PhD Thesis:

A Tacit Alliance: The Political Economy of Iranian-Chinese Relations

Sahra Joharchi

April, 2016

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Nottingham Trent University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Abstract

This thesis examines the continually developing Iranian-Chinese relationship in the Contemporary Era and if it can be classified as a Tacit alliance. Under analysis is the affect that domestic, regional and international developments have had upon the evolution of their political-economic relations and what this reveals about the nature of the relationship itself. This dissertation shows that relations and decisions between the two states are not always based on tangible decrees or treaties but within a framework of unspoken understanding and co-operation. The relationship is influenced by existing historical and cognitive frameworks with regard to foreign policy and economic security. As such the orientation towards this informal alliance is constructed and reinforced by the identities, interests, norms and values of the two societies and perceptions of distance (politically) between one another from the silk road era to the present day, as supported by holistic constructivist theory and cognitive approaches to foreign policy. Iranian-Chinese relations are the creation of myriad factors at many levels of interaction, be they regional, international or historical. However, this thesis focuses on the nature and drivers of their relationship.

Please Note: Parts of this thesis have been included in papers that have already been published or submitted on-line for conferences, as follows (and submitted with the thesis):

Joharchi. S., 2013. A Tacit Alliance: An Analysis of Chinese-Iranian Relations. The Maghreb Review.

Joharchi. S., 2012. Post-Colonial, Hermeneutic…or Both? The Problem of Interpreting Iranian Foreign Policy. Paper submitted on line for the BISA-ISA international Conference, 2012: Edinburgh.

Table of Contents

Acronyms

AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCTV	Chinese Culture TV
CMC	Central Military Commission
CNCP	Chinese National Petroleum Corporation
CNOOC	Chinese National Off-shore Oil Corp
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRO	Islamic revolutionary organization
MAD	Mutually Assured Destruction
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MVM	Movement of Vanguard Missionaries
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCP	National People's Congress
OIC	Organization of Islamic Countries
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PAP	People's Armed Police
SCO	Shanghai Co-operation Organization
TAT	Tacit Alliance Theory
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

Iranian-Chinese relations are not a modern phenomenon. Historic relations between the two powers can be traced as far back as the Parthian and Sassanid Empires of greater Iran (141 BCE to 208 CE) which were in regular economic and political contact with the Han and Tang Dynasties of China Proper (206 BCE to 907 CE) (Fischel, 1951). Each boasted grand and advanced, historically rooted civilisations of great regional power and influence. Such relations appeared to have endured into the 20th century with the respective formations of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the People's Republic of China (Fischel, 1951). This historical association was born out of mutual gain and the common interest of trade preservation and protection along the Silk Road through co-opted guardianship.

In the contemporary era the relationship between these two states is as complex as it is dynamic, as well as being of international interest. Iran and China are both significant actors in two highly important regions of the contemporary world: China, a rising global power and Iran the strongest state in the energy abundant Persian Gulf. On such a statement of the positions of the two states it would seem unproblematic that they maintain positive and enhanced diplomatic and trade relations with one another. Indeed, the US and the EU are important actors in two important regions of the world and it naturally makes sense that they would foster, where possible, amicable, if not friendly, relations. The case is far from clear cut, however. Iran has been at odds with western powers since the spectacular revolution of 1979 in which it turned its back on the special relationship it had with the US as a key ally, in preference for a return to non-secular, foundational values.

In the wake of 9/11 and 7/7 Iran was denounced as a member of the Axis of Evil (Chomsky and Achcar, 2007:155). Recent aims, objectives and actions with regard to the development of its nuclear energy programme have also exacerbated international concerns that Iran is intent on developing nuclear weapons capabilities. As a result, it has been the recipient of numerous and extensive economic and trade sanctions, requested by the United States and supported by United Nations members (Afrasiabi and Maleki, 2003:255). China, on the other hand, is very much a member of the global economy with the restructuring of its economy after Mao Zedong (1949-1976) into a liberal free market, despite retaining a socialist political system (Wu and Lansdowne, 2009). It is highly interdependent with the US and boasts trade relations and ties with an extensive array of Western, Asian and other international peers. It is highly economically successful, with year on year GDP increases and has seen a significant improvement in its diplomatic relations (Chinability, 05.11.11). Such information poses the question, why then is China (or does China appear to be) so intent on fostering and maintaining positive relations with an international pariah? China may have voted in favour of NATO sanctions against Iran but the government is also consistently on record expressing

the desire that alternative measures be explored instead. China is an advocate of the opening of discursive relations between NATO powers and Iran, believing that sanctions are not the most appropriate plan of action (Farrar-Wellman and Frasco, 2010) with President Hu Jintao stating that they are - 'quite confident that friendly and profound economic relations between the two countries should continue forever' (Farrar-Wellman and Frasco, 2010). Indeed, China has gone so far as to employ third parties, such as Taiwan, to facilitate trade in order to bypass sanctions. China and Iran are heavily involved in mutually profitable billion dollar deals with regard to industry, construction and energy. China is aiding Iranian development of its oil fields, both inland and offshore, as well as its railway system, dams and shipyards. Iran in return buys up to 30-40, 000 barrels of refined petroleum daily from China (Leyne, 16.04.2010). China has also shown interest in joining the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline venture in the wake of India's exit from the commitment (Farrar-Wellman and Frasco 2010).

