military involvement in the political realm due to their training as experts in violence management:

“The merging of civilian and military identities and values inherent in the concept of the citizen-soldier was anathema to his conception of professionalism. To be a military professional was to exist apart from society, not just physically but also psychologically and ideologically” (Brooks, 2020, 11).

Just as Huntington, Deng and the reformers understood that the existence of clear boundaries between these two spheres is an essential aspect for the proper functioning of the national democratic system. By following this normative model, which contains prescriptions and prohibitions for officers of the military corps, these institutions would govern their ideological processes and actions for its exclusive application within their own domain and in relations to the civil apparatus⁸⁴ (Brooks, 2020, 12). Hence, to assure that the party exerted greater -if not absolute- control over the governability, the State Council's activities needed to be portrayed autonomously to fundamentally reflect a change in the nature of the state functions: “the scope of state power [...] was deemed too intrusive to an economy and society increasingly regulated by the market, nongovernmental organizations, a variety of collective

⁸⁴ By this, we are not referring a Deng's reformative practices directly applied Huntington's proposal, but rather that, in the same fashion, he understood the required normative pathway to disaggregate the emergency of troubling power disputes.

entities and individuals, as well as subcentral state actors”⁸⁵ (Shambaugh, 2000, p. 167). Ergo, by following on the author’s remarks, when further analyzing the tribulations of the contemporary Chinese state is essential to understand the existence of a mutualistic dependency between the State Council, the People’s Liberation Army, and the Chinese Communist Party. A unique dynamic that thrived along Mao’s own governmental model and was certainly distanced from its known totalistic control to devolve power to lower levels and to separate the party from non-state bodies; a reality that still differentiates China from its international contemporaries.

Aside from the latter, the structure from the party itself did not suffer any major readjustments. The intention of Deng was not reorganization but rather enhancement, especially as he strongly believed in fortifying the Leninist-like party schemes that were atrophied during the Cultural Revolution. The normative changes that deemed necessary to prioritize optimal operations were the central concern -process of decision making and policy implementation-, meaning a certain continuity of several core structural elements inherited from Mao. Nonetheless, in each of the following Leninist elements of party rule it is possible to identify some of the qualitative changes initiated: the nomenklatura personnel system, the "interlocking directorate" relationship between the party on the one hand, and army and state on the other; and party control over the media. Evidence of such compromise towards advancement and openness can be pinpointed in the following remark:

It must be said that in several other key areas of "totalitarian" Leninist control, Deng did away with previous Maoist practices: the decline in the use of terror, bureaucratic hegemony, and intolerance of civil society. To be sure, with regard to the latter, Deng still practiced the Leninist/Maoist method of state cooptation of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), but under Deng such organizations mushroomed and gained considerable "public space" (Shambaugh, 2000, p. 173).

These maneuvering trespassed the commonness of factional skirmishing logics as it belonged to a wider governmental coordination for reopening China to the outside world and create

⁸⁵ Aside from this redirection, the armed forces were also streamlined with the reduction of the Military Region Commands down to 7 and the establishment of 24 Group armies.

the required conditions to fulfill the decades-long wish for attaining richness and power. However, as Goldman & MacFarquhar (1999) denotes, the acquired success has been at a cost of the traditional institutionality of party-state leninism and its capacity to deal with society's ills. By handing over capacities to the market, the regulatory extent of the state got reduce significantly, thus facing competition and dynamic tariffs over previously fixed configurations engendered a discontent among workers, farmers and migrant laborers. Such reality forced Beijing to decentralize decision-making criteria and tolerate a greater degree of regional autonomy which caused an unintended reduction of political leverage around the institutions of the Central Level. But aside this intial complications, we can certainly affirm that this epoch sought compromise over Deng's "economics in command" dictum and a relaxation over Mao's overpolitization of quotidianity with the aforementioned state-dilluting tendency of the reforms.

As Susan Strange explains in *The declining authority of states* (1996), this phenomenom has been trigerred by the impersonal forces of the market, formed and (UNGA, 1974) (Global Times, 2006)consolidated by the global financial system -created after the Second World War-, which due to a number of technological, economic and organizational factors had led upon that "where States were once masters of markets, it is now the markets that are, in many crucial matters, the masters of State governments⁸⁶. Now, often blindly, we hear the business outlook around the facilitation of operational processes, the flexibility of public policy enactment and the need to act in parallel with governments to solve problems affecting collective welfare which, as mentioned by Sievert et al, (2020) makes proposing comprehensive action plans by authoritative bodies require considerable political capital and more coordinated efforts. But in order to fully understand the scope of the transformation of China along the various administrations, we will proceed to present a table based upon the information provided by Goldman's (1999) *The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms*:

⁸⁶ After the commencement of globalization and the ever-rising continuum in the inability of the State to fulfill basic notions of the social contract, the authority of these has begun to fall significantly. Susan Strange continues her book by mentioning that "this erosion of state authority has a proportional impact on a system of global governance whose main focus is statocentrism" (Strange, 1996).

