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A Chinese Case Study: An insight to our changing judgement

Masters Thesis
Geneva Business School
[Masters of Business Administration in International Relations]

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Geneva, Switzerland

Date: 09/02/2021
Defence date: 11/02/2021

Word count: 14,953

“In the information age, it’s not just whose army wins, but whose story wins.”

- Joseph Nye

Declaration of Authorship

“I hereby declare:

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Name: [Haydn Samir Hagstrom]

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Haydn Hagstrom", written in a cursive style.

List of Abbreviations

ADIZ	Air Defence Identification Zone
AU	African Union (Bank)
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
HK	Hong Kong
HRC	Human Rights Council
PRC	People's Republic of China
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
US	United States

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Abstract

China and international relations is a sensitive topic due to China's breach of human rights, aggressive tactics in the South China Sea, movements in Africa and through usage of the Belt and Road Initiative. China has a long history leading up to their current state of power which is explored in order to answer a handful of given questions which regard international business, Africa, Asia and the soft power strength the People's Republic of China has in the chamber. Furthermore the investigation between the link of Westernised opinions of Chinese relations, and news sources the public of the West are consuming effect the depiction of the PRC and the Chinese. This too is investigated among the research of current Chinese relations.

These given topics shed light on Chinese relations leading to the overarching topic, of learning and understanding the depiction of Chinese relations to the West. The focus on China could be a fascination, a means in which to predict what their next step is, or a study in how they manoeuvre their, occasionally, controversial work.

This research focuses on, in particular, examples of soft power that China is and has been utilising over the last 30 years, the Belt and Road Initiative and the domineering power the PRC has over Chinese companies. The report further looks into details of Westerners' opinions of Chinese relations and how news outlets have augmented said opinions. Consequently, affecting international business across all platforms and nations. These given topics sheds light on the power Beijing has, as well as how they are changing Asia and Africa to best suit their needs and interests. The conclusion gives a formulated opinion that China, as of current, is a contending world power and the paths in which they might take from the information discovered throughout the report.

1. Introduction

Traversing across all sides of Asia, linguistics, religions, ideologies, social and ethnic differences have been reinforced or enhanced, often without choice and, sadly due to modern war. China has fallen victim to much of this modern war, leading them to becoming the fierce contenders in international politics and geopolitics that they are today.

1927 to 1979 there were many wars, ultimately leading the extreme economical rise of a handful of countries. In 1979 China changed course under an internal power struggle, the new leader Deng Xiaoping, proclaimed a “non-ideological foreign policy..., that continued and accelerated under his successors, [his successors] have had a profound transformative effect on China and the world” (Kissinger, 2015). As these times continued to unfold in Asia, elsewhere, a national-based Westphalian system unraveled. A system in which each state agreed on non-interference upon one another domestic affairs. Deng Xiaoping, who ruled until his passing in 1997 “oversaw the arrangements by which Hong Kong (HK) was returned to China. He did not favour political liberalisation, was suspicious of dissent, and suppressed the pro-democracy movement in 1989” (Davin, 2017). Knowingly or not, this was the perfect foundation to propel China forward economically and match that of major European countries from the early 1980s. Through their economical development, they rose into the headlines of the world.

China has traversed through technology, domestic and international economic development and has prevailed through military standoffs. They are now considered a force to be reckoned with. However, the People’s Republic of China states that their relations are necessary for their international business and politics of their country. Although, as the secondary research illustrates, there is a hidden card up their sleeve. The primary research will illustrate the Westerner’s understanding of this hidden card and the public's lack of trust due to what has been seen through the media. Initially by analysing the secondary research and what we as normal individuals see through the media, we can create an assumption of, ‘why China is doing what they do’. From then on, primary research will be analysed to make clear that there is indeed a link between the public's opinion and the method in which the media and news depicts the Chinese. Finally to be concluded is why they are doing this, and how we as the public ought to interpret the media.

Through the analysis of political, economic and technological aspects of PESTLE, we will be able to conclude the effectiveness, repercussions of their current endeavours and the future of China. Through the exploration of the secondary research of the report, we will build a picture of why China is a topic to be marvelled and why it ought to be studied and kept a cautious eye on for the foreseeable future.

1.1 Why focus on China today?

Today the country of the Red Dragon falls under grave scrutiny from Western nations and is considerably feared by many parts of the world. From disputing territories with India, cyber warfare with America, to ‘liberating’ Hong Kong, China has been illustrating dominance, now more than ever, across many platforms. As of the present day China has been brought to the attention of the world due to a hand full of serious topics:

The relations between the previous autonomous zone Hong Kong and China have been a considerable disturbance due to China's domination over the region, this further affected the international relations between Hong Kong, China and the rest of the world. Towards the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020, China had begun to impose laws on the, then, autonomous zone of Hong Kong. Beijing had decided it would deliver "broad powers to crack down on a variety of political crimes, including meting out life imprisonment for "grave" offences" (The New York Times, 2020). In resistance to this, mass demonstrations commenced and lasted for months, those protesting were arrested for "violating the National Security Law" (Hong Kong Police Twitter, 2020) for something as simple as unravelling a Hong Kong flag. The Chinese crackdown on Hong Kong was to usher in a new era for the region in which "civil liberties are tightly constrained and loyalty to the party is paramount" (New York Times, 2020). This broke the international agreement between the United Kingdom and Hong Kong, where the United Kingdom (UK) had formally relinquished HK as a colony of the UK to the PRC in 1997. In this agreement, "China agreed to govern Hong Kong under the principle of "one country, two systems", where the city would enjoy "a high degree of autonomy, except in foreign and defence affairs" for the next 50 years" (BBC, 2017).

Further discussions of the Coronavirus pandemic has been centred around China and their handling of the virus. The virus that has swept the world, disrupting everything in its path and, at present, having killed over 1.8 million people. The virus had originated from a central city in mainland China, Wuhan. Wuhan for the most part was an unknown city to the Western world of approximately 10 million people, which has become a household name as the epicentre of the virus. The Coronavirus (also seen as SARS Covid-19) has politically disturbed the world, from illustrating governments who have best been able to handle it, to those who have not, the virus has taken over 'normal life'. China has found themselves in controversial news titles across the world, from the likes of: "theory COVID-19 came from Wuhan lab" (Haynes, 2020) from Sky News, to "Conspiracy theories flourishing as coronavirus resurfaces in China" (Weinland and Zhou, 2020) from the Financial Times. The country has found itself under grave scrutiny for being the epicentre of the pandemic and for not alerting the world in an appropriate time to mount their defence.

China has been in talks with countries across the world for a range of international trade, politics and discussion upon territories. Recently, China has fallen into a dangerous dispute with India in regards to a particular disputed territory in the Himalayas. In the year of 2020, the contention had its final stroke, both parties began to open fire upon each other with the result of the loss of life. "Both armies prepare for a long winter after battle lines were redrawn in months of tense fighting" (Bloomberg news, 2020). The disputed area saw the death of 20 soldiers from India and an unknown number of Chinese soldiers along the Galwan Valley in the Xinjiang Tibet region which is controlled by China but claimed by India. This situation has raised more tension between the two nations in the last six months than in the past six decades. Currently, both armies are preparing for a long, cold winter across a vast and freezing landscape "in which temperature can drop to 40 degrees below zero" (Bloomberg News, 2020). This conflict has led to "an expanded winter deployment"...for the first time "since the 1962 war" says General D.S. Hooda, a former Northern army commander of the Himalayas pass between India and China (Hooda, 2020).

People have gone to extraordinary lengths to uncover the truth as to why Uyghur Muslims have been disappearing in the province of Xinjiang, North West of China. The Xinjiang province of China has been reported to be developing ‘vocational education and training centres’ for those of Uyghur descent to be converted to Han Chinese (China’s dominant ethnic group). “China has expanded its network of detention centres for its Uyghur minority despite insisting on the "re-education" system” (BBC, 2020). Many governments and international committees decided to have their say in what they truly believe is happening in an attempt to not go silent regarding the situation, in 2019 “23 countries joined the condemnation of China on the Uighur issue [at the United Nations human rights council], and the near doubling of countries this year signalled that there is growing international concern about Beijing's policy toward the ethnic minority” (Besheer, 2020). Whereas, for the majority, Chinese ambassadors have refused to condemn the concentration camps. On the 17th of October 2020, the Economist published a newspaper titled “Torment of the Uyghurs” (Economist, 2020). In the British newspaper, China was criticised and the use of the concentration camps was denounced. In the following week, the newspaper published the response from Zeng Rong, spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy, London, in which he stated “At these vocational education and training centres, those who have been led astray by extremism or who have committed minor crimes learn the common language, legal knowledge and vocational skills. This helps them break with extremism.” (Rong, 2020). The story between the Uyghurs and the Chinese has been a tale ongoing from the early 1950’s and will continue, unto the unforeseeable future. Although this topic is of great importance to the world it will not be spoken of in great detail during the report due to its complexity and length. However it is beneficial to know for the reader that the world stands strong against these given practices.

These situations, political disagreements and abuses of human rights are what makes China, one of the most interesting case studies of modern foreign politics and international relations. Each of the given topics previously spoken of, has manifested China and their characteristics, in which the country has been able to propel its success regardless of universal scrutiny.

1.2 Objectives and Research Questions

The questions below provide a focus for the topics that will be discussed. These questions, throughout reviewing substantial material, will enable for a conclusion in an attempt to give an explanation as to why China is such a topic to discuss.

1. How is Western media biased portraying Chinese relations in Asia?
2. How is Western media biased portraying Chinese/African relations?
3. How is Western media portraying China changing international business?
4. To understand China’s use of soft power.
5. To understand the depiction of Chinese relations to the general public of the West.

2. Literature Review

Many professional authors, journalists and media outlets have taken to express their opinions and the factual insight they have been able to find over their careers. Many of which present different opinions depending on nationality and their own personal relation to China. The year of 2020 was a year which revealed the sinophobic discussions of China and Chinese relations. However, an interest that has had, lack thereof, information published, is the relationship between the news

and media that dictates Chinese relations to the masses. A key piece to the literature is the understanding of why topics are reported in the journalistic perspective which they have been. Authors such as Tim Marshall or Henry Kissinger use a neutral and non-sinophobic point of view to their research while discussing Chinese relations. Prisoners of Geography, a published book by Marshall gives a brief and well described overview of Chinese relations, domestic and international, what they are doing and why. His writings give an occasional contradiction to that of (mostly) Western journalists who are quick to slander the PRC's methods of international works. Meanwhile the PRC representatives are ones to exasperate their means of how they can ensure everyone involved in their business is working for a common goal of success and prosperity. On the contrary to the neutral and balanced argument that Kissinger and Marshall express, journalists such as Roy Chandhury, express a form of backlash against Chinese relations with France and the "biased rewritings" the Chinese are dictating to the French to better themselves. Alongside Chandhury, journalists such as Ellis-Peterson of The Guardian newspaper, titling reports such as: "No Cambodia Left': How Chinese money is changing Sihanouville" (The Guardian, 2018). From the given title, a depiction of the Chinese relations with a Cambodian city percolates aggression to those reading.