Iran, in the contemporary arena, is very much at the mercy of the processes of globalisation. A growing population must be supported, economically, politically and socially. Iran has difficulty due to inherent mismanagement, both as a result of the first Gulf War which put longer term structural developments on hold, and as a result of stalemates amongst the ruling elites (Minmansour, M., 2007). Economic sanctions and limited trading and investment opportunities with the external world have also led to the retardation of economic growth. A direct result of this is the rapid urbanisation of the Iranian population in a climate of economic stagnation internationally which has a direct domestic domino effect. The status of Iran can be separated into two camps, those that urbanise with development and those that urbanize without it. The result is the lack of a clear middle level urban centre to bridge the gap between underdeveloped cities such as Hormozgan and Kerman, with major cities such as Tabriz, and Tehran (Minmansour, M., 2007). Through continued interaction, the relationship with China mediates the risks that globalisation presents to Iran, inviting Chinese firms, information and investment with aid, trade, knowledge production and development. This is Iran's back door into the international economy and it has substantive possible effects on regional transformation. Iranian advancement and development is an area of concern not just regionally with regard to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) but also internationally, especially with its development of nuclear capabilities.

Economic security is a key foreign policy consideration of any state, regardless of its level of development. Also important in foreign policy formation and implementation are the roles of norms, values, history and experience. Iranian-Chinese relations have their roots in historical and civilisational narratives. The two states have at times been aloof or distant with one another, tensions rising over

disagreements or ideological divergences. Regardless of this, or more to the point, in spite of this, there exists no historical occurrence which is set in the national or civilisational narrative to foster resentments between them. In the context of psychological factors of foreign policy analysis (FPA), it could be said then, when considering the actions or motivations of one another, the existing schema's or knowledge frameworks for assimilation, are not based on negative past experiences or enemy images. Despite both suffering long periods of humiliating interference, intervention and/or control from external actors, be it Japanese expansion or European colonialism, neither in their nation state or civilisational guises has ever made a victim of the other.

It is no secret that Iran's relationship with many 'Western' powers, especially the US, is contentious at best. Indeed, Iran has been the recipient of numerous sanctions in the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian revolution and more contemporarily with regard to its nuclear energy programme (Vakil, 2006:52). Iran is also out of favour with significant actors in the international community over fears of its nuclear development programmes. These fears are born out of, or exasperated by, psychological dispositions with regard to cognitive processes and the assimilation of information into existing schemas (Clarke, and White, 1989:143). This is to say that in the eyes of the US for instance, Iran has acted in a negative manner previously. The 1979 revolution and a turn against western values, followed by the 1981 Iranian hostage crisis was seen as a betrayal to the US. This results in the use of theories such as mirror image, image of the enemy theories and Fundamental Attribution Error theories to assess actions and perceived or assumed motives of other states (Clarke and White, 1989:145). China and Iran have a long history of diplomacy and interaction which has specific effects on their inherent images and assumptions of one another which, as a result, are important to consider in any assessment of their relationship.

In contrast, it can be argued that Russian-Iranian or even Russian-Chinese relations would be a much more timely subject of research in light of current events in the MENA surrounding the fall out of the Arab spring and the conflicts raging, specifically in Syria. Such an analysis however would add little additional dimension to the study of the role of identity and historical narrative in the formation and execution of foreign policy. To take Russian dynamic in particular, with regard to either state is certainly an interesting endeavour however, it is also vacillatory at best. In the case of China, it began as Russia's protégé, before throwing those shackles off under the leadership of Mao Zedong from 1949-1959 (Xia, 2000:11). Tensions rose during this time as Mao felt subverted and adopted a level of distain for his former mentor. Following the collapse of the USSR, rapprochement with Russia began in 1996, with commitments to a constructive partnership in 1996 and a treaty of co-operation in 2001 (Nye, 2015:6). The two neighbours also share a long land border which puts them within one another's

security sphere in a way that distance between states does not and they are both founding members of the SCO, with smaller states which is a security organization constructed in part in reaction to growing US presence in the Asian region (Huasheng, 2006: 118). As their relationship develops it breeds greater co-operation and diplomatic ties, however there is a specific history of tension – from China's experience of colonial imperialism to the swords at dawn period of the 1960's which points to a relationship which, over the long duree represents a series of peaks and troughs.

Iranian-Russian relations, in contrast, are also plagued by historical experience. The codification of an anti-hegemonic policy in the re-drafting of its constitution following the 1979 revolution immediately puts Russia, along with the USA and many European states, at a distance. In the run up to Khomeini's rise to power the communist influence in Iran was strong, represented and endorsed by the communist Tudeh party until it was crushed by the Ayatollah's victory and subsequent consolidation of power. Though relations with Russia can be traced back to 1521 (Logan, 2002:91), this relationship has, and arguably still does, fluctuate between co-operation, or collaboration, and rivalry. Since the fall of the USSR relations have steadily improved, benefiting from the UN imposed economic sanctions placed on Iran which, despite Russia predominantly vetoing, have resulted in the later becoming one of the former's top trading partners (MacFarquhar, 2016:1). In the contemporary era they also join forces with Iraq and Syria to form the RSII coalition, a joint intelligence sharing operation between the four opponents of ISIS as both Russia and Iran come out in support of the Assad regime – a long standing ally for both (Jethro, 2015:1). Again, as with China, Iranian-Chinese relations, though they may be cooperative and collaborative at present, have not always been so and hold within them a history as much of enmity as of amity.