Table 8. Major Economic Post-Mao Reforms

<i>Reform</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Administration</i>
<i>Household Responsibility System</i>	The application of the reform allowed farming families to finally gain charge of their agricultural production. Such a shifting from the collective model incentivized farmers to increase their productivity due that, after meeting state quotas, they could sell the surplus in local markets.	It led to an important augmentation in the agricultural output nation-wide, thus transforming rural economy, boosting their incomes, and increasing the sector's development.	Deng Xiaoping
<i>Special Economic Zones (SEZ's)</i>	The cities of Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen were designated as special economic zones to attract foreign direct investment. By offering favorable tax rates and reduced regulatory requirements, they acted as experiments for market-oriented reforms.	The establishment of this cities proved to be essential in driving China's economic development forward. The technological transfer, alongside the millions of created jobs, serve as evidence of their pivotal role in this period.	Deng Xiaoping
<i>Market Liberalization in Urban Areas</i>	This reform permitted urban areas to move-way from state-prices by setting them through based on supply and demand. Alongside this, the establishment of township and village enterprises allowed local communities to exert a greater deal of operational autonomy from the state.	An increase in the presence, variety, and availability of goods firmly stimulated local markets and fostered entrepreneurship activities, thus augmenting the offer, and invigorating the demand.	Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin.
<i>Price Reforms</i>	Mainly acting as a furthering of the latter in a national scope, the reform made possible for the government to	Marking a significant step away from central planning, it overall improved market efficiency and customers choices. However, under the	Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin

	deregulate prices for a large variety of goods, almost fully transitioning to market-driven mechanisms.	conditions it was deployed, it led to inflationary pressures in some sectors.	
<i>Financial Sector Reforms</i>	The reform to the banking system with other initiatives, included the establishment of joint-stock banks and the introduction of interest rate reforms; with the People's Bank of China operating as the central bank and regulating the financial operations.	Aside from furthering the advancement of the market reforms, their new focus over the financial sector's operation permitted an easier access to credits for small businesses and individuals, hence fostering investment and business initiatives.	Jiang Zemin
<i>State Owned Enterprises Reform</i>	This package was aimed to increase the efficiency of the State-Owned Enterprises by introducing profit retention schemes, operational autonomy, and encouraging private investment.	By having some State-Owned Enterprises restructured or privatized, there was an increase in the competitiveness and productivity within the sector.	Jiang Zemin
<i>Foreign Investment Policies</i>	With this reform they [the CCP] relaxed restrictions on foreign investments, thus allowing joint-ventures and foreign enterprises to establish themselves in Chinese soil. Later, the Foreign Investment Law was implemented to generate more regulatory transparency.	By opening the doors to foreign capital influx, China established itself into the global economy. More technological advancements, market preferential tendencies and investment paved the way to modern chinese manufacturing capabilities.	Jiang Zemin
<i>Rural Land Reforms</i>	A series of policies were implemented to permit the leasing, transfer, or sale the rural land rights.	It provided farmers with more incentives to invest in their land and operations, while also substantially increasing agricultural productivity.	Hu Jintao

Note: (Goldman & MacFarquhar , 1999)

The previous table contains the major reforms implemented from 1978 to the 2000 for it to act as a roadmap of the so-called process of reopening. Initiatives as the establishment of SEZ's and the Household Responsibility System permitted the creation of a hybrid economy that, even though initially intended to concentrate into a dual advancement in development, with urban-centric policies like the SOE's restructure an important quantity of jobs were lose and the inequality gap increased. As in this section of the chapter we aim to contextualize over the general panorama of Xi Jinping's consolidation of power, a thorough revision of his predecessor's commitment to China's transformation and advancement was necessary and, through this table, we were able to summarize the landmarks in a clear and direct manner. Overall, these reforms collectively aimed to modernize China's economy by transitioning it from a central-planned system to a market-oriented one, triggering economic growth, lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty, and positioning the country as a global economic powerhouse. A certainly paradoxical procedure, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao were able to advance these efforts further while simultaneously retaining the absolute control of the CCP over the political and economic directions of the country.