A debate between a UK Member of Parliament (MP) of the Conservative party and a Singaporean diplomat and academic writer, Mahbubani, discussed whether or not it was within the West's power to deal with an 'out of control' China. The debate was met on both sides with fair and balanced arguments. Further debates such as "The China Debate 2019: Will China's Rise be Peaceful?" (SOAS, 2019) At SOAS University, London, receipts similar arguments as Mahbubani and the left wing MP. These differing opinions and arguments for and against, are echoed across the world by academics, diplomats, politicians and NGO leaders. To further incentivise the vast opinions spread throughout the world, scholarly articles from Mlabambo, Kushamba and Simawu can be considered for China-African relations and could aid the primary and secondary research. Furthermore, world famous diplomats such as Liu Xiaoming, the Ambassador of China to the United Kingdom have particular opinions which he makes clear throughout the report, benefiting in creating a final conclusion.

For the majority of literature found, the West depicts China's methods unlawful in regards to many domestic and international relations. However many Chinese politicians and scholars are prepared to defend or express little reluctance to scrutinise their governments work "Chinese students with nationalist sentiments can be seen as agents of the Chinese Communist Party" (O'Donoghue, Benney, 2019). The difference in opinions between the West and East has fuelled the fire in the topic of conversation, whether or not China is peaceful. The internet is covered in information expressing China's aggression which has been analysed in the main body of text and further exemplified through titles such as "China is turning Ethiopia into a giant fast-fashion factory" by Bloomberg Businessweek, an American news outlet.

The perspective of contradicting points of views allows for a greater discussion and inclination of a more in-depth research to be had, in order to formulate a conclusion. The research throughout the report has led to an evident belief in the PRC and the trust that the Chinese domestic and international work is having more positives for millions of citizens universally. The opposing views of the West have led towards key findings and evident conclusions as to

what China intends to achieve with their work and how their methods have led to their pre-eminent universal prosperity.

A gap found in the primary research is to interlink the connection of Western opinions of Chinese relations to news sources and how they dictate the Chinese. The discussion at hand will present different information, leading towards one main point, how China has been growing and how the Western media is changing that. Towards the end of the Literature Review section we should be able to answer the overarching questions to the paper.

2.1 China's Soft Power

The days of military power, aggression and physicality are behind us. Now, the strongest forms of international power are of "persuasion, which is defined as soft power influences of the world" (Kumari, 2016).

From the Seventeenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2007 the topic of soft power became more in line with the PRC's development's of its own internal mainframe. Since 2014 Xi Jinping said: "We should increase China's soft power, give a good Chinese narrative, and communicate China's message to the world" (Jinping, 2014). This was the beginning of a firmer national attempt to raise China's popularity and its appeal. This introduction to a necessary soft power expansion was the first leap in China's mega expansion of their soft power tactics.

"China believes that it's not going to be a major power, a global power, unless it has the ability to attract, unless it has soft power" (Nye, 2016). This quote from Joseph Nye in 2016 was an answer to the question "Why is China interested in soft power and when did this begin?" (Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2016). Nye explains that for over a decade, China has been in the process of focusing on themselves, since the 18th century China has discovered that it was not enough to focus entirely on military powers so it is for economical power. For many years China has been in the process of learning and developing, leading up-to their economical explosion. An example of the country's self focusing process, they began to work on reducing poverty, making them more attractive to surrounding neighbours who were equal to them from an economical standpoint (eg, Vietnam and/or Cambodia). Over the past 40 years "China has introduced a series of landmark market reforms to open up trade routes and investment flows, ultimately pulling hundreds of millions out of poverty" (BBC, 2019). This is one of many examples of how China, working on their own economical defences, had made their soft power status greater and more attractive. Throughout most of Western media, those who have spoken of this topic have considered it neither a positive nor a negative to report.

2.1.1 Introduction of the Belt and Road Initiative

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), "coined in 2013 by China's President Xi Jinping" (European Bank, 2020). Unveiled in late October 2013, the project is to "construct a unified large market and make full use of both international and domestic markets, through cultural exchange and integration, to enhance mutual understanding and trust of member nations, ending up in an innovative pattern with capital inflows, talent pool, and technology database" (Chinese Government, 2018). This route that began in Hong Kong, has been developed to allow easier

trade through Asia, the Middle East and Europe, similar to the previous trade route. The BRI is at the heart of bringing together a multitude of countries through a “major infrastructure project under the banner of the ‘New Silk Road’” (CNBC, 2014).

This audacious project sees the Chinese providing thousands of jobs across the world. The investment projects of the BRI looks to “add over USD 1 trillion of outward funding for foreign infrastructure over the 10-year period from 2017” (OECD, 2018). The route starts from Hong Kong, spans across 6 countries in South East Asia, 25 East Asian and Pacific nations, 38 Sub-Saharan African nations, 24 nations in Europe and Central Asia (including 18 that have taken part in the European Union), 17 countries in the North Africa and Middle East and 18 in Latin America and Caribbean nations (Countries of the BRI, 2020). In a publication from Forbes, a New York based media company titled a report on the BRI, “How China's Belt And Road Became A 'Global Trail Of Trouble’” (Forbes, 2019).

Meanwhile the overland route of the Belt and Road stretches from Xi’an, the mid East of China, through the West into the Stans and across Turkey into Europe to meet the Maritime route. The development of the BRI has seen disturbances to locals across the world as infrastructure and money gets funnelled into small rural areas as “the BRI will inevitably create rapid urbanisation... Across all the regions it touches” (CNA, 2018). This has the ability to change and ruin local businesses, modernising and creating a new economical mainframe for the province and people that are unprepared to welcome it. As report “The demise of Sihanoukville ” (Intrepid Travel, 2020) explains the over urbanisation of the area, ultimately leading to the internal destruction of the city in Cambodia. Eventually creating an area built on migration.

China intends to connect the world through trade routes, promoting China as the primary gateway for trade. This was a political tactic for Xi Jinping to formulate a plan in which he could identify himself with a hallmark project. The furthermore puts China in the centre of the stage and allows them “to have more say in the world [in regard to trade and international politics]” (M. Lampton, 2017). This is Xi’s attempt to justify his reign, in telling the world that China is “back, an economical player, back to the status it had in the last two hundred years” (M. Lampton, 2017). The Belt and Road Initiative has proven to have mixed reviews and not a great deal of documentation, however many slandering the works.

2.1.2 Chinese Diaspora

A quintessential part of Chinese soft power mechanics is their “*huaqiao* (华侨 Chinese citizens overseas)” (Suryadinata, 2017). Along with the intense modernisation of China, the world has seen a rapid rise of new Chinese migrations. “But the destinations for migrants have been developing countries rather than the developing countries of Southeast Asia (except Singapore)” (ISEAS, 2017). The Chinese chasing a lavish lifestyle, in less economically developed worlds, such as Cambodia, Philippines or Thailand, have played a strong role in the foreign policy and international politics on the PRC’s behalf. Through the help of the BRI, Chinese foreign relations and Chinese diaspora in Asia, the PRC has been able to gain influence and control areas in states such as Malaysia or those listed above.

Malaysia was one of the first countries in Asia to create economical ties with the PRC. In 2011, the PRC and Malaysia came together to create their first industrial park, named Qinzhou. The

park was developed to permit “bilateral ties” when the sixth Malaysian Prime Minister signed This then became the first checkpoint of China’s Marine BRI. “Qinzhou is a 13,600 acre industrial park (150km from Nanning)” (Kim, 2016). Within the Qinzhou district, there is an estimated total population of 500,000, with a majority in favour of Chinese.

A further tactic which could be utilised by the CCP in regards to their overseas population is the use of exporting their culture. In an extreme scenario a country that is able to export their culture to a smaller nation has the ability to entirely augment the culture for their own. In most majoring cities across the world there is a ‘Chinatown’. A sector of the city where there is a convergence of Chinese culture moving in masses. Reports such as “China Tries To Woo A Sprawling Global Chinese Diaspora” (Kuhn, 2018) could lead to proof that the Chinese are incentivising their intention of a diaspora for a reason.

A significant role of Chinese diaspora is for the international image that China previews to the world, through their migrated citizens. In 2013 there was a calculated 40 million Chinese overseas with 30 million in Asia (Academy of Cultural Diplomacy, 2013). The overseas Chinese are a representation of the country of China on a large scale. The Chinese abroad are a representation to the PRC and an ever growing importance and presence to their government’s international reputation, as it is across all nations. Furthermore they bring influence in large numbers which bodes well for the export of Chinese culture. Their overseas civilians give a great boost to Beijing’s soft power strength aforementioned: “We should increase China’s soft power, give a good Chinese narrative, and communicate China’s message to the world” (Jinping, 2014).

2.3 China’s handling of international politics

For the past few years China’s handling of international relations has become more aggressive. With a growing number of reports with titles such as “Taiwan calls for global coalition against China’s aggression” or “France leads European pushback against China” (EconomicTimes, 2020). In some parts of the Western world, Chinese diplomats are nicknamed “wolf warriors due to their snarling at foreign critics” (Economist, 2020). It is with enough evidence that we can see the Chinese diplomats being depicted in a harsh tone.

The takeover of Hong Kong in 2019 saw a harsh law set forth in Hong Kong. This law has been perceived by the US (and many other Western countries) as an “unfair abrasion” (Pompeo, 2020) to Hong Kong’s autonomy as a state. The ex-US-Secretary of State used harsh words in his description of China’s actions: “One aspect of that assault has been the actions of the National People’s Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC), which have effectively neutered the ability of the people of Hong Kong to choose their elected representatives in keeping with the Joint Declaration and Basic Law” (Pompeo, 2020), he finished his speech targeted at the PRC with “The Department of State is holding accountable those responsible for these brazen acts” (Pompeo, 2020). The PRC has directly retaliated against the US by “revoking visa exemptions for US diplomatic passport holders visiting Hong Kong and Macau, and imposing sanctions on some US Congress members” (Ng and Huang, 2020). China’s use of these sanctions has illustrated their approach to retaliation as a ‘tit for tat’ further illustrating their willingness to use aggression in times of scrutiny. However Pompeo’s words were concurred through the likes of the Financial Times as writer Hilton states “Beijing’s Hong Kong takeover is a masterclass in creating fear” (Hilton, 2020)

The UK took a stand against the actions of the PRC with a speech from Prime Minister Boris Johnson stating, "a clear and serious breach of the Sino-British joint declaration. It violates Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and is in direct conflict with Hong Kong's basic law" (Johnson, 2020). They further suspended its extradition treaty with HK. The given treaty between the two is "when one country formally gives up a person to another country where they are accused of crimes" (BBC, 2020). The UK had decided upon this so China could not see pro-democracy protestors in Hong Kong be charged in mainland China due to the potential of being sentenced with life imprisonment. This was portrayed by the Western Media as a "a brave step" (Cables, 2020) illustrating a fearless China that the UK is coming up against.

In addition to suspending the extradition treaty, the UK Prime Minister pledged to offer millions of Hong Kong residents the chance to settle in the UK, which could ultimately lead to the permanent migration of the Hong Kong citizens. Included in this opportunity is the 350,000 British National Overseas passport holders as well as another 2.6 million who are eligible for application. This action put forth by the UK was considered an offensive move so the PRC could see that the UK was not to let unjust actions go without repercussions. China responded with words as opposed to actions, with the spokesperson of the Chinese embassy in London saying: "The UK government keeps making irresponsible remarks on Hong Kong affairs..." he continued "We want to be your friend. We want to be your partner. But if you want to make China a hostile country, you will have to bear the consequences" (Xiaoming, 2019). Further illustrating the frustration the Chinese government has on Western media affairs.