In analysis of Iranian-Chinese relations and the formation of a tacit alliance between the two provides a specific reading of the identity narrative that is present in cognitive foreign policy making and the ways in which the historical narrative influences decisions yes, but more importantly the perceptions upon which such decisions are made. Unlike Relations with Russia, Iranian-Chinese relations do not have, in the modern era, the memory of previous tensions or conflicts to act as checks and balances on greater integration or to colour concepts of trust and risk in decision making. As such the narrative that is constructed is subtly but significantly different and so offers a more original lens through which to asses decision making and alliance creation in the absence of a formal treaty.

This is a highly contemporary area to research, discussing a relationship which is still in the process of development and transformation. As such it has huge potential to transform existing relations and situations. The Middle East is an important region for the international community, due to the global dependency on hydrocarbon reserves. Indeed, the US has long been aware that the

maintenance of hegemonic power is reliant on the control of the economic levers of such power – specifically control and influence over energy resources (Chomsky and Achcar, 2007:135). This is not to say that the South Central Asian region is not also of significant importance to the US. Since the end of the Cold War, the states of these regions have been embracing various opportunities presented to them to liberalise their trade structures and integrate as fully as possible into the world economy. This can be seen through the development of regional initiatives such as the SCO, ASEAN, APEC and AFTA (Ellings and Simon, 1996:18). Also pursued have been bi- and multi-lateral agreements at the international level with trading blocs such as the EU and NATO (ibid, p89). Such efforts have resulted in significant annual GDP increases at the regional level (though of course national differences in rates of growth are naturally present). It is also of considerable strategic importance for the transit of Middle Eastern oil to external markets. It also offers extensive trade markets and low cost labour for Western firms and states. US presence in the region has diminished somewhat since the early 1990s, particularly in military terms. Following the end of the Cold War numerous US bases were withdrawn and, as tensions in the MENA heightened, the US became pre-occupied; it is still an area of wealth and potential for the western powers, however. In short both regions are of significant importance to the US, though for rather different reasons and so they cannot truly be compared (Ellings and Simon, 1996:98-100).

Indeed, any such attempt at a comparison is far beyond the scope of this thesis. What is under scrutiny is the nature of Iranian-Chinese relations. The central interest of this thesis is to analyse Iranian-Chinese politico-economic relations and how they are conducted in the absence of a formal alliance, as well as their impact both regionally and internationally. This relationship has many external implications. Not just with regard to regional transformation but also the international community. In exploring, analysing and evaluating this relationship in economic security terms this dissertation builds on 'Tacit Alliance Theory'. This will naturally involve an analysis, or consideration, of regional and international dynamics but only in so far as they support the cause. The proposal of the existence of an intangible relationship between states was first formalised in the work of Sylvia Crosbie (1974) in her influential book *A Tacit Alliance: France and Israel from Suez to the Six Day War*. This work describes and analyses the informal alliance which developed between the two states in the 1950s and 1960s, though it actually has its roots in earlier interactions (Crowe, 1974: p660). This concept of a Tacit Alliance is one that has received very little scholarly attention generally. In analysing the applicability of Tacit Alliance theory to Iranian-Chinese relations this thesis departs from the more traditionally empirical discussions of security co-operation and theories of the 'end of alliances' that have tended to dominant the post-Cold War era (Oest, 2007: 3). As such the underpinning assumption here is that though the nature and structure of alliances have changed, alliance theories still hold

relevance in the contemporary era – specifically tacit alliance theory. Since the original application of TAT to an analysis of French-Israeli relations in the 1960's there has been little further research, though it has been applied to understandings of the dynamics of Sino-American relations in the post-Cold War era (Moore, 2014) and to Israeli-African relations (Polakow-Suransky in 2010). The alliance discussed in the first of these two cases was concluded to have come to an end, though the Israeli-South African case appears to be ongoing. TAT moves away from the traditional security centred alliances in that it develops an understanding of bilateral state relations which allows for the evolution of more complex, less territorially based interests that have evolved in line with the ever more globalized and economically interdependent world of the contemporary era. Whilst alliances have not ceased, they have arguably changed in size and shape to represent more politico-economic entities that recognize the importance of non-traditional security concepts and the dynamics of national-international two-way influences. A Tacit Alliance is one such representation of the interplay between such dynamics, which can be witnessed in an analysis of Iranian-Chinese relations.

An assessment of the relationship between Iran and China would be a daunting task, created as it is of myriad factors and considerations at the domestic, regional, international and historical levels. This thesis will take a considerably narrower form, since what is under scrutiny relates directly to the nature and drivers of their relationship and the extent to which it is underpinned by a tacit commitment to one another, within a framework of historical civilisational lineage and psychological effects of victimisation and exploitation (again, by many but never each other). As such there will be instances when it will be necessary to discuss them separately, but always in relation to one other vis-a-vis greater trends and commitments. With this endeavour in mind the aims of the investigation will be threefold:

1) To explore the nature of Iranian and Chinese foreign policy decision-making and the impact of identity and cognitive factors in this process.