As signaled by Gachuz Maya , Leon de la Rosa , & Calderon Mora, (2022), Xi Jinping has ushered a new era in the Chinese political panorama. Since the beginning of his mandate in 2012, the conveyed rethoric has remained steady into transmitting that his term embodies a third phase in the People's Republic development pathway. This "xiism" has cataculpted the premise of consummating the ambition of revitalization, which is none other that replicating the traditional Middle Kingdom's Tianxia logics into the moden spectre of global politics. Due to the awareness that China is going through a vital period, the slogans and planifications have been flirting with Mao's discursive style to invoke a shield against a liberal political evolution that could homogenize the system in a west-like tendency.

This "continuism" of the post-maoist national metamorphosis have proved to yield a greater dynamism and haste along the lines of incorporating more environmental and technological stances to advance a comprehensive modernization. This commitment to the cause has not distanced itself from the unwavering endeavor to perpetuate and fortify CCP's singular model of "socialism with Chinese characteristics⁸⁷". In retrosprective, the country

⁸⁷ Building a modestly affluent society with greater social justice through central-planning and control of the strategic sectors

that Xi Jinping inherited was the second largest economy in the world, the largest trading country, and the biggest target for FDI outside of the United States. As the biggest partner of every country in East and South Asia, China's appetite for raw materials made it the main linking manufacturing hub of the Western Pacific countries; an outstanding situation that elevated infinite opportunities ahead was the best manner for Xi to receive the administration of his motherland in the first term in office (Bader, 2016).

With this capabilities in mind, Xi Jinping was proved to be an opportune figure to rethink China's approach to foreign and domestic policy, especially because in spite of this steady economic growth, the party's leadership has grown preoccupied with strengthening mechanisms of control since the aftermath of the events in Tiananmen Square. The domestic challenges that Xi faced during his first two mandates included, among others:

“Providing employment, housing, transportation, and medical services for 10 to 12 million new migrants moving to cities each year; developing energy sources to fuel the world's fastest growing large economy; coping with a demographic challenge that is dramatically reducing the number of able-bodied workers; growing inequality and corruption; providing for an aging population; reversing degradation of the world's most polluted air and water; and maintaining peace and stability in restive minority areas” (Bader, 2016, pág. 9).

These enlisted challenges were confronted with determination in order to maintain the market-driven model as the decisive tool by strengthening the CCP's efforts for governance. For this, a series of anti-corruption campaigns against party cadres, new laws on national security, combat on terrorism, and limiting the involvement of NGO's in national territory, have coped as deterrent strategies to the constantly changing conditions of the international system. In the realm of international relations, the resurgence of tensions in Asia was evident in several escalating conflicts in the Korean Peninsula, the incursions by American and Chinese military aircrafts into Taiwan's airspace, and the deadly skirmishes in the Indian-China border. Such volatile context beared a significant responsibility to China to provide institutional frameworks for managing these disputes, particularly because many countries remain wary of their leadership.

Under Xi, China has also reconnected with its original purpose of pursuing a national project rooted in the country's cultural and historical distinctiveness, that, although it might

act as a façade for pre-modern autocracy, its discursive endorsement symbolizes “shaping the nation’s trajectory as it approaches full modernization” (Gachuz Maya , Leon de la Rosa , & Calderon Mora, 2022, p. 12). Alternative to the motto of continuation, what has captured the global attention over the current directionality of foreign affairs relies mainly around its innovations, highlighting the announcement of his modern version of the ancient Silk Road: the Belt and Road Initiative, a strategy aimed to largely fund Chinese projects through Central Asia to the Middle East and Europe.

4.2.2. Speech Context

The 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was held between the 18-25 of October 2017. Delivered over three and half hours, Xi’s report to the party was a landmark for signalling a figurative end of the Reform Era as we knew it, proclaiming the advancement of a rejuvenated guiding ideology that would strive to influence the international entourage along the lines of Chinese national interest and win-win principles. Being a significantly larger report than those delivered by his predecessors, it contained a more ambitious agenda around basic policy, major theoretical innovations, and CCP’s historic mission in a “new era” (Stanzel, Doyon, Holbig, Mittelstaedt, & Sautin, 2017). The previous amendments to the constitution in order to enshrine “Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era” elevated his status as equal to Deng’s or Mao’s by a confirmation realized through a Li Zhanshu’s article in the People’s Daily, in where the author discussed that the spirit of the SG’s multiple speeches to the date ideally transmitted a new guiding thought to the party in the subjects of statecraft and governance.