Despite the fluctuations between UK-China and US-China relations, China has been perceived as a marvel to many countries. In an interview with CGTN, Raphael Tuju, the secretary-general of Kenya's Jubilee Party, commended China and their handling of the Coronavirus and the capacity that they have to "save the world" (Tuju, 2020). On a later date, in the Poverty-Alleviation forum, Tuju was quoted as stating the PRC should be an example for his own governance. With support from countries that China is directly in relation with, Xi Jinping had devised training sessions with foreign political parties. The countries that had taken part were Central and South American, Asian and over thirty sub-Saharan countries. The sessions do not state that a dictatorship or authoritarianism is good although it does promote the benefits of a central leadership. Song Tao, a Chinese politician and senior diplomat called the teachings, "The Chinese system" and further stated that it could "serve as a reference" (Tao, 2020) for the given audience. In the Western world, this report could accentuate a 'spread of dictatorships' which is considered in a democratic society, strictly negative.

China has further brought upon themselves universal scrutiny through their use for 're-education' camps of the Uyghur Muslims. In an attempt to crackdown on terrorism after Turkish Uyghur separatists had killed 33 in an attack in the Yunnan province (NBC News, 2014). Leader Xi Jinping had then decided to call for a "struggle against terrorism, infiltration and separatism," showing, "absolutely no mercy" (Jinping, 2014). From then on the term 'concentration camps'

had begun to circulate after the BBC had shown satellite images of mass incarceration where the “re-education camps” are in Xinjiang.

2.4 China’s hegemony in Africa

For some few years it has become easy to assume why China has been utilising majoring African nations and building power and influence there. From enforcing a plaguing debt, purchasing key maritime ports, exporting an unprecedented amount of natural resources to experimenting engineering practices to master their trade. China has been working on a grand-scaled project in Africa for many years. However, China's project is not entirely based on an economical factor as much as it is political. For the most part, it is commonly accepted that China intends to drown the continent in unsustainable amounts of loans, in exchange for natural resources. However, it is surfacing more that this is not the case, due to the BRI. “Oil, timber, and minerals China buys from Africa (accounting for about 70% of all African exports), can now be sourced from dozens of other places along the Belt and Road” (Olander, 2020).

The import of oil from Africa to China is an ordeal that has been changing in the past few years. Former US Ambassador and acclaimed scholar of Chinese-African relations had explained that in 2008, 30% of Chinese bought oil had been imported from Africa, by 2018, the number dropped to 18% (Shinn, 2020). China has become more reliant on Saudi Arabia, Iraq and (recently in 2020) signed agreements with Russia, meaning the African suppliers will continue to drop as trade deals are made elsewhere. All of these new suppliers are routes of the BRI. Despite the fall of Chinese trade deals with African nations, China still provides states like Angola a considerable trade where China purchases oil, timber and coffee. “In 2019, bilateral trade exceeded US\$120 billion and Angola is currently [in 2011] China’s largest African trade partner” (China Briefing, 2011). Angola have participated in their role for the Chinese economy, similarly to Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Djibouti and Luanda (Angola’s capital) falls under a large debt bill of an estimated USD 20.1billion. “China has more invested in Angola than almost any other country in the continent and almost all is concentrated in the oil sector” (Olander, 2018).

As for the loan front, the African countries China works with will find the repayment a hefty challenge. From the 2000’s to 2017, “China provided \$143 billion in loans to African governments and their state-owned enterprises” (Sun, 2020). Aforementioned, we see the Chinese are not too drastically interested in the natural resources sector that Africa has to offer due to their interest elsewhere. This leads a looming question of what the Chinese want if not for the economical or material interest. It is possible that they are seeking political influence.

China has been focusing and keeping the political support from as many African nations as possible, through organisations such as, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, the UN Human Rights Council and the World Trade Organisation. All combined African states equates to over one quarter of all UN members, despite not voting as one. Throughout the previous twenty years, the majority of African states are in support of China’s position of foreign relations via UN organisations more than that of the US. For this reason African votes tend to be more supportive of “China’s core domestic concerns such as the treatment of Muslim minorities, Tibet, South China Sea, Hong Kong, and human rights generally” (Shinn, 2020). In recognition and repayment, China has been using its position on the UN Security Council to support the issues that are imperative to African states when criticised by Western leaders. “Africans support

the “One China” principle. Today, only one African country—Eswatini— recognises Taiwan.” (Shinn, 2020).

China has begun to accept repayment through construction in Luanda, mostly under Chinese companies, from this, the relationship is set to expand, somewhat similarly to how they had worked with Addis Ababa. These constructions create easier passages for the Chinese to gain access to other areas within the region of Angola. In January 2020, on a visit to Luanda, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi said his country supported Lourenco’s (Angola’s president) economic diversification strategy. “Chinese companies have the capabilities and conditions to supply equipment and technologies to re-launch industry in Angola,” Mr Wang said” (Yigal Chazan, 2018).

2.5 China’s hegemony in Asia

Exploring whether or not China is the hegemonic power of East Asia or Asia overall is a difficult and possibly implausible question to consider, and one that could be formed with many different opinions. Exploring the information gathered throughout this report it would be easy to put that China as of right now is the most influential economical power in East Asia with little competition. China has sought to reshape the Asian order through aggressive actions to assert its territorial claims across the South and East China Sea. In an attempt to claim continental dominance. The desire for hegemonic power and using the objective of neo-realism has illustrated China along an aggressive path of domestic and international relations.

China faces a few considerable problems before it can consider themselves the hegemonic power, Japanese-American relations, Vietnamese-Russian relations and the Philippines. Sino-Japanese relations have been sensitive and contentious for many historical reasons. With an already sensitive relationship, China was deemed a security threat to Japan in 2004, soon came off the list, then in 2019 had reentered the list having “Beijing second place in the Defence White Paper and North Korea into third position” (Kelly, 2019). To add to the tightrope walk in the area, the argument between who claims The Senkaku islands is still up for argument as “there is a longstanding sovereignty dispute concerning the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands between China and Japan” (Dan, 2018). This dispute on the region is not without concern in regards to China’s true ambition, “projecting power across a region once dominated by America...Japanese officials point out that East China Sea, where the Senkaku lie, is even closer to China’s shoreline and on the path out to the Pacific” (Graham-Harrison, 2017). Further issues they have been facing in another disputed area in the South China Sea, falls against another neighbouring nation, the Philippines.

In the last 10 years, China has been upping their military spending more than most countries universally. SIPRI (Stockholm’s International Peace Research Institute) estimated that from 2010 to 2020, their defence spending has increased from 80 billion USD, to 260 billion USD (SIPRI/CSIS, 2020). The Economist newspaper released an article on 5th of December 2020 to which they pictured a new type of Chinese vessel, the CCG3901. The new ship brandishes “two helicopters, a 76mm gun and a thicket of other weaponry” (The Economist, 2020), China has deployed two of these in their seas. According to the Economist, come November 2021, China has presented a new law where they have allowed themselves to destroy other countries’ structures which have been created on self-claimed, Chinese seas, furthermore to board and

dislodge foreign vessels as well as to fire upon hostile ships. As of December 2020, one of the two CCG3901 vessels has been within the Senkaku maritime zone for over 39 hours (breaking that of the previous record). Across the South China Sea, the Chinese have been seen through satellite imaging, developing and creating man made islands in an attempt to create a string of pearls of naval bases.

“In what's been described as a ‘David and Goliath’ battle, the two neighbours (China and the Philippines) are embroiled in a tense dispute in the territory in the South China Sea” (Al Jazeera, 2012). The Scarborough Shoal is an area of rock located closest to the Philippines however claimed by both countries. “According to International Maritime Law, the Scarborough Shoal belongs to the Philippines because of its proximity to its coastline, but China says it has historical rights to the territory that dates back 2000 years” (Al Jazeera, 2012). The area has no development or “structures built on Scarborough Shoal, but the feature is effectively controlled by China, which has maintained a constant coast guard presence at the feature since 2012” (CSIS, 2020). The fishing of rare wildlife in the area called on the Philippines to arrest the rogue Chinese fisherman, however, from this altercation, a stand off escalated. Upon the apprehension of the Chinese fishing vessels, “two Chinese surveillance ships appeared at the scene and prevented the arrest of the fishermen.” (Pugh, 2017). Some Chinese news offices called for China to “be prepared to engage in a small-scale war at sea” (Global Time, 2021), to resolve the matter once and for all. After all threats and stress, the Americans were not summoned by the Philippines and the Chinese had recalled their majoring warships, however still to this day their heavily armed vessels control the Scarborough shoals.

Years later in 2014, China deployed an oil rig, the HYSY-981, “into Vietnam’s claimed EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone)” (CSIS, 2019). This excavation of oil resulted in China entering into another diplomatic crisis. The justification for excavating in other regions EEZ is that China claimed an “inconsistency with international law” (CSIS, 2019). Similarly to the Scarborough Shoals, and other parts of the South China Sea, China has begun to create disputes over areas that were effectively undisputed in the past, therefore claiming their right for the natural resources. During the oil rig excavation, the Chinese were seen to be aggressive and hostile with an effective use of high pressure water cannons if Vietnamese ships were seen in the area. Although, after enough time of stand-offish behaviour, the Chinese had withdrawn the rig, shortly after, the Vietnamese sought to balance the regional powers and so they began to purchase weapons from Russia in their attempt to fight the Chinese, with Russia stating that they received “orders worth more than \$1 billion” (Staff, 2018). Meanwhile, across the South China Sea, the Philippines were in discussion with the US to renew its old alliance “in any attempt to form a balancing coalition to contain Chinese power” (Pugh, 2017).

China’s manner of asserting its dominance in the region has been through their development of Air Defence Identification Zones.

“A zone that provides an early warning system to help a country detect possible incursions into its sovereign airspace. It stretches beyond the boundary of a country's national airspace. When an aircraft enters an ADIZ without warning, the country in question may scramble the fighter jets to visually identify the aircraft and determine whether it poses a threat.” (Sevastopulo, 2013)

These ADIZs have been in full effect since 2013 and China has assured the world that they would be establishing more of these to aid their work on the development for the Senkaku Islands, among other disputed territorial claims. China “is seeking to force Japan to recognise that sovereignty is disputed” (Bolt, N.A.) meanwhile refusing to participate in an international court case formulated by the Philippines at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague.

2.6 How has China affected business?

The focus of business with a greater regard to technology and data handling will be analysed. From telecom giant Huawei to important Chinese personnel, the inspection of how an international Chinese business operates and why this contributes towards the volume of information that surrounds the PRC and their current depiction to the West. Meanwhile focusing on particular business aspects, the bridging of topics together to understand how this has contributed towards China’s ability of metamorphosing into a powerhouse of a state.

2.6.1 Huawei and 5G: Changing World Business

Huawei is a technological firm that stands at the forefront of 5G infrastructure rollout. With a huge market, “Huawei sold more smartphones than Apple in 2019...Huawei sold around 240 million smartphones in 2019 compared to Apple’s 197” (Business Insider, 2020). From the international boom of the telecom giants, the PRC began to take interest and began to subsidise the company. From then on to current day, there has been mass scrutiny on the Chinese company for being a ‘gateway’ for the PRC to spy on Western nations.