2) To investigate the political and economic dimensions of the Iranian-Chinese relationship in the contemporary era with particular reference to domestic and international economic security.

3) To evaluate the extent to which the Iranian-Chinese relationship represents a Tacit Alliance and what this could mean for international relations.

These aims will be pursued in the form of the analysis of the following three research questions

1) What are the key features of Iranian and Chinese foreign policy decision-making and what are the psychological and cognitive factors that influence these processes?

2) What impact do the political and economic dimensions of Iranian-Chinese relations have upon domestic and international economic security interests and concerns and how are they impacted by them in turn?

3) Are there sufficient grounds to classify the Iranian-Chinese relationship as a Tacit Alliance? If so what does this relationship suggest with regard to the evolving dynamics of the south central Asian region?

An exploration and analysis of the Chinese-Iranian bilateral relationship can give rise to numerous hypotheses with regards to power politics, liberal institutionalism, foreign policy frameworks and so on. The hypothesis to be tested in this project is as follows:

'The relationship between China and Iran is indeed a tacit one, that is to say that it is informal and intangible in nature. This relationship is influenced by existing historical and cognitive frameworks with regard to foreign policy and economic security but is also affected by external powers and factors'.

The thesis will begin with a literature review which will set the political economic relationship between the two states within the wider theoretical and analytical arena. Divergence and convergence in policies, norms, values and commitments between the two states will be analysed. Also considered will be general trends in interpretation – by one another and external powers. China, at the end of the Cold War was viewed with great suspicion by its regional neighbours and the US, indeed many of the fears expressed with regard to Iran's lack of transparency and unwillingness to act 'responsibly' were mirrored in similar views expressed towards China at the fall of the Cold War in the Early 1990's (see Ellings, R.J., and Simon. S.W., 1996). The majority of the literature to be reviewed will be no more than 15 years old, to maintain a contemporary analysis. Older sources will be used where necessary. One such example of this is the work of R.J Ellings and S.W. Simon on 'Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium'. Though published in 1996 it is an excellent example of interpretation and assumption with regard to the nature of China's rise to power and external interpretations of its intensions and aspirations.

Also of importance in this section will be a discussion of classical paradigms within IR. Iranian-Chinese relations can clearly be analysed using Balance of Power theory, the two states using one another to boost their own positions and development, as well as checking the hegemonic interventionist nature of the United States and its regional aspirations in the interests of maintaining controls of the dominant levels of the global economy – namely energy resources and trade relations. Liberal Complex interdependence theory can also be used to analyse the relationship at hand. Each state has something that the other wants and so cooperate in numerous ways, resulting in a complex

web of interdependence which makes extraction difficult. Each state gradually has more to lose from distancing itself from the other over time, making it more and more difficult. This can be seen equally as clearly in China-US economic relations. China leases a significant degree of US treasury bonds to the extent that, if it did not renew its leases the US economy would be delivered a potentially fatal blow. Such an act though would also result in devastating China's economy: the economies of the two have become intricately intertwined. Such alternate theories will be discussed, alongside the reasons why they are being rejected for this thesis. This is not to say that Iranian-Chinese relations cannot be explained in traditional power politics or interdependency terms, but rather that they omit too much which is necessary whilst including too much which is not.

Following on from this will be a discussion and defence of the theoretical and methodological framework of this thesis. Tacit Alliance Theory, developed by Sylvia Crosbie, analyses the informal alliance between states. Due to its normative nature Tacit Alliance Theory will be analysed using Holistic Constructivism. Holistic Constructivism posits the international and the domestic as two sides of the same coin; both affected by and effective of one another. This branch of Constructivism allows the most comprehensive analysis of all factors of effect within the informal Iranian-Chinese alliance. Holistic Constructivism as advanced by John Ruggie (Burchil and Linklater, 2007: 195) will allow the development of analysis with regard to the evolving relationship between China and Iran as well as allowing for domestic considerations and influences within that relationship.

Cognitive foreign policy concepts such as schema theory, though supported by scholars such as Benjamine Goldsmith (cited by Sridharan, 2005), Jerel Rosati and Scott (Rosati and Scott, 2004), and David Houghton (2009), have their roots in the writings of sixteenth century Montaigne (Sridharan, 2005:663). Schema theory aids analyses of the greater securitisation or de-securitisation of existing perceptions. The Iranian-Chinese relationship is shaped by economic security concerns and interests. It is also heavily influenced by pre-existing norms and values and historical experiences, by psychological factors, and as such cognitive FPA will also be employed in the interests of the most comprehensive analysis of all significant factors of influence. The use of a mixed methodological approach will be discussed in the second part of this chapter. It will be shown that such an approach is necessary to permit a greater array of methodological tools to be utilised (Creswell, 2011:35). In keeping with this anti-foundationalist approach, the epistemology will be normative. It will assess the extent to which the patterns of interactions are uniquely fuelled by individual foreign policy aims with regard to political and economic interests and the maintenance of the tacit alliance, so long as this alliance is beneficial to either side.