Holbig’s (2017) remarks on “the principal contradictions of the New Era” easily explains that the CCP historically sets up to the task of identifying the operational contradictions of each period’s of social developments to further the socialist cause and change the overall conditions of the citizenry. For example, while Mao’s contradiction was centered on class struggle and Deng’s between “the ever-growing material and cultural needs of the people versus backward social production” (Xinhua, 2017), the new formulation implied that rounded human development and social progress could only solve Xi’s identified contradiction: “between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people’s ever-growing needs for a better life”; an statement that was officially lauded as the latest

achievement in the sinification of marxism (Stanzel, Doyon, Holbig, Mittelstaedt, & Sautin, 2017).

Jointly to this ideological introduction, major changes in the political power structure of the party were made, most of senior leadership was replaced by five of the seven member of the Standing Committee. Of the 25 members of the Politburo, 15 were replaced to loyal supporters of President Xi which, unlike previous appointees, their background as political experts expressed a loud message on the party's priorities for the years to come⁸⁸(Ella, Lavi, & Orion, 2017). To briefly acute this section of the thesis, we would round up that the 19th National Party Congress, as China's most important political forum, was a pivotal moment for the sketching a roadmap on the incoming decades in the areas of politics, economics, security and foreign relations.

Said this, it is possible to understand why we preferred to analyse the delivered speech of 2017 over the 2012 NPC's inaugural one, due to the stakes being higher and the emphasis on China's future greater. This message in and for a "New Era" would define the governments's objectives up to today and, for this, we will proceed to delineate our Semantic Network Analysis to identify the main trends, thematic axis and conceptual frequencies, to verify if the undertaking actions of the CCP can be traced back to the discursive agenda of Xi Jinping or, once more, they serve as a tool to foster nationalism and to cover up a most ambitious agenda.

4.2.3 Interpretation of Xi's speech

Following the analysis in the same manner as we realized it in section 4.2.3, the following extract will serve us as a sample to overall analyze its contents beyond the contextual roundabouts we briefly examine just above. This, as to faithfully elucidate conceptual relationships that glimpse the rustic trends require us to isolate the speech and focus it, for a moment, on its conceptual nodes and clusters. Even though the entirety of Xi Jinping's 2017

⁸⁸ As further signaled by Ella et al (2017), "western experts argue that this is a sign of the President's intention to continue for a third term in office. On the other hand, there have been precedents in China's recent history, where a president was appointed without first being announced at the Congress as the intended heir". It was later also clarified that, "the new appointments at lower ranks are also important for an understanding of China's future leadership. Of particular interest are the promotions of younger party members (the sixth generation), whose numbers have doubled in the last two years, particularly among the leaders of outlying areas. This generation is less idealist than its predecessors and less connected to the Party's values. This is also the generation that will have to deal with the party's shortcomings.

address to the 19th National Party Congress was passed through our Semantic Network Analysis software's, the sample of the text we will center our qualitative notations on, is the following⁸⁹:

“Comrades,

In the early days of reform and opening up, the Party made a clarion call for us to take a path of our own and build socialism with Chinese characteristics. Since that time, the Party has united and led all the Chinese people in a tireless struggle, propelling China into a leading position in terms of economic and technological strength, defense capabilities, and composite national strength. China's international standing has risen as never before. Our Party, our country, our people, our forces, and our nation have changed in ways without precedent. The Chinese nation, with an entirely new posture, now stands tall and firm in the East. With decades of hard work, socialism with Chinese characteristics has crossed the threshold into a new era. This is a new historic juncture in China's development. This is what socialism with Chinese characteristics entering a new era means: [...]

This new era will be an era of building on past successes to further advance our cause, and of continuing in a new historical context to strive for the success of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It will be an era of securing a decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, and of moving on to all-out efforts to build a great modern socialist country. It will be an era for the Chinese people of all ethnic groups to work together and work hard to create a better life for themselves and ultimately achieve common prosperity for everyone. It will be an era for all of us, the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation, to strive with one heart to realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation. It will be an era that sees China moving closer to center stage and making greater contributions to mankind.

As socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, the principal contradiction facing Chinese society has evolved. What we now face is the contradiction between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life. China has seen the basic needs of over a billion people met, has basically made it possible for people to live decent lives, and will soon bring the building of a moderately prosperous society to a successful completion. The needs to be met for the people to live better lives are increasingly broad. Not only have their material and cultural needs grown; their demands for democracy, rule of law, fairness and justice, security, and a better environment are increasing. At the same time, China's overall productive forces have significantly improved and in many areas our production capacity leads the world. The more prominent

⁸⁹ The selected sample is larger in comparison to the selected fragment of Deng's exercise due to length of Xi's speech.

problem is that our development is unbalanced and inadequate. This has become the main constraining factor in meeting the people's increasing needs for a better life.