January 2018 came as a shock that rippled through the business world. *Le Monde Afrique*, a French newspaper, reported African Union’s computer system had been hacked and compromised. The office of the AU bank was developed by non-other than the PRC in 2006 - 2012. From this AU had “accused China of hacking its headquarters’ computer systems every night for five years and downloading confidential data” (Aglionby, 2018). Shortly after this had been publicly brought to light, it had reported that listening devices had been discovered throughout the building. Instantly, China condemned the report as fake news - “an attack by Western media to damage relations between a more assertive China and an increasingly independent Africa” (Vaswani, 2019). In the middle of the havoc sat Huawei, the main supplier of information and technological systems to the headquarters of AU. From this situation, Huawei had their first international inspection which culminated in the conspiracies which left the strongest nations of our current world fearful of the tech giant.

On December 1st 2018, in Canada, Meng Wanzhou (the chief financial officer of Huawei) had been detained by Canadian officials. The officials accused her of “misleading the bank HSBC in a way which might lead to it breaking US sanctions on Iran” (Corera, 2020). At this moment, Canadian officials, Huawei, and the US had plunged themselves into a major international incident which to this day has not been resolved. The US Department of Justice filed two indictments against Huawei and Ms Meng. The first indictment was “misleading banks and the US government about their business in Iran. The second indictment - against Huawei - involved criminal charges including obstruction of justice and the attempted theft of trade secrets” (BBC, 2019). Among the AU bank situation, this is not the first time Huawei and the PRC have been

accused of officially stealing trade secrets, companies such as AT&T Corp., Fujitsu Network Communications Inc. and Nortel Networks Corp among six other major international companies (The Wall Street Journal, 2019). These fears have manifested from industrial espionage to a large scale international spying company with the close links to the PRC.

Concerns have greater spread throughout the Western world due to the development and forefront of 5G *mobile internet*. A system which will allow greater forms of connectivity across multiple devices and with speeds “being quite a significant step up from what we know as 4G today. It is also what we call 'low latency', the ability to have very minimal delay because of the underlying wireless network itself” (Nair, 2019). As Huawei is the world's largest telecoms infrastructure provider, the Chinese company is well placed to secure, handle and develop these 5th generation networks across nations that choose to access it. With such great concerns surrounding the PRC's voyeurism of data income, the international lack of trust with Huawei, the US has “warned its intelligence partners that awarding contracts to Huawei would be tantamount to allowing the Chinese to spy on them” (BBC, 2020). Due to the US warning, the UK, Canada and Germany have been reviewing meticulously whether or not Huawei poses a security threat.

Although, the manor in which the PRC has firmly defended and protected Huawei consequently raised an eyebrow for every Western leader for the level of independence that the giant has on its own influence. Days after Ms Meng's extradition to the US, China had detained “two Canadians [formally living and working in China] with alleged espionage” (Kuo, 2020). As mentioned in 2.3 *China's Handling of International Politics 'tit for tat'*. The detentions of the Canadians come across as politically charged and linked to Ms Meng's arrest however the Chinese government has “repeatedly rejected any of its criminal proceedings against foreigners are politically motivated” (Kuo, 2020).

3. Methods

The report was written on the basis of ‘grounded theory’, a method in which approaches the report by first gathering data and then analysing the patterns that occur from it. The research of the literature review is able to allow us to create these patterns and learn from it in order to create our hypothesis to create a conclusion for the research objectives and questions.

An analysis could be had on the statements, news reports and opinions on the secondary research, as the sources of the literature review suggests, China can be considered the aggressors. China has set itself on a path of what can be treated for extreme international, and impressive power, with a universal growing concern of the rapid development of vessels to be put out at sea. Totalling more than that of “German, Indian, Spanish and British navies combined” (Brands, Sullivan, 2020) making the South China Sea and all disputed islands, a great deal more uncomfortable. The efforts to control territorial seas and land of neighbouring nations is a daunting affair which could be expressed by the West as an example of the power in which China looks to maintain the region. Further exemplifying the aggressive characteristic the Western has seen from media outlets. Further examples of the depiction of an aggressive China can be used of the given research found in the *Literature Review*, research such as the PRC's overbearing power on Chinese companies and the manner in which said company handles data that they had gathered. An aggressively depicted Chinese government can instantly be assumed to be projected onto the Western nations due to the lack of faith that Chinese companies such as

Huawei, DJI or TikTok have in majoring Western nations. Which gives reason for US's banning of Tiktok and the British government's refusal of using DJI.

Furthermore China has been depicted as international voyeurs of data through the given examples of the African Union bank in Ethiopia or the lack of power Huawei has over their own gathered information. This has shaped the world's perception as a fearless regime with a lack of remorse. China, as a nation used to hide their international intentions, however, has now been characterised to openly assert themselves universally. In 2017 Xi Jinping addressed the world and more importantly China, in a professed claim of a "new era" and for Beijing to "take centre stage in the world" (Gardner, 2017). This can be perceived by the West as a form of power-play considering the movements of the BRI. The exact intentions of China's authoritarian reign is strenuous to discern. Xi Jinping has been portrayed as hard to predict due to the unexpected brashness with Hong Kong or the Uyghur Muslims.

China's approaches to African relations can be characterised as untrustworthy or forceful due to the political tactics mentioned in *2.5 China's hegemony in Asia*. Playing on politics more than resources and trade deals illustrates a clear hidden message, their actions might not be as it seems. This is further incentivised by Western reports as "shady" Chinese companies (CNBC, 2021). Further documented in relations of territorial disputes, such as for the Senkaku islands or the Scarborough Shoals, China is willing to play the aggressor for an outcome that only they know.

Throughout the secondary research, it can be theorised that there is greater coverage and more interest in the pro-democracy protests of Hong Kong and the Uyghur muslims, than that of territorial claims or the BRI. This can be related back to news sources used of the topic, as it could be evidence that the 'neutral' news outlets used, have still been, in part, biased towards a democratic and/or anti-Chinese perspective. Given that the secondary research throughout the report has been mostly of Western media, an analysis could be had of how Western journalism has augmented the opinions of the Western citizens. News sources are not only important for the general public but for business personnel internationally, they are "also channels of communications within and between governments" (Zhang 2010). This quote proves the weight of which the media has for the depiction of the Chinese both to the public and to important personnel who could potentially, directly affect relations with the PRC.

Through the discourse of the report we have been able to cover an exceptionally wide variety of actions and documented sources from across the world from over the last 10 years. From the documentation and analysis of the secondary research, we can accurately depict that Western news sources are painting a picture of an aggressive, vengeful and assertive China. The secondary research, despite mostly being biased to a Western narrative, can be considered fair with regards to the documentation of Chinese relations. The reason we can assume the equitable documenting of Chinese relations is the accuracy in the writing, for example, the Economists' journalism on the new naval ships setting sail in the South China Sea, being an accurate and true affair. From this reporting, it is up to the reader to consider the necessity of such vessels in place. The likelihood of said naval fleet being constructed and with such firepower cannot be assumed for defence, yet for attack. However, it is important for those receiving the news to be conscious of what they are being told and to think accordingly on their own opinions.

The secondary research was considered in a neutral perspective and documented between chapters 1 to 3. Once documented and processed the conclusion will be the given opinion of what we believe China will be focusing on in the near future and why. Further primary research would be able to aid in the case of how the Chinese is perceived in the West and why.

Over the discourse of the readings, factually based opinions were formulated which led to the answering of each given research question and objective. The research led to understanding how China is changing the diplomatic nature of Asia as well as Africa, through the benefit of soft power. From the connection of soft power and the Belt and Road Initiative a link could be made to clearly see the development of China's soft power and the changing business environment that is currently underway. The secondary research has allowed us to take a neutral perspective through an unbiased lens and develop opinions on whether or not the multifaceted plan of international soft power is beneficial or not to Chinese international development. This can be linked to the primary research of whether or not this given information spoken of in *Literature Review* has changed or augmented the opinion of the West to view a more illicit China.

To lastly illustrate a clear view of the PRC's soft power and the changing business environment, a story of Huawei and Beijing subsidised business is told to hammer in the final nail. The association of the BRI, soft and hard power and Huawei/Chinese companies is paramount to lead to the final research objective, which is to illustrate why China is, as an international relations case study, necessary to observe and learn from. As for the literature review for Chinese international handlings, the PRC claims to have brought "sustained economic growth, social harmony and stability, improved wellbeing and unprecedented cultural prosperity" the ambassador of Xinjiang. The scrutiny that China is experiencing is due to the increasing number of those who have been entered into these "re-education camps". The growth of numbers is due to China's knowledge of undisputed competition with regards to given topics. Xi Jinping understands that backlash would come from the situation however he would not be challenged enough by any other world leader given China's mustering of allies at the UN, further explained in *2.4 China's hegemony in Africa*. China is on the forefront of changing the face of the Human Rights Council at the UN, removing the current presidency, Fiji. "Backed by Russia and Saudi Arabia" The Economist explains that China is to "manoeuvre a country more to its liking into that position" (The Economist, 2020), implying any of Beijing's current allies. Making questionable domestic affairs easier to allude with less scrutiny on the HRC board. China and Russia did not previously take place on the Human Rights Council, however will from the 1st of January 2021. It can be assumed that China's interest in the council is to find a way to best utilise the council for their personal gain. The HRC have "yet even to introduce a resolution, much less pass one, on China's mass internment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang or its stripping of Hong Kong's freedoms" (The Economist, 2020). This situation of the Uyghurs represents China's brashness and unwillingness to adhere to the thoughts of the democratic world, which, in turns portrays the PRC to the West as an unforgiving and uncompromising force.

Analysts have concluded that Huawei's exclusion from the US could, as a domino, affect the US's capability in learning and developing on technology, causing them to "fall behind in its 5G capabilities" (BBC, 2019). This would give consequence to a world where there is a digital divide, "pulling a digital iron curtain across the world" (Bloomberg, 2020). This divide,

augments the business and data usage across the world. The lack of trust for the CCP would imply that any other such company, which works internationally would be under suspicion in regards to the control that the PRC has of data over their given Chinese companies. An example of this is the social media app TikTok. TikTok was banned in the US in fears that the PRC would release information which is otherwise guarded and secured in most Western nations. TikTok is an app which utilises facial recognition and is often used to document personal information of the given user. With an audience of approximately 80 - 100 million citizens of the US the PRC would be able to gain personal access to the US citizens personal information. The fear the West has developed overtime could well be sinking into major companies in China where the PRC could demand information with no fair exchange. Is this perhaps what the Western nations are beginning to notice the PRC is doing, considering the American's responses to the use of TikTok. Furthermore as Huawei looms over the telecommunications and technological infrastructure of the 5G world, there are fears in the close links that the PRC's communist party holds closely to the company. The worry is whether or not leader Xi would ask Huawei or any other company to allow the PRC's access to private information. Huawei would have no choice but to adhere to the demands. This perspective makes it easier to understand why Western observers would be recoiling in fear. "There is no evidence to indicate that Huawei is in any way under the orders of the Chinese government, or that Beijing has any plans to dictate business plans and strategy at Huawei - particularly when it comes to spying" (BBC, 2019).

This overarching power of the PRC bodes to a jolt in international business with Chinese corporations as international companies would fear whether or not the PRC would demand (what could be) vital personal information. Another example being the use of DJI drones, as drones are used more commonly for surveillance from construction sites to security, the fear in the US remains the same as these drones are assembled and technologically pieced together in China. Pivoting a sense of data protection with yet another Chinese company.