Though both qualitative and quantitative methods will be utilised for this research endeavour which will, occasionally, be empirical it does not aim to be empiricist. With regard to ontology and epistemology, this research will be conducted and consolidated within an anti-foundational and interpretivist framework. It shall be shown that international relations and alliances and the construction of foreign policies are effected by inherent cognitive factors (Clarke and White, 1989:145). Since the regional and international arena in which relations are conducted will be shown to be a social construct, interpretation will also need to be utilised and considered (Jervis, 1970:19). Data used will involve the analysis of existing research and trade data such as desk research, current documentation, trade reports and flows. Also included will be a critical discourse analysis of government representations of, and statements towards, one another which will reveal the construction, or lack thereof, of an informal alliance and the ways in which rhetorical devises are used to offset risk and increase trust between one another.

Tacit Alliance Theory (TAT) offers interesting considerations regarding why and how states engage. China and Iran's long history of diplomacy affects their inherent images and assumptions of one another which are important to consider in any assessment of their relationship. This will be built upon further in Chapters four and five, which seeks to analyse the specific foreign policy-making processes and the extent to which they are influence by cognitive factors. Both China and Iran have a commonality in their inclination to overtly incorporate their foreign policy experiences into their national and (especially important) historical narratives. Each is seen as an extension of the other and so mutually influential. History will play an important role in these chapters as they will be shown that decisions taken and interpretations made with regard to external actors are heavily influenced by past experiences. Both states for instance, have been at the mercy of colonialism, though to different degrees and in different manners. This ultimately affects their interpretations of the Western (and Japanese in the case of China) intentions and capacities to manipulate and humiliate. This is naturally a vast amount of ground to cover and so will be split into two chapters accordingly: chapter three concentrating on Iran and chapter four on China.

Chapter five will bring the information from the two previous chapters together to analyse the ways in which the political and economic dimensions of Iranian-Chinese relations have shaped, and are shaped, by domestic and international economic security concerns and interests. Within this analysis will be a consideration of the nature of securitisation and the factors which result in the securitisation of benchmarks, specifically the greater securitisation of the overall economy, but in particular hydrocarbons and trade. A key rising concern with regard to this area, following the western financial crisis in 2008, is the state control of the Yuan (RMB) and the extent to which it is undervalued

(Morrison and Labonte, 2011). The two states are also moving closer together regionally. Each sees themselves as a natural superpower in their respective regions and so appear to be committed to regional stability and peace (though the two are not mutually exclusive). As such they have been highly visible in a number of regional organisations such as ASEAN and the SCO and the ECO (Vakil, 2006:61).

It will not be possible to exclude from this chapter a discussion of the 'nuclear issue' though it must be stressed that the aim is not to discover Iranian nuclear intentions. The nuclear issue is an important factor in the Iranian-Chinese relationship with regard to the transfer of technology and materials, be they 'dual-use' or otherwise. It is also important with regard to the securitisation/politicization of an 'Iranian threat'. How China responds to the Iranian nuclear programme, its official discourse and external reactions has the potential to reveal much about how they see and interact with one another. Connected to this will be a discussion on third party profit-driven 'front companies' and politically driven 'black knights' which are used to ensure the delivery of trade commitments despite the extensive economic sanctions applied to Iran and firm wishing to conduct significant trade with it (Early, 2011:383).

Chapter six applies Tacit Alliance Theory to Iranian-Chinese relations, in light of the previous chapters. Relations will be assessed with regard to the extent to which they are underpinned by a tacit commitment to support their status quo. If a Tacit Alliance does constitute the theory of best fit the facets which make up the whole will be addressed specifically to further cement the argument. That is to say that all factors pertaining to shared norms and values, economic and developmental interests, civilisational grandeur, historical humiliation at the hands of external interlopers, and regional ambitions, will need to be considered in an analysis of how, why and to what extent the relationship under scrutiny can be considered a Tacit Alliance. The final chapter will necessarily conclude on the overall ambitions of this project. The points made and areas addressed will be summarised and the relationship formally codified. Possible developments in the relationship may also be projected, such as the likelihood of the relationship surviving the return of Taiwan to China or a military strike on Iran by the US, or far less dramatic, the natural evolution of the South Central Asian region, in relation to the MENA and the various issues for consideration that may be raised which could influence or alter the dynamics of the relationship, if not the very relationship, or alliance, itself.

Iranian-Chinese relations are important to understand. Both are significant states in their own regions. They are also high profile actors in the international arena. If either state speaks then they illicit a reaction from the dominant global powers. However, it is important to note here that this thesis does not state that they are necessarily heard, or responded to. And herein lies an issue of interest. China is ever more furnishing its image as a responsible international actor. It has chosen its

path of development and embraced capitalist economic tools in a way that it seems unable, or unwilling, to grasp politically. It is highly interdependent with the United States and growing more so with its regional neighbours, Latin America and the EU.