We must recognize that the evolution of the principal contradiction facing Chinese society does not change our assessment of the present stage of socialism in China. The basic dimension of the Chinese context—that our country is still and will long remain in the primary stage of socialism—has not changed. China's international status as the world's largest developing country has not changed. The whole Party must be completely clear about this fundamental dimension of our national context, and must base our work on this most important reality—the primary stage of socialism. We must remain fully committed to the Party's basic line as the source that keeps the Party and the country going and that brings happiness to the people. We must lead and unite the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in fulfilling the central task of economic development. We must uphold the Four Cardinal Principles, continue to reform, and open up, be self-reliant, hardworking, and enterprising, and strive to build China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful. Comrades,

Chinese socialism's entrance into a new era is, in the history of the development of the People's Republic of China and the history of the development of the Chinese nation, of tremendous importance. In the history of the development of international socialism and the history of the development of human society, it is of tremendous importance. Our entire Party should develop unshakeable confidence, work hard, and work well to see socialism with Chinese characteristics display even stronger vitality” (Xi Jinping, 2017).

Now, having seen the sample of the selected corpus, from a list of 24,861 words identified in a Microsoft Word, the resulted CVS file was uploaded into *neTxt* software for the creation of a list of frequent words. Among the 20 more frequented words are: “party” [324]⁹⁰, “people” [263], “chinese” [194], “china” [168], “development” [162], “must” [158], “new” [124], “system” [118], “work” [98], “country” [94], “improve” [93], “should” [93], “national” [89], “political” [87], “develop” [76] , “socialist” [75], “building” [72] and, “governance” [71]. For the lemmatization -also known as stemming-, (Stage 3), the same software was used to automatically eliminate 90 stop words and to manually merge families of derivationality, resulting on a significant reduction that reached 14,630 words. The ensued spreadsheet was reuploaded into the “text>network converter” functionality, where a total of 150 words were selected for the elaboration of the link list (Stage 4) that acted as the data

⁹⁰ Number of frequencies presented in the corpus.

source for the establishment of the preliminary network. The following table shows the 10 most common conceptual links contained in the corpus:

Table 9. Concurrency and linking in Deng Xiaoping’s speech.

<i>Node 1</i>	<i>Node 2</i>	<i>ID⁹¹</i>	<i>Strength⁹²</i>
Chinese	Socialism	0	57
People	Chinese	1	41
Chinese	New	2	37
New	Era	3	36
System	Improve	4	33
People	Must	5	31
Chinese	Era	6	29
New	Socialism	7	27
People	Country	8	27

Note: elaborated by Cejudo, T. (2024) using neTxt software.

From Table 9 and the previous filtration, we obtained a total of 150 direct conceptual links that were used to map the semantic relationships contained in Xi Jinping’s speech. The preliminary network developed by neTxt was the following:

⁹¹ Categorization number for organizing purposes.

⁹² According to Segev (2022), the strength of the tie can be measured by the amount and frequency of interactions.

The second cluster focus in the ideological backbone behind the party's efforts to integrate traditional cultural identity with modernization and development, meaning that their unparalleled history and rich values must be the inspiring source of China's distinct path towards a better future. This is demonstrated in the fourth paragraph of the sample by mentioning that: "we must recognize that the evolution of the principal contradiction facing Chinese society does not change our assessment of the present stage of socialism in China. The basic dimension of the Chinese context—that our country is still and will long remain in the primary stage of socialism—has not changed". Again, even though they are working continuously into adapting themselves better to confront the international and domestic challenges of our time, it is fundamental to the Party to acknowledge that they continue in the same stage of socialism and, as it reads, they do not seem to want to reverse it.

The third cluster, separately, seems to transmit a centrality over the creation of jobs as a means of ensuring social mobility and financial stability. The dual-circulation strategy to balance domestic consumption and international trade underscores the importance of investing in infrastructure, urbanization, and technological innovation to create a modernized economy. Once more, the benefit of having a visual representation of a textual material is what allow us to find such relationships between the themes without the need of applying qualitative lenses to each of the existing paragraphs, hence allowing the following phase to be enriched by this clearer interpretation of the text.