A reason to look into the correlation of Chinese depiction and the overuse of China's soft power is to look back at examples of history where the usage has acclaimed strictly negative reactions. In Indonesian, May 1998, riots took place across the country and were called the "Anti-Chinese Riots", in this event we can look at the aggression that had come from the Indonesians and ask the short question, what caused this? It has been proven in scholarly articles such as: Explaining Anti-Chinese Riots in Late 20th Century Indonesia by Panggabean, that this was merely a frame-shifting distraction from the Indonesian government from their lack of control of student protests. Many accounts of this protest can be argued by Chinese nationals as an unfair ruling of sinophobia. The reason that this can be an interesting case study and add to the primary and secondary research is that all of the given rioters at this time was a conviction from the news sources. With such a domineering influence on the public of Indonesians to the degree of rioting, could the news outlets in the west have the same power of influence?

The report was written on the basis of secondary and primary research. The secondary research was considered to perceive the difficulty of the topic and manor in which the Chinese are depicted through the news. The primary research will be set up as a questionnaire, to best see how news and media sources have been able to augment and depict the Chinese from the Westerners perspective. The questionnaire will result in qualitative data in understanding Western opinions on Chinese relations. The results will not be a direct representative of all

opinions throughout the West as those who participated are limited, however the results can provide an illustration or indication about the majority's opinions and answer a hypothesis given prior to the questionnaire. A questionnaire can provide an efficient and quick method to obtain a large amount of information from a large sample of people. The questionnaire will be voted on by Westerners only in order to keep the results untampered with and to ascertain Western opinions. What we can hypothesise from the questionnaire is that the opinions will mostly be towards an aggressive China, alongside a lack of knowledge of Chinese/African relations or the BRI and with decent understanding of hot topics such as, the Uyghurs, Huawei/5G and Hong Kong. This conjecture is assumed from the secondary research viewed throughout the *Literature Review*. The information of topics such as African relations or the BRI is vast though often not a front page headliner topic for most general news sources, whereas topics of human rights often is. The questionnaire will be orchestrated with participants remaining anonymous in order to allow people to answer freely. The questionnaire will be online to further allow people a freedom of time to answer each statement. A good and fair amount of votes for the questionnaire will be approximately 100 in order to gain enough of an opinion to observe whether the hypothesis is accurate. However, if 100 is not able to be accessed, over 40 can be accepted, as long as the results are able to create an answer either for or against the given hypothesis. The research for the report will conclude on various findings obtained from the primary and secondary research. With regards to the research conducted throughout the report, the questionnaire will take place after the secondary research has been analysed in order to formulate the best questions for the general public and to gain a better understanding of what is considered more of a 'hot topic' for the news outlets to report upon. There will be no more than 25 questions to ensure the participants answer all of them alongside remaining high concentration. Moreover this questionnaire can allow for an effective means of measuring the opinion of a relatively large number of participants/subjects in a quick and timely manner.

The questions asked throughout the questionnaire will be grouped together in what the report has been discussing. The first set of questions will gauge the understanding of Chinese relations and the given opinions of certain events. Among this, a question will be asked in regards for which media source the participant uses as well as having a multiple choice answer to allow them to pick more than one news source. The second set of questions will consist of the use of Chinese soft power such as the Belt and Road Initiative and whether they are aware or have particular opinions on the matter. The third set will be on the topic of Chinese/African relations where the same questions will be put to the participants, whether they are aware of the situations, believe it to be positive or negative and how big of a change it would affect the world. The fourth set of questions will be on Huawei and 5G, the public's opinions of whether they are comfortable with a Huawei infrastructure or not. Lastly to conclude a set of questions will be on whether or not they believe China is depicted as aggressive, whether their depiction is necessary and lastly whether they are a world power. The reason for the last collection of questions is to understand a blunt opinion on whether or not the public believe, from what they have seen through Western media, is an aggressive China or a necessary China. This will be able to answer one of the research questions put forward in the beginning of the report. The questionnaire will be conducted through Google Forms to assure no technical issues can occur on the conductors end. A further benefit of utilising the Google Forms tool is the case that the information presented from the questionnaire is given in the form of a pie chart making the information easier to decipher and learn from.

The strengths in using a questionnaire in this circumstance is that it is economical, implying a large amount of information with relatively low costs. For this reason a large amount of information can be represented which we can generalise from for the findings of the report. Amidst the economical strength, the information gathered can be comfortably converted into quantitative data, which gives reasoning for statistical analysis of the responses. Lastly, all participants will be asked the same questions in the same given order. This means that the questionnaire can be replicated and filled by multiple people and give reliable results. A questionnaire allows for “detached and objective (unbiased) method, where the sociologist's personal involvement with respondents is kept to a minimum” (Thompson, 2016), in this circumstance the conduction of the report will not get in the way of the participants' opinions. The questionnaire ensures that the information used is kept entirely confidential and requires no usage of names, address or contact details. Furthermore consent to answer the questionnaire was had verbally or in writing depending on how the particular participant was contacted.

The profile of a given relevant participant for this questionnaire is any particular individual who is actively conscious of the changing world around us and more so of the news. For this reason, the age range could be between 17 years old to any age above. A necessary characteristic is that the given individual must be from or living in the Western world, preferably in America/Canada or Europe. The reason for this particular area is to group together the used news outlets and to gain an educated assumption of what said news sources say about Chinese relations. A preferable characteristic is whether or not these participants are focused on politics however, if this is not the case might not change the outcome of the questionnaire.

The findings will be comparatively analysed to the findings of the literature review. An example of this comparative analysis is through a closed question, are the Chinese depicted as brazen and rough in the South China Sea, or in reasonable territorial claims for the Scarborough Islands. If the participants would further agree with this point, then it can be assumed that the most used source of news (which will be asked to be stated) can be the one dictating the aggressive actions to the public/participants. This can answer the research objective, “To understand the depiction of Chinese relations to the general public of the West”, by formulating the general opinion. As always, with broad topiced surveys, there could be outstanding individuals who could be pro-PRC or anti-international news, however the overall votes will push aside these anomalies to prove what the vaster, more general public think of China.

A limitation for the primary research is due to the fixation of each question, there is less scope for participants to elaborate on answers which reflect their true feelings. However, in order to keep the participants focused, the questionnaire could not include open answered questions as it must be assumed that people will either give not enough details to their answer or too much. This limits how much one can accumulate from the questionnaire if not conducting multiple questionnaires to particular individuals, however, if this was done then the sense of anonymity would be lackluster.

To answer the research question, “How is Western media portraying China changing international business” an interview will be conducted with an anonymous interviewee. The person interviewed will be referred to as Anon. An interview will be conducted as an interview is

considered to be suitable “when the researcher or investigator either investigates a new field of study or intends to ascertain and theorise prominent issues” (Strauss, 2008). Anon will remain anonymous due to their preference and the importance they bring to their company and due to the size of the company in China. Anon is a senior employee of one of the largest Chinese companies in the world which sits on the Fortune 500. Anon had kindly agreed to take part in an interview so long as their gender, name, age, company name and profession was kept anonymous.

An interview with Anon will be able to give first hand proof of whether or not Western media depiction of Chinese business is correct, and whether those who take part in Chinese truly ought to be cautious of whether the PRC does have an overarching power. If the interview proves that there is an overarching fear that Anon has, meanwhile working in the company, then it can be theorised that Western depiction is accurate from stories such as Huawei or the use of 5G. However if Anon’s interview contradicts the theory above, then it can be theorised that Western media portrays a harsh painting of the PRC.

The interview will take place of the interviewer asking a set of seven questions and allowing Anon to speak further of their opinions and their feelings meanwhile working in a Fortune 500 Chinese company. Ideally, for further proof of this theory that Western media depiction is accurate or not, a second and third interview should be conducted however within the time frame of the report, no more individuals had or could be willingly interviewed. The questions asked in the interview will primarily take place of whether or not they are fearful of what use the Chinese company uses the gathered information for. Further questions will be asked in regards to whether or not they have intentionally or against their will, been asked for any information to be handed over to the PRC and if so why. Lastly it will be asked whether or not customers have addressed concerns with the use of a Chinese company and how that has in effect, had to change their company to market themselves differently.

It was assured to Anon that their information would be kept confidential for the sake of releasing too much information, furthermore it was made clear that Anon did not have more time to answer any further questions as they kindly gave their time during a lunch break. Among this, Anon was informed only after what the report focuses on in assurance that it did not affect their given opinion once the interview began. It must be considered the amount of information that Anon would know in regards to the particular point of the research topic.

The strength of conducting a brief and thorough interview as this was for a brief yet concise insight into the power the PRC has over Anon’s company. In regards to formulating qualitative research, the value is high. Although, as Anon is the only interview that is conducted throughout the primary research not all information can be hung on their words, ideally more than one of a large Chinese company would be interviewed to balance the data. Furthermore, ideally, if Anon had a greater amount of time, an unstructured interview would be best to conduct a greater amount of research on the conversation and to best gauge his reaction to certain questions. The interview will be a directive conversation.

4. Findings

The findings of the Literature Review has illustrated to the reader that China is on a long, multifaceted mission to change the world for themselves. One of the given topics is the power of the BRI and the fact that this symbol that Xi Jinping believes is a tangible representation of the regime. A regime of patriotic nationalism, socialism and resilience. The BRI is a cohesive step for Xi and China to boost the international reputation and legitimacy of the regime on a political level. “China now actively seeks to shape international norms and institutions and forcefully asserts its presence on the global stage” (Economy, 2020). Among political pragmatism, China looks to compete on the highest level, considering the largest component of the BRI are trains and carefully planned routes.

For political, economical, and developmental reasons, it is evidently paramount for China to upkeep their relations with their given African nations. In order to hold relations intimately, China is moulding African nations through their online sessions in which many African leaders have partaken. Said sessions have been explaining to developing countries how “The Governance of China” has been changing the world from the pandemic’s perspective. Those attending these sessions are the ruling parties from the likes of: Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, Ghana and Mozambique among other Central and South American countries. Furthermore, some African nations idolise the manner in which the PRC functions, to the point of China sponsored trips to study “party building and governance” (Economist, 2020). The countries that have been attending these trips are democratic nations such as Ghana, Kenya and South Africa. From this, the New Patriotic Party of Ghana has asked for further training to “deepen its ideological skills” (Eisenman, 2020). Meanwhile other nations have sent dozens of staff to China for further training. This could symbolise the international influence the Chinese government has in order to change other such political parties, such as those stated above.

Among their assertions in Africa, China has proven power and dominance in Asia from forcing changes due to their influential trade statuses (as seen through the stand off with the Scarborough Shoals). The PRC proves China’s desire to shift Asia’s political order. Their aggression and domineering characteristics could see China’s intention of eventually attempting to change world powers by starting with the East Asian nations. Which has been depicted as an aggressive from the given readings.