Iran is on a similar path, it has committed its foreign policy actions to fostering greater trust and respect amongst regional neighbours and international peers such as the EU and states of Latin America, such as Brazil. Expansionist and interfering intent were absent from its negotiations with the West, and specifically the US, over Afghanistan and Iraq in the post 9/11 bubble of the war on terror. It also has set upon a course of development, though with a much greater start up challenge than China due to economic stagnation caused by years of economic sanctions and trade embargos. Why then are Iran and China committed to growing interdependence? Indeed, if the driving force behind China's actions was the ability to hold the Iran card in the face of Washington's Taiwan card then this makes little sense. If the Taiwan issue were to end, some form of resolution to be found, China would still be stuck with the Iran pariah at its heels – there seems little benefit. Indeed, parallel to greater Iranian-Chinese integrations, there has also been a thawing in relations between China and Taiwan and noises of a desire to put the issue of ownership on the back burner in favour of greater integration in terms of trade and economics.

There is much media coverage of Iranian-Chinese cooperation, deals, support and interaction. In terms of the media, the relationship between the two can be well-chronicled with just a few strokes of a keyboard and a Google search engine. This interest has not yet saturated academic fields, however. There is such discussion to be found on Iran-US and China-US relations, but little on relations between the two states. This is surprising for several reasons, but above all because the relationship matters on many levels. It is arrogant to pass their cooperation off as an anti-hegemonic stance against the might and glory of the advanced and powerful West. It is still more arrogant to suggest that each is important only in relation to the West. The International system is changing, it may be slow and, at times unapparent, but it is changing nonetheless, and its forms can be seen in regional trends. Martin Jacques recently wrote a well-received book: *When China Rules the World* (2009). In it he discusses the evolution of a new world order with China at the helm. The book is not pro-Asia or anti-US. It states merely that the US and Western ideology are in a natural decline and China is the only fitting driver of a new system. Interestingly what is discussed is the importance of a new level of democracy: democracy not within a state but between states being the most important aspect of interaction and interdependence.

Relevance and originality

Iran and China are heirs to two of the world's most ancient civilisations. They are also in possession of two very different and unique social, economic and political systems in two regions growing ever closer in geo-strategic terms. Relations between the two nations, despite periods of cooling (1940's-1960s and 1979-1982) have remained fairly constant and amicable from the days of the silk route to the present, where they have flourished in economic and diplomatic terms. Despite this there has been very little study of the relationship between the two states. There are to be found various studies, commentaries and media reports that reference Iranian-Chinese relations or discuss issues or aspects of engagement, such as China's response to the Iranian nuclear issue – or more specifically the proposal of punitive sanctions in relation to Iranian intensions; also details of trade and economic transactions and their impact on each or either state's development, though generally in relation to the wider international community. Lacking from such literature is an in-depth discussion or analysis of the relationship itself, its drivers and agents, impact, or potential impact, at the regional and international levels – both now and in the future – and above all its very nature and implications.

In brief Iran and China have enjoyed amicable relations, as joint guardians of the silk routes, as far back as the Parthian and Han empires and dynasties (circa 139BCE), until they ceased in the fifteenth century. Formal relations, though tepid, resumed in the 1920's with limited trade relations, only to cease again in the 1940's. China's conversion to a people's republic in 1949, further exacerbated relations with Iran's unwillingness to recognise its legitimacy. The reasons for this are numerous, based on national interest, ideological difference and geographic distance to name just a few as well as experiences of, and relations with, external powers. Whilst it would be interesting to expand on these issues, they are not, in detail, the aim of this study and are mentioned in the interest of supplying a background to the history of the inter-state relations.

In the 1950s China expressed an interest in renewing ties with Iran, as a result of anti-imperialist uprisings in the latter how, due to its monarchical nature and heavy policy dependence on western, colonial powers, Iran declined. This attitude was revised in the 1960's as a result of domestic and international shifts, as Iran reconsidered its approach to China. The latter's statement of support for the Shah on the eve of the 1979 revolution again resulted in retardation, though relatively short lived, in relations. China's appeasement and recognition of the Islamic Republic, combined with the breakout of the Gulf War, however, gave China its foot in the door as it became a major arms supplier of Iran (and also Iraq). Relations between the two powers since this time, though slow in taking off, have gone from strength to strength in economic, political and diplomatic terms. Despite this, the relationship has never been formalised into an official, and binding alliance – and thus is the rationale

for this investigation.

The Middle East is an important region and will continue to be so until viable alternative energy sources are found. Even after this it is still an ancient region of civilisations, cultures, and the world's fastest growing religion – Islam. Iran is on the rise regionally, attempting to combat patterns of regional distrust from neighbouring states and secure multi-lateral trade endeavours through systems such as the SCO. It recognises itself as the most suited nation to take pride of place as regional superpower. Being, in this regard, China's regional peer. A new world order, be it still based on traditional capitalist principles, will be ever more shaped by the growing dominance of the more powerful, the agenda setters – already Chinese Mandarin is seeping into language schools as a highly relevant business language and is attracting more foreign students than the most important traditional European languages, including French and German. Chinese art and fashion are ever more popular at the galleries and fashion shows of New York and Milan. For too long the study of international relations has been western in focus, be it euro-centric or US-led. This overlooks important developments in other regions which can have profound effects on the international. For a point in turn see the fall of the USSR and the end of the Cold War. One reason for the lack of appropriate prediction was an inability, or unwillingness, to assess the USSR within itself, outside of its relations with the US. The result was half a story and lack of preparation for an unexpected outcome.