The fourth and final cluster highlight's Xi's concept of strength by encompassing its attention over the economic, technological, and military dimensions. By prioritizing national security and military advancement toward a framework that aims to safeguard its sovereignty and maintain peace amidst a rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape. It seems that in general the clusters and conceptual linkages are more straightforward than those of Deng's 1974 speech because of the quorum for whom it was delivered. One was intended to impress the international community of China's commitment with multilateralism, trade, and international institutions, while the second aimed to share a message with his fellow comrades without the need -seemingly- of parading over false promises or pretenses.

Assembling the dynamic connection between the four clusters, it is clear that Xi's strategy is multi-dimensional. The interconnectedness of "China"- "identity", "new"- "era", "economic"- "development" and "chinese"- "socialism", along with the more evident

assembles around social development and governance, culture, and strength and sovereignty, demonstrates that the clusters are not isolated. On the contrary, they operate as interdependent pillars to ensure long-term national success.

Ergo, with the already discussed⁹³, we will proceed to insert Nuechterlein’s interest matrix to, as explained and done in the previous sections, permit us to place China’s interest into an ascendant category to visually represent where does the focus particularly lied around during this epoch:

Figure E: Intensity of Interest in Xi Jinping’s 2017 address

Country: China		Issue: Xi’s address to the 19 th National Party Congress		
Basic interest involved	Intensity of interest			
	<i>Survival</i>	<i>Vital</i>	<i>Major</i>	<i>Peripheral</i>
Defense		<i>x</i>		
Economic			<i>x</i>	
World Order			<i>x</i>	
Ideological	<i>x</i>			

Note: as adapted from: Nuechterlein, D. (1976).

Identifying where the main focuses of national interest reside is essential to comprehend what does the One really wants to transmit to the Other, which in this case seems to be: power. Nonetheless, the projection of power during the 19th National Party Congress was not intended to be found when dealing with the notions of military capabilities or sovereign defense, but rather in what Yaqing Qin (2018) tackles as Relational -sourced- Power. As discussed in his book, “the social world is one of relations and each actor is a relator. [...] Her relational circles and other relators in such circles, due to the connectivity she has with them, produce value for her in form of a resource or base value.” Such constructivist concept seems to emulate basic dynamics underlying the construction and interpretation of Soft Power as both derive from the existing relationships with others. But unlike it, the relational nature of power is not attractive nor co-optive in nature, it is rather an ambiguous

⁹³ Further development of this subject can be found in 1.2 of the current documents.

combination of Hard and Soft elements when affecting the behavior of third-party outcomes in the outcome of certain event.

Xi Jinping, conscious or not, is constantly dwelling over a relational conception of political power dynamics: its shareability. The focus over economic growth to foster a sustained development for all sectors of Chinese society is only the first stage on this model, as it becomes a collective responsibility to generate the correct conditions for pushing the Party's agenda forward. It is a relational convention to delineate power resources are jointly owned by actors who are related to each other in certain manner, theoretically dispossessing itself from particular ownership. This vision is enshrined in any definition of cooperation as there can be described to be "situations characterized by reciprocal effects among countries" (Keohane & Nye, 2001). Common to the socialist jargon, we would argue that these traditional Ruist elements have a deeper interpretative effect than only applying the Marxist's insights over collectivization.

Chiefly when discussing foreign policy, the following part of the speech highlights China's commitment with the international community and, to a certain extent, help us elucidate these deployed elements of relational power into play:

"The dream of the Chinese people is closely connected with the dreams of the peoples of other countries; the Chinese Dream can be realized only in a peaceful international environment and under a stable international order. We must keep in mind both our internal and international imperatives, stay on the path of peaceful development, and continue to pursue a mutually beneficial strategy of opening up. We will uphold justice while pursuing shared interests, and will foster new thinking on common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security" (Xi, 2017).

Equally important when sharing is the accessibility. IR studies on social capital express this variable to be of borrowable nature of relational power. So, when Xi (2017) discusses "beneficial strategies" and "pursuing shared interests" he is indirectly evoking that the polarization of China's influence in the global arena could be "borrowed" by its partners and allies to temporarily benefit from resources that otherwise would be more difficult to attain. Again, it all comes back to reciprocity and willingness of the involved actors to exploit the benefits of their relationship to be mutually beneficial as possible.

The first impression after this brief theoretical revision might be to fully determine an inclusivist tendency all along Xi's address to the 19th National Party Congress due to Zheng's characterization. The matter with discursive analysis is that the real intentions are often masqueraded by the interlocutors, an assertion that reminds us of Krasner's organized hypocrisy as the device we used to identify when the emperor's resorted to these elements to only boost nationalism and gain political leverage among the courtier corps and the rest of the vassalry. The logic is similarly applicable in this case as we are also implementing a macro-structural approach to identify the discursive material in the context where they are delivered and under the conditions they were intended to convey.