4.1 Findings of Primary Research

The first collection of statements were intentionally vague for the participants. The first statement was “I have been up to date with Chinese news (in the last 6 months)”, the reason behind this was to understand the degree to which people follow Chinese relations and the interest in it. From what we could see through the results of the first statement, the majority of those involved in the questionnaire expressed their overall agreement in keeping up to date with Chinese relations with over 42% agreeing. The impact of this information is a proof of interest, be it great or mild, the larger majority of the general Western public are aware of Chinese relations. The second statement inquired people’s interest on Chinese/Hong Kong relations to which most had agreed in keeping up to date with the topic and many expressing a neutral opinion, implying their understanding and remembrance of the situation when it was first reported. Although not continuing to follow it after coverage with emphasis on the neutral opinion. Moreover, in this section of statements, was to acknowledge the interest in a case of

human rights such as the Uyghurs, alongside controversies of Huawei/5G and China's territorial disputes. With the information gathered we can see that topics on Huawei, Uyghurs and Hong Kong are of greater interest than that of the BRI or Chinese/African relations. Perhaps these topics of human rights have gotten more coverage than that of the BRI and have been able to intrigue the public moreso. See image 1 - 5 in *Appendices* for infographics. To conclude with the general questions, the 6th question was to ask those involved to state which news sources they often use, the highest used was the BBC at 82.5%, second was 'forms of social media' at 43.9% and The Guardian newspaper at 36.8%.

Questions 7 to 10 are in regards to Chinese African relations. The majority of those who voted in the questionnaire had informed that they had little to no knowledge of Chinese-African relations implying one of two things, the lack of readership in this given topic, from the mentioned news outlets in the question prior, or the lack of interest in the topic. See images 7 to 10 in *Appendices* for infographics.

Questions 11 to 13 are based upon the topic of the BRI. The findings show that most are aware of the BRI, but statements show the lack of opinion. Implied again, the lack of interest or lack reporting from the given news outlets. See images 11 to 13 in *Appendices* for infographics.

Statements 14 to 16 are in regards to 5G controversies and Huawei. The first statement seems to make aware that every single individual is in acknowledgment of the criticism that Huawei has been battling. Statement 15 is, "*I wouldn't mind if my government began using 5G infrastructure in and around where I live*". The statement raised a collection of mixed reviews with over 35% agreeing and over 17% strongly agreeing. Whereas another 26% disagreed and nearly 18% did not have an opinion on the topic. This is an interesting result as it implies that many people could be misinformed of 5G or could lack trust in the given infrastructure due to what they have recalled in the news. Meanwhile statement 16 concerned the opinion of Chinese companies running 5G in the Western world which also delivered mixed opinions. Over 60% had agreed that they would rather not use a Chinese company for 5G, only 17% had disagreed. This could incentivise a lack of trust from the Westerners with a high probability that could link the media and new consumption to the stated opinions of Chinese ran infrastructure.

Statement 17 to 19 was to understand the opinions of the public in regards to the aggression that they see in the news, with statement 17 being "*Western media depicts Chinese actions as aggressive*". The majority of those voted "agreed" at 56% and 17% strongly agreed. This could play a part in emphasising public Western opinion on Chinese relations domestically or internationally. Furthermore could be an exemplification of Westerners having a skewed opinion towards Chinese relations from the news they are exposed too. A connection can then be made between the most used news source (questions 6) and the opinion formed from the public. The general opinion being "Chinese are characterised as aggressive" could be created from the journalistic writing of The Guardian, the BBC and what the Westerners are exposed to on social media. Most gave the opinion that the aggression of Chinese relations have been depicted as "necessary", not far behind statistically was a 'neutral' response which could imply that many of those are uninformed with the details of China's proceedings. However, for those who are in a disagreement, could express the aggressive depiction of Chinese relations (statement 17) making an effect on the public opinion of statement 18. Statement 19 was to further emphasise on the

opinion of the public with the next, asking whether or not the Chinese could handle situations less aggressively. Approximately 69% had agreed with this statement followed by a 21% neutral ground and 8% disagreement. Meanwhile not one vote was casted for “I don’t believe they are aggressive”. See image 17 - 19 in *Appendices* for infographics. The harsh tones used in Western media has been able to shape the opinions of those who took part in the form as proven from statement 17.

The final statement was “*China is in the contest as a leading global superpower*”. As expected, 51% had strongly agreed and 44% had agreed with 3% having a neutral opinion. This fact is impactful as it illustrates that those who are viewing the news are recognising the power that China is exhorting.

Lastly, participants were asked to state their nationality in order to get a good understanding of where the given opinions were originating from and to create a formal assumption of which news sources are being viewed from where.

The hypothesis stated above concluded to be correct, where we can observe that most opinions of Chinese relations are considered ‘aggressive’ as statement 17 states with statement 16 incentivising the lack of trust formed between the PRC and the public. Furthermore interest and knowledge of Chinese/African relations and the BRI is less understood than that of other situations like the Uyghurs or Huawei/5G. This can be related back to the secondary research of the topic as it could be evident that the ‘neutral’ news sources used, have still been, in part, biased towards an anti-PRC perspective. Given that the secondary research throughout the report has been mostly of Western media, an analysis could be had of how secondary research has augmented the opinions of the West.

In regards to the interview conducted with Anon, much was spoken about and they were able to prove a hypothesis incorrect. In *Methods* a theory was given where, due to Chinese relations of tech companies such as Huawei or the infrastructural situation of 5G, Anon had illustrated why their given company has no issues with customers perceiving a Chinese company as ‘negative’. For this reason we can answer that China has been, in part, changing the international business environment be it for financial companies or technology. However, for the most part, people do not shy away from the use of a Chinese company despite what is seen in Western media. Perhaps Chinese companies such as the one Anon works for have been able to play a part in which has not been affected by the PRC as much as Huawei has been. It can further be concluded that from the position that Anon works as, they might not have the highest view of what is handed to the PRC from their given company. Perhaps there is more to what Anon truly sees.

It was stated clearly that on occasion, Anon’s company had complied with the PRC and expressed a sense of forcefulness in regards to releasing information, however continued to explain that the company would only do so under laws that complied with England and Wales. This was enough to prove a point that whether it was willingness or not, information at one point had been handed over to the PRC from Anon’s company without his knowledge as they stated, “I for the most part know the information we pass to Beijing” (Anonymous, 2021) although, they explained, if asked for more information though refused due to laws relating to the United Kingdom, the PRC had evidently been complicit with the decision. The interview was able to

gain an insight of what form of power the PRC has over a Chinese company, as Anon had stated, their company was in relation to a Chinese parent company, however this does not take away from the case that, even as a subsidiary, the PRC has demanded information. Although no surprises arose on Anon's face while asking the questions, their points were stern and unmovable as if the conversation had occurred before. See *Interview conducted with Anonymous* for full transcription in the Appendices.

5. Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations

China continues their efforts of data voyeurism despite saying otherwise, which could ultimately decide the fate of data sharing across multiple platforms and nations as the West has speculated. As well as the economical efforts to control the influence and financial coercion through Africa, Central Asia and the Asia-Pacific through use of the BRI. China is changing Asia through power play upon financial domination. With a high probability that China is focusing on more than one poorer Asian nation, it's a possible assumption that China is changing weaker towns/cities, albeit, nations across the continent. Among this, China is causing more difficulty for there to be peace talks across the South China Sea and disputed territories with their aggressive behaviour and undiplomatic characteristics.

From the given research of the report, it is unknown whether or not China-US/UK relations are set to improve however is not impossible. The relations can be concluded upon answering a harder, more intensive question, is China seeking to establish themselves as a world leading power? As of now we can only assume the answer is yes due to the international development. The final analysis leads Xi's China to a sense of fatalism which is often seen with a sense of extreme nihilistic power.

The overview of soft power is being utilised, more so than that of hard power. The concept of 'convincing someone to want what you want' has been successful through the parties' pragmatism of the cards they have been handed. The Belt and Road is a perfect example of an exceptional form of soft power as discussed earlier in *2.1 Introduction of the Belt and Road Initiative*. The BRI is a tool which Xi has initialised as his project whilst in power, and has done so with great succession. The BRI is capable of reaching many of the PRC's intended accomplishments, from creating more accessible trade deals to building upon infrastructures of partnered cities/countries. This changes the ability of business across all areas that the BRI touches and makes it easier to allow for employment, work, trading and dealings. However, via proof of the questionnaire, the BRI has illustrated a lack of global coverage, perhaps for not being as impressive as the PRC had intended.

Furthermore the battle of who controls the 5G networks has sparked conversations about cyber and data warfare. The conversation that as of yet, has no definitive ending will be asked with more questions in the foreseeable future, with the looming cloud over all, between the battle of two major world orders. The complications of the 5G network infrastructure has put in place an evident strength the PRC has over their national companies, be it Huawei, DJI or TikTok. This overarching power spreads fear up the spines of leaders across the world for the lack of trust they can have with any one Chinese company. The use of Western media further forces the hand of leaders and normal citizens to reconsider the business they are doing with Chinese companies.

If China's golden goal is the desired influence of a global superpower, there are a couple of roads they could travel on. The first is the one that as of current, looks most evident, geographic primacy. Through the helping hand of the BRI, the path of geographical primacy through the central Asian and Western-Pacific nations will act as a promoter to global influence and power. USA's National Security Advisor of President Joe Biden, Jake Sullivan, theorised a method in which China could rise to global power is a less traditional approach in "building a position of unassailable strength in the Western-Pacific than on outflanking the US alliance system and force pressure in that region by developing China's economic, diplomatic and political influence on a global scale" (Sullivan, 2020). Another method which is tangible through the development and empowerment is that of the BRI has given Beijing. These paths China can take is one which will be explored countlessly as time continues.

Over the duration of the topic setbacks were imminent. Answering the research and objective questions mostly proved challenging due to the size and volume of the given questions. Throughout the secondary research it was overestimated the ease in which one believed it would be to analyse the soft power of China and the reasoning for it. This led to the secondary research using a large majority of time and word count in order to best summarise and emphasise the points needed for the report. Furthermore, an attempt to explain the complexity of each research question in depth in one given report is challenging, the word count given of a maximum of 15,000 began to be too little for all the information that was planned to be written. Throughout the report, as more information was learnt throughout the readings and research, more issues of writing the information began to arise. In an ideal time frame and greater word count, interviews, more questionnaires and a greater expanse on primary and secondary research would have been conducted.

Each given topic discussed in the report has the deservedness and capability to have a greater detail spoken of. In the given circumstances each topic is briefly touched upon to illustrate the scale in which China is currently operating upon. This can be considered a limitation, as, with a greater word count for the given report, a greater amount of detail can be spoken of per each topic. This brief and vital information per topic is necessary to answer one of the overarching questions put forth in the introduction of the report; To learn the depiction of Chinese relations to the general West. Each given topic has been able to illustrate that China is being painted in an alarming red hue. This depiction of China unintentionally augments opinions of the West from their proceedings. China's international development is an interesting topic, with each tentacle leading back to the main bodied question, what will they achieve in the end?

Over the course of the report many documents were discovered titled somewhat similar to '*Should the West crackdown on China?*', through much thought and deliberation a philosophical question is at hand, is it the West's right? The West and the East is divided in idealistic beliefs making the given situation impossible for one to govern the other. A recommendation of the report is for those experiencing Wester media to use a diplomatic approach to the information, a tool which is best used in times of calm demeanour. For the West to 'get tough' with China would cause a redundancy to diplomacy and democracy, when in regards to the Uyghur Muslims and China's breach of international law and human rights. For this reason, diplomats and journalists, state that the best method to handle a somewhat, uncontrollable China, one must use "reasoning, logic and charm" (Mahbubandi, 2020).

China has an abundance of methods they could take to restore their original power or challenge America. China's resources appear to be vast and infinite however, similarly to every country, is as finite as the next. The proof of this is the necessity of the BRI, to easier build upon trade deals as well as the economical development in countries such as Angola. A recommendation for those of the Western world would be to think philosophically and logically behind what Chinese relations are emphasising. It would be easy to review Western news and assume China is the outright aggressor, however this can result in more questions: Why are they doing this? Are they only asserting power? Is the news source outright biased? From the research of the report we can see that news sources certainly have an effect on Western perspectives of Chinese relations. A further question can be asked, now that this has been learnt, does the Western news sources have any greater power than simply convincing the public of world affairs?