Iranian-Chinese relations are an important, yet overlooked, area of study that are necessary to understand and adequately interpret the international system and its developing trends. The evolution between the two states has important implications with regard to regional dynamics in central Asia as well and the MENA, not to mention the rest of the world. Many of the issues which surround Iran and its nuclear development programme concern lack of transparency. Yet to what extent has Iran been given the opportunities, within a favourable environment, to be transparent and accepted? It should also be noted that both states have experience of colonialism in all of its various forms of interference and manipulation. This naturally colours their perceptions. Being old colonies also affects the perceptions of their old colonial rulers, however. Will previous colonies not always, to an extent, be those that the west had to civilise? Barbarians that had to be taught to be correct and good and acceptable? Such may be the dominant view in western capitals, albeit unstated.

There are numerous side issues that come from this thesis, opening myriad avenues of investigation with regard to the study of norms and values and critical approaches to IR. They are for now, however, beyond the pale. There is a significant gap in the research available on Iranian-Chinese relations at the national, regional and international levels. Indeed, the word gaps seems to be an understatement as there have been just three book published on the subject, one a history of the two

civilisations, one an assessment of their parallel histories (Burman, 2009: 5), and the third, a recent endeavour, by John Garver (2004), to discuss the Realist nature of the relationship – in light of the US position. This thesis is unique – for now – and through the development and application of Tacit Alliance Theory offers a new way of looking at states and state relations. In this respect it contributes to knowledge, and theory. Beyond this, it is a contribution that is of value to foreign policy-makers and analysis as well as IR scholars generally. It matters, it is useful, and above all, it has practical policy implications.

Chapter One:

Literature Review

Introduction

On approaching the task of analysing Iranian-Chinese relations, it is quickly apparent that there are a wealth of both direct and indirect references to the mutual rhetoric between the two states, of shared historical experiences, civilisational lineage and amicable, if not friendly, interactions. In 1971, Zhou Enlai's welcome of Princess Ashraf to China was framed with a rhetoric which stressed Chinese-Iranian relations dating back 'more than two thousand years' (cited in Graver, 2006:9). This was supported by a subsequent newspaper editorial linking positive relations back to the silk road (Gentry, 2005:124). In response to a similar speech delivered a year later to Farah, the lady replied in kind. This is worth mentioning at the beginning of this literature review because this rhetoric appears, at least, to run parallel to the motivations of concrete interests and ambitions, and at most, to be intricately intertwined with, or to underpin, them. Despite China voting in favour of NATO sanctions against Iran, President Hu Jintao (2002-2012) insisted that China was 'quite confident that friendly and profound economic relations between the two countries should continue forever' (Farrar-Wellman and Frasco, 2010:1).

The role and use of rhetoric in this instance is far more complex, however, and one that needs to be clarified in the first instance. China and Iran continually fall back on a discourse of shared norms and values based on their long histories and relations as guardians of the Silk Road, allies against Soviet expansionism, and standard bearers of ancient civilisations and original great powers. President Ahmadinejad, in a speech given at Peking university (09.06.2012), referred to both China and Iran as 'ancient cultures which had both liberated themselves from colonialism' (Press TV: 06.06.2012). Hu Guoqiang, in a similar vein gave recognition to both countries as 'ancient civilisations […] enjoy[ing] historic relations […] since 2,000 years ago, the ancient Silk Road has connected [the] two countries together, and the friendship between [the] two countries has withstood the hardship of time and history' (Chineseembassy.org; 18.07.2011). Official address of one to another concerning economic, cultural or political exchange are littered with such references and allusions to trust, friendship and respect. For example, Hua Guofeng, during a 1978 visit to Iran, stated that '[t]wenty years of Friendship between Chinese and Iranian peoples, provided a solid base for continuing cooperation' (cited in Garver, 2006:10). Though this statement was offered before the 1979 revolution and so regime change in Iran, it suggests a continuation of attitudes, its roots being visible in Hu Jintao's above allusion to a 'profound' friendship which 'should continue forever'.

This is of course no secret and can be confirmed by the most sweeping glance of the internet, journal articles or newspapers. What is less clear, or rather less clearly defined, are the motivations for such behaviour. Iranian and Chinese interests are heavily intertwined as major energy suppliers and consumers. They are also highly invested in one another's economies and in areas of research and development, trade and culture (to be discussed at length in chapter six). They also have a shared interest in a stable and secure MENA region and limited US interference. These interests are the drivers of Iranian-Chinese relations and dictate much that transpires between the two, wider global constraints permitting. What is interesting is that these policy goals would be no less important, or pursued, if stripped of their rhetorical garb of a millennia of friendship, deep trust and admiration. As such the literature review to follow will begin with an assessment of the presence and role of rhetoric generally. The following section will take this rhetoric further to discuss how the previous understanding fits with concepts of trust and risk in international relations. Trust and risk are important considerations in relations, or potential relations, between states and underpin the inclinations or reluctances of one state to approach or interact with another. An understanding of this is highly important in the contemporary era which is based on a global political economy of free markets and economic interdependence. The role of economic concerns with regard to security policies will then be discussed in the proceeding section, followed by an exploration of the concept of economic security as a specific aspect of foreign policy. This will naturally, and necessarily, result in the final section which will discuss spheres of influence. This is not a significant jump in subject matter. After discussing the roles of rhetoric, security, economics and foreign policy it is necessary to frame these with regard to discussions on where, or in which direction, such foreign policies are aimed - the framework within which the relations and interests of each state can be understood vis-à-vis their foreign and domestic policy aims and ambitions.