Hamilton and Orelke's (2020) remarks on how the CCP -and this can be taken as a synonym of Xiism- has advanced its agenda to reshape global governance by Sinicizing the United Nations, pushing Taiwan off of the international stage, creating parallel and pseudo-multilateral organizations, influencing western academia, linking party money in Brussels, and the party's domestic think tank expansion. Although an analysis coming from an Australian and a German, their valuable insights permit us to create some barriers around falling over discursive aesthetic and to further analyze the conveyer, the message, and the context on which they are enacted. For this, we would categorize Xi Jinping's report to the 19th National Party Congress to be of a *realpolitik-inclusive* discourse that is covering a *Idealpolitik-exclusivist* foreign policy agenda.

Concluding Remarks

As it was thoroughly stated in the second chapter, Confucian philosophical and political traditions are the foundation upon which a national identity was constructed. A comprehensive dialectical notion elaborated by Xunxi permitted an early dual unification of culture and unification of thought that systematized the doctrine into an enhanced form of knowledge. From that moment onward, Confucian values and insights on humanness, political directionality, and good governance, became part of the government-ingrained configurations cited by Yao Xiazhong's (2000): Ru Xia (as a family); Ru Jiao (as a cult); and, Ru Xue (as learning). But as time advances and the government further integrates the teachings at the core of ruling and societal ordering, a hybrid dynamism between religious practice and political doctrine blurred the previous categories.

Although, as in any system of thought in history, the tribulations faced by the Empire often affected the degree on which Ruist maxims were followed or respected. For example, as aforementioned in the third chapter, Song acted as a period of renaissance for the Ruist values in Zhongguo after a large period of lesser exposure due to the chaotic momentum of the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdom's period⁹⁴. Not only there Confucianism emanated as a response to the plural social nature of the time, but also due to an increase of the Middle Kingdom's international relations. The establishment -and continuation- of the vassal system, introduced as Tianxia in this thesis, also permitted China to produce one of the earliest systems of "states" in the world along the doctrine's guiding lines (Zhang, 2001).

Facing foreign invasions and reinventing itself numerous times, the one constant element of the Chinese dynastical cycle was Ruism. Up until the abdication of Emperor Pu-Yi in 1912, the main governmental and decision-making criteria for running the public affairs of Zhongguo were the neo-Confucian premises. It was here, with important pressures of domestic transformation that the elevation of republicanism became inevitable and thus, the ascension of democracy at the center of Chinese political life. This, alongside the May Fourth Movement's anti-traditionalism that impregnated the CCP's cadres, that with the foundation of the People's Republic of China, anything Confucian came to be a target of attack under the concept of "a target of proletarian dictatorship" (Peng, 2010). Not only associated with

⁹⁴ In between the fall of Tang and the reunification.

aristocratic values and backwardness, it is also in the third chapter where Riost's remarks on Mao Zedong's formative years can also instruct us to comprehend the abhorrence that the leader acquired to anything remotely associated with Confucianism, a hatred that had terrible consequences for scholars and practitioners during the Cultural Revolution⁹⁵.

After Mao's death and Deng's ascension to the leading role of China, the process of Reform and Opening up changed the panorama positively for Confucianism. Starting with Peking's University courses in 1990, a slowly but steady reassessment of the Classics was made by the Party in an effort to recuperate cultural richness and valuable traditions into the collective memory. For instance, as a briefly former account, the establishment of the China Confucius Foundation (CCF) and the International Confucius Association (ICA) which were not only fully funded by the central government, but encouraged academic research among its alumni and magisterium⁹⁶, was a lighthouse after decades de facto prohibition.

Though, this modern hyper commercialization of Confucian classics is thought to be a strategy to promote "narrow-minded" Confucianism. This argument followed by Guoxiang Peng on his previously cited article, comes in handy when constructing the concluding remarks of this thesis, especially when considering that the inclusion -directly or indirectly- of Confucian political elements in the enactment of foreign policy discourse might operate as a glazing mirror over a stratagem to foster chauvinism. The detailed historic pathway of imperial China is the main axis of this thesis historic foundation and, certainly, the most interesting element of it all.