What is important to consider over Xi Jinping's endeavours, is the change that is able to come from such a nation, as "no nation on Earth has discovered a way to import the world's goods and services while stopping foreign ideas at the border," George Bush had stated in regards to the development of China. "Just as the democratic idea has transformed nations on every continent, so, too, change will inevitably come to China."

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Appendices

Infographics of questionnaire

Image 1. Statement 1.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with this statement: "I have been up to date with Chinese news (in the last 6 months)"

55 responses

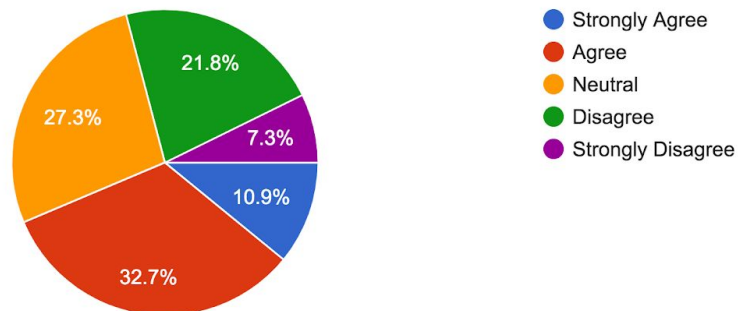


Image 2. Statement 2.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "I have kept up to date with the news on Chinese - Hong Kong relations"

57 responses

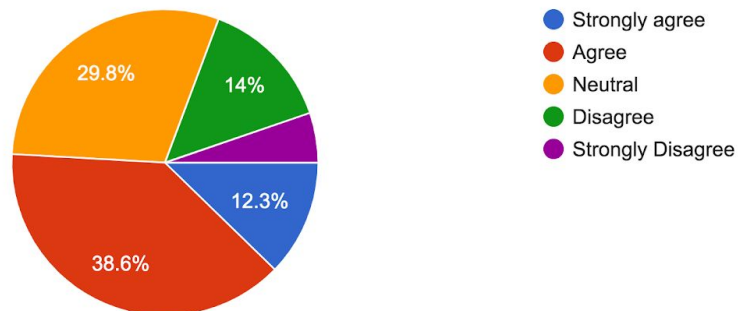


Image 3. Statement 3.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "I have kept up to date with news on the Uyghurs (relevant to 6 months)"

56 responses

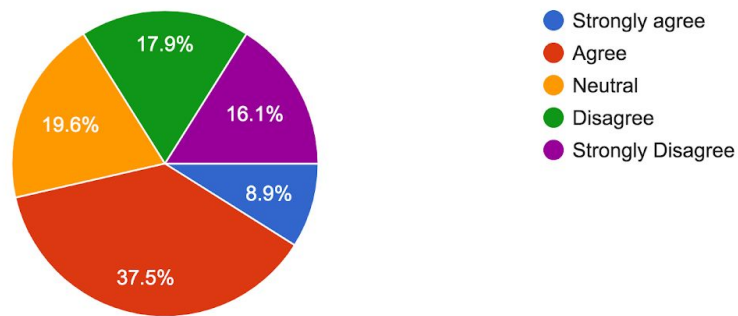


Image 4. Statement 4.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "I have kept up to date with news on Chinese territory disputes"

57 responses

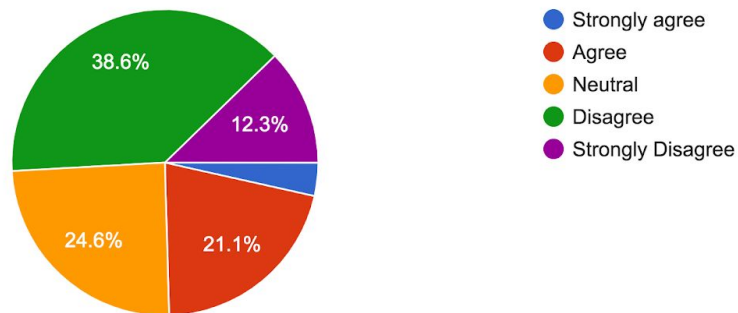
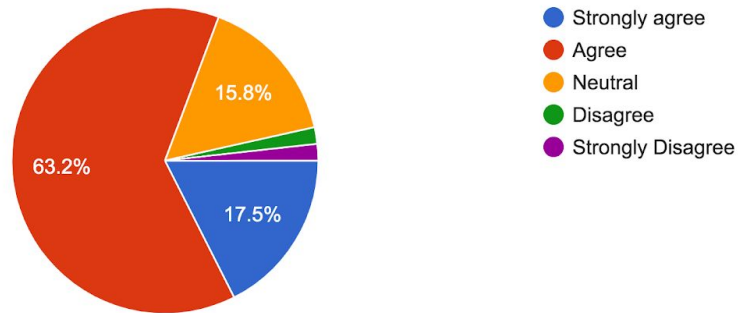


Image 5. Statement 5.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "I'm aware of Chinese controversies with the use of 5G and/or Huawei"

57 responses



Image

6.

Statement

6.

What news outlets do you often use?

57 responses

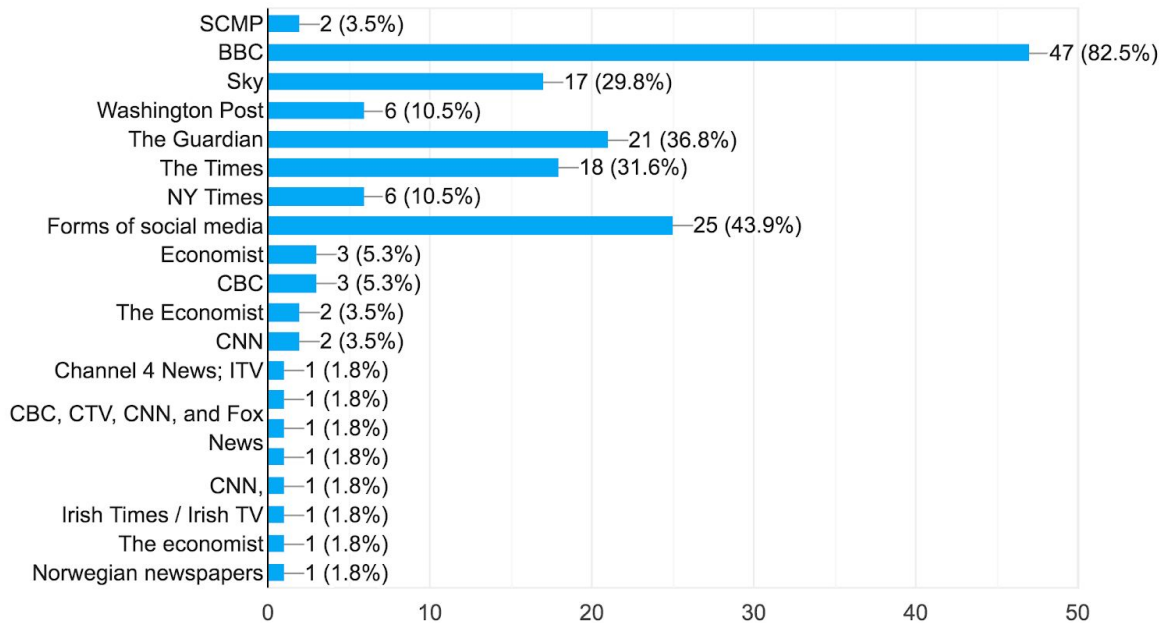


Image 7. Statement 7.

Use the scale below to agree or disagree with this statement: "I have kept up to date with Chinese African relations"

57 responses

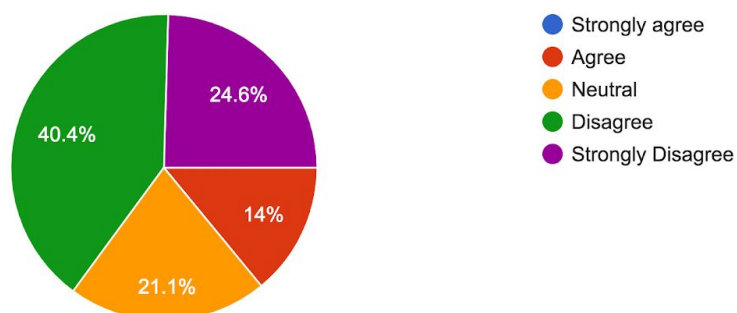


Image 8. Statement 8.

Please use the scale below to express your agreements with this statement: "I'm aware of Chinese relations in nations such as Angola, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya"

57 responses

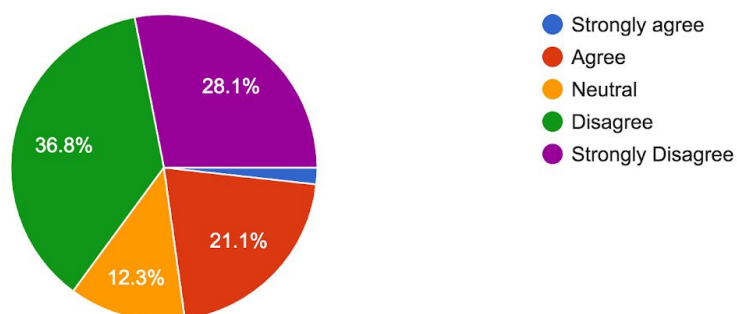


Image 9. Statement 9.

Please use the scale below to agree or disagree with this statement: "China's proceedings in Africa allows a positive effect on African nations"

57 responses

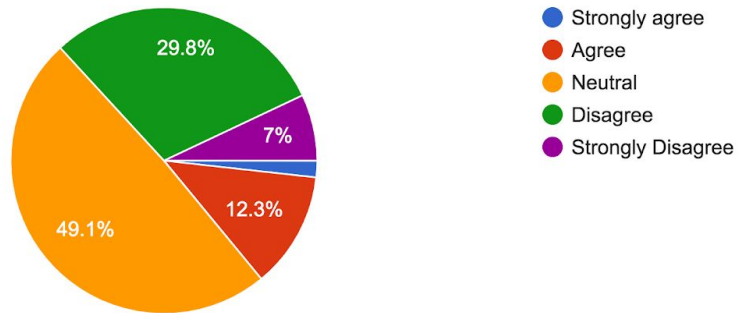


Image 10. Statement 10.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "I am aware of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)"

57 responses

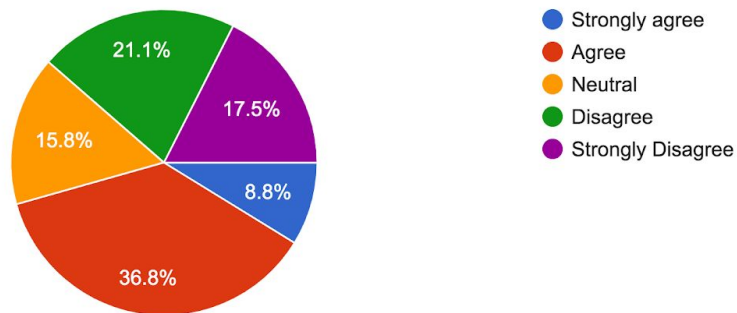


Image 11. Statement 11.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "I'm aware the BRI is the largest trade route in the world and I believe it is a good thing"