Rhetoric

Iran, China and the Persian Gulf, written by A.H.H. Abadi in 1982, published in the wake of the 1979 Iranian revolution and Deng Xiaoping's consolidation of power in China, is well written and informative, albeit slightly dated, with little to offer as a result of the myriad changes that have taken place internationally and domestically in each state since. The opening chapter begins with a description of the long standing, positive, relationship between Iran and China and their shared experiences as great powers, ancient civilisations and victims of European expansionism. Zhou Enlai, addressing Princess Ashraf on the 14th of April 1971, states: 'friendly contact between [the] countries date back more than 2000 years' and he adds that: '[i]n modern times […] there have been fewer contacts as a result of imperialist obstruction and sabotage' (cited in Abidi, 1982:57). As such, though it recognises the

significance of such discourse it has little to offer in the contemporary era. Martin Jacques in contrast (2011*)*, dedicates only a brief section to Iran, which is seen to be at the heart of Chinese strategy in the Middle East. Despite this Jacques, whilst giving no direct examples of speeches of confidence or amenity between the two powers, highlights the use of rhetoric to 'create a shared affinity between the two countries' (p434). Though he consigns this fact to the margins, positing that core power and developmental interests alone are what underpin and influence the relationship. This raises the question, if they are as irrelevant as Jacques posits then why were they not omitted entirely from the reading. To mention the existence of such rhetoric is to denote that it has influence in some form, regardless of the extent to which it is considered effective. It should also be noted that despite Jacques' writing about the rise and future of China, the section on its relationship with Iran is the smallest in the book. This theme of the use, or acknowledgement, of rhetoric is developed more broadly by John Garver in *China and Iran: Ancient Partners in a Post-Imperial World (2006)*.

Garver carries out a much needed discussion on Chinese-Iranian relations in the contemporary era. He considers how China and Iran consistently try to resist perceived US hegemony and invoke their ancient relations to legitimize the convergence of their national interests. The relationship between the two states is framed within the regional and international context and discusses the economic agreements between the two states as well as knowledge and technological transfers. The impact of this relationship on China-US relations is also addressed and China is shown, when pushed, to bend to US wishes, cancelling contracts already made with Iran. Despite this, China is acknowledged to consistently assist Iranian development and modernisation efforts as well as seeking their common interest of a Soviet- and United States-free Asia. Garver looks at the relationship between the two states from the time of the Shah, through the 1980-88 Gulf War, to the present day. He approaches this subject from a Realist *power projection* lens in which the rhetoric of trust and respect is a lubrication tool for the execution of pragmatic and independent interests and ambitions. Garver makes a significant contribution to the issue of the rhetoric of friendship between the two states. He readily acknowledges that despite concrete interests being the core drivers of interactions, this rhetoric has a deeper role to play as a reinforcement of 'civilisational solidarity' which 'seem[s] to lubricate the process of Sino-Iranian co-operation' (Gentry, 2005:123). In this respect it creates and reinforces the shared modern histories and the resultant norms and value systems of the two states. Importantly however, Garver sees the application of this rhetorical tool as secondary to the Pragmatic interests, rather than being crucial to their maintenance and so intertwined with the overall construction of their relations. This is a result of the realist framework utilized which subverts the roles of norms and values and diplomacy in favour of the objective agency of interests. This objectivity

however is little more than an illusion as it is the very narratives of experiences and beliefs that dictate interests and, more significantly, the behaviours and actions utilized to fulfil them.

Lounnas Djallil (2011), in contrast, attempts to assess the China/US/Iran triangle in light of the Iranian nuclear crisis in purely factual terms. Great attention is given to the nature of trade, energy and technology transfers between the two powers and the wider influence of the United States. Iran is portrayed as an asset in more practical terms both in reference to its geo-political position and also as a deterrent to US hegemony over China or as a useful bargaining chip for China in reaction to the Taiwan card which could potentially be played by the United States. Whilst the article is useful and undeniably factually accurate it is very much focused on Iranian-Chinese dynamics in relation to US interest. It also prompts certain questions. In recent years China-Taiwan relations have been thawing and the urgency to have Taiwan return to Chinese control has wavered, or rather been put on the back burner in favour of opening greater diplomatic channels in light of China's various good neighbour, harmonious rise policies (Wu and Lansdowne, 2009). China is, and has always been, loyal to its perceived borders which continue to be of top priority, as can be seen by its refusal to negotiate ownership of contested South China Sea islands (Buzan, 2012). The government has been eager to adopt a stance of shared, regional responsibility and joint projects for development which appear to be taking priority over ancient boundary issues in China's rise.

Within this framework, the Taiwan card is of far less importance in security terms than is suggested by Djallil. This argument is supported by