But before furthering in imperative statements, it becomes important to bear in mind what were the main and particular objectives laid in the introduction. Only with clarity in the direction, the contents, and their current evaluation, we would be able to fulfill a conclusion that encompasses the majority of the boarded elements. The hypothesis stated that the particularistic and relational applicability of Confucian meta-values in foreign policy sought the achievement of legitimacy for political action and operation under the Mandate of Heaven

⁹⁵Guoxiang Peng (2010) commences his article *Inside the Revival of Confucianism in Mainland China* by comparing the vicissitudes of Confucianism in contemporary Chinese society to a Song dynasty poem called "You Shanxi" -Traveling to the village to the west of the mountain- by Lu You. A metaphor that seeks to demonstrate that two main analytical stages -yet contrastingly different in their approach to the customary application of the doctrines- can be identified to be: one from 1949 to 1970 and another from 1980 to 2010.

⁹⁶In 2005 a landmark for Confucian studies is registered after the adherence of a fully classical education tenure in Fudan University of Shanghai (Peng, 2010).

ideological order in Ming and Song Dynasties, a phenomenon that, after the revival of these values on the reform and opening up era, are often used as a propagandistic nationalistic-oriented tool under the administration of President Xi Jinping.

Alongside this and, again, as they can be encountered in the introduction, the objectives to attain a result were: the description of discursivism as a sociological tool, the comparison and assessment of the presence of punitive and exclusivist Confucian referents, the outline on Maoism as the axiological agglutinant of modern Chinese-state construction and its corrosion during the Reform and Opening Up era, and the analysis over the speeches of the fourth chapter. So, where the objectives fulfill, and the hypothesis attained?

The first chapter introduced us to discursive construction and foreign policy. Two elements that are not commonly studied in International Relations, together held strong leverage to analyse events from a perspective that can deconstruct the relator's purpose when conveying a message and a general contextual interpretation of those asseverations. Kenneth Waltz own neorealist models donates importance to centering our analytical efforts over a multi-dimensional structure, going upper-down and again bottom-up. Discursive criteria also gave us that opportunity, as done in the fourth chapter, to integrate all the faces of our historic revision along the quantitative and qualitative methodologies chosen in the introduction.

This, as it was proven that post-Maoist China political ambience permitted a greater degree of social expression as a consequence of the market-driven economic model and the commencement of international penetration after decades of a steel curtain-like application of exclusivism in foreign policy. Such directionality did not hide any alternative rather than the advancement of domestic development and an upgrading in the overall conditions of rural and urban areas, a reality proven through the inspection of Deng's 1974 address to the UNGA, a soft power element that was followed by high-level diplomatic encounters that serve as first-hand declaration of the emitted compromises. Such confirmation summed up the required elements to argument which foreign Confucian tendency was the one that permeated during this epoch.

The second posed example acted in a similar fashion. The last chapter described the overall advancement of the reforms after Deng's administration until the ascension of Xi Jinping as Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party, along with some context around his term and the 19th National Party Congress itself. This exercise, being a little more

visually captivating than the previous one, did not show a clear relation between the bestowed sociological elements and the semantic results. For one part, the thematic edges graphed in the semantic work acknowledge a report that commits China into further integrating into the international community with the advancement of an agenda of mutual cooperation and relational borrowing. But once we included all the analyzed segments of the section, we concluded that the discursive construction did fall in correlation with the thesis hypothesis, although with certain clarifications.

The first and most important one is that, completely agreeing with Peng's (2010) aforementioned conclusions, Confucianism is used as a tool to drive nationalistic tendencies. However, it is not expressed in the direct manner we expected to be, especially because the main theoretical guidelines used when constructing policies is the so-called "socialism with Chinese characteristics". A Sinicization of Marxism that required, even if unnoticed or unintended by Mao, the usage of traditional teachings to be tropicalized and in sense with the nation's history and philosophy.

With this, not only our hypothesis was mainly in the correct pathway, but our interest when selecting the subject was fulfilled, as the motivation that guided the development of the current topic revolves around the important role of China in reshaping the current international reality and the implications that a new set of moral and political beliefs could exert in a world engaged in a fully American institutionalist and cooperative perspectives. We consider, and often remarked throughout the research, that Chinese motives and objectives are often mis-interpreted and mis-understood by the western scholastic and journalistic overviews, as cognitive dissonance and uninterest in their theoretical approaches stand in the way.

As a brief final reflection, I would want to encourage the Latin-American students to pursue on analyzing subjects through the correspondent theoretical lenses. Nowadays we have the opportunity to access to the more recent innovations of Chinese scholars over their own philosophical tools. The same can be done with any IR field and chosen region until the discipline has enough methodological cruxes to challenge its own epistemically violent nature.

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