57 responses

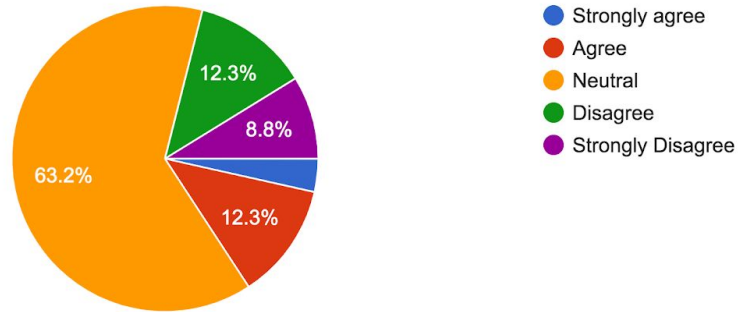


Image 12. Statement 12.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "I'm aware the BRI touches over 60 countries for international trade and I believe China is up to no good"

57 responses

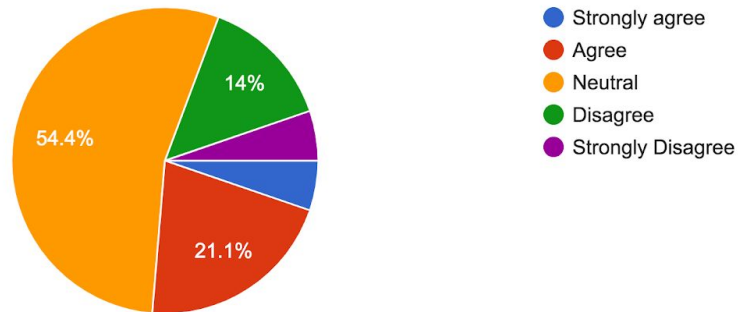


Image 13. Statement 13.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "I believe China's use of the BRI and international connectivity will unite the world in regards to trade"

56 responses

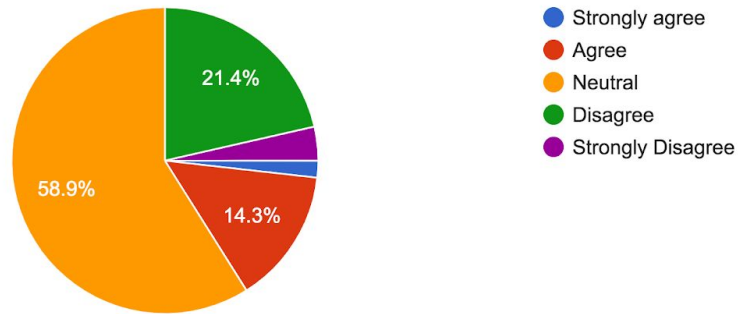


Image 14. Statement 14.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "I'm aware of the criticism that China has through the use of Huawei"

57 responses

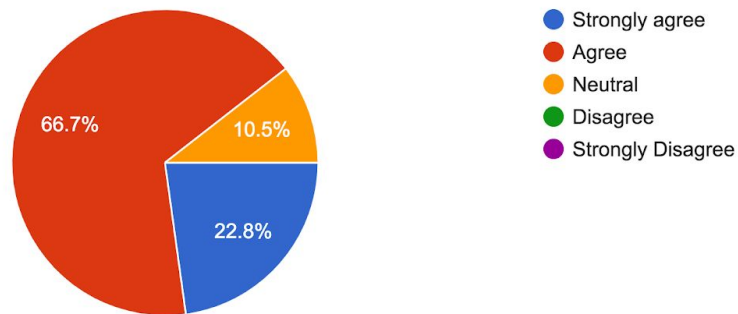


Image 15. Statement 15.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "I wouldn't mind if my government began using 5G infrastructure in and around where I live"

57 responses

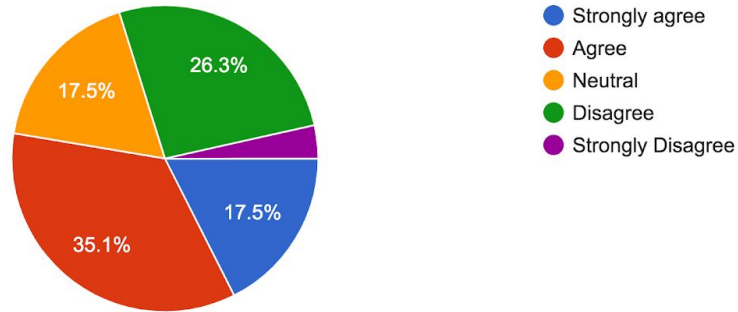


Image 16. Statement 16.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "I'd rather wait until my own government has created an infrastructure for 5G, than use one developed by a Chinese company"

57 responses

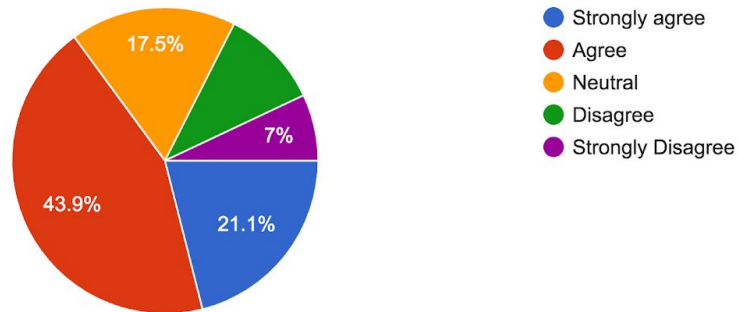


Image 17. Statement 17.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "Western media depicts Chinese actions as aggressive"

57 responses

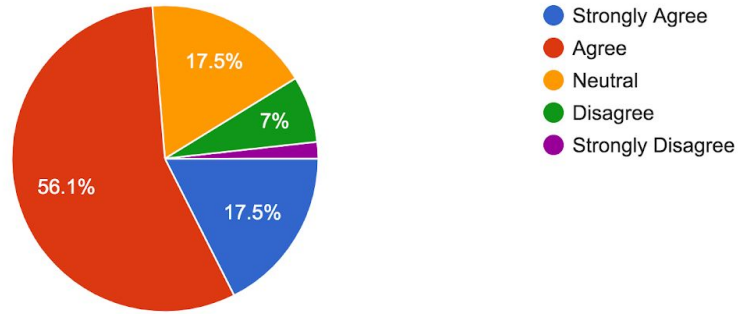


Image 18. Statement 18.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "Western media depicts Chinese actions as necessary for their given circumstances"

57 responses

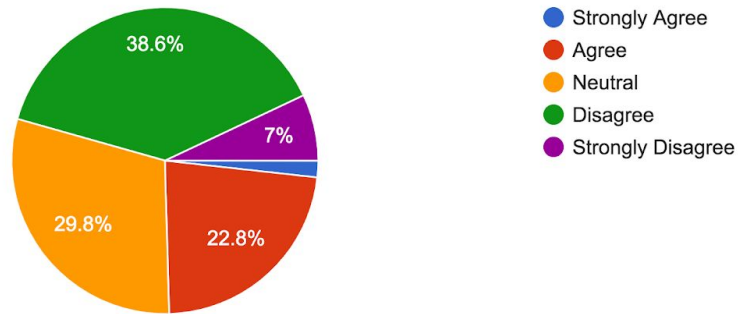


Image 19. Statement 19.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "I believe China's handling of international politics can be less aggressive"

57 responses

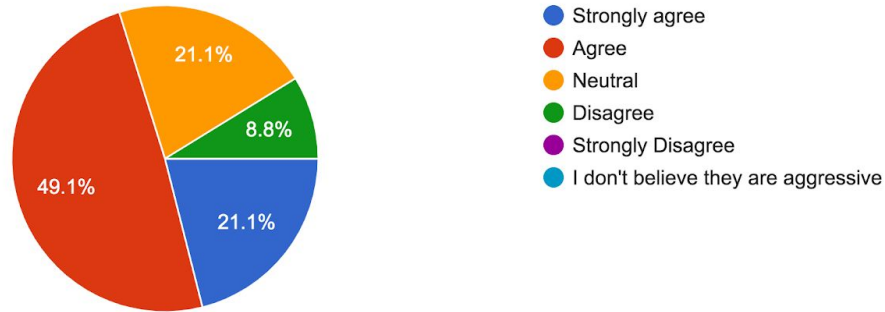
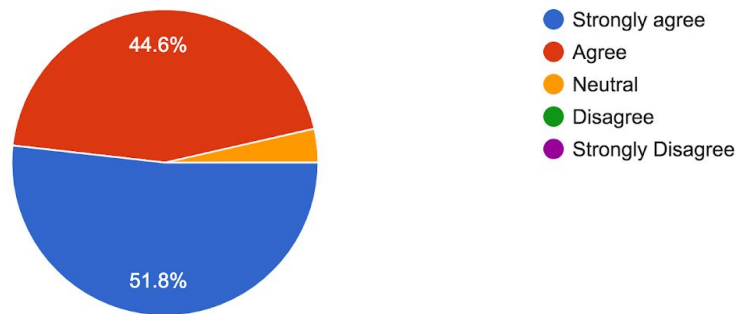


Image 20. Statement 20.

Use the scale to agree or disagree with the statement below: "China is in the contest as a leading global superpower"

56 responses



Interview conducted with Anonymous.

Haydn: I'll be asking you a number of questions and you can feel free to answer as you wish. Some of the questions overlap so feel free to answer as you wish and how you wish. So question 1, do you fear what happens with the information that your company gathers or where it is stored?

Anon: In short, not really. The company I work for is based in London and it's parent company is based in China. As you would expect subsidiaries frequently and reasonably provide information to our parents companies which are based in Beijing. I for the most part know the

information we pass to Beijing is required by the head office. For the purposes of understanding our financial position on a regular basis and other non-financial information is used for reporting group related matters to senior management within the head office.

Haydn: Well that decently answered the second question which was to be, why are you not fearful. How much does your company comply with what the PRC demands?

Anon: As I said, we are a subsidiary where we receive only reasonable requests of information from our parent company from time to time and to the extent that local, applicable law, in this case what English law allows us to do so. We will comply with those requests. I will say that in some occasions where local law prevents us, or prohibits us from passing information outside England and Wales or formally the European Union then we would have to decline to pass the information to the head office. In my experience head offices mostly understand the reasons why we cannot comply. But in all cases the request for information is understood and we will comply to the extent that we are able to do so.

Haydn: I see, so in this circumstance the information given is merely for the head office. You at no point have handed information upon request of the PRC?

Anon: Yes, I said with question 1 and 3 only when it is within compliance with local laws. I should also add to that it is also in regards to contractual obligations or regulatory obligations which we owe to our clients or customers or members of staff.

Haydn: Thank you for that, as I'm sure you're pushed for time, I'll ask you one last question. Has at any point a customer been skeptical of your company being a Chinese company?

Anon: No I don't believe so, we're clear to our customers that we are a part of a group of customers that are set up in Beijing and as a matter of fact our customers come to us because of this. The customer has an understanding of the situations as well as a service and a product we can provide. I think that attracts the clients as a matter of factly. I would say there are no situations that I personally am aware of.

Haydn: Fantastic, thank you very much for your time. I appreciate it greatly.

Anon: Thank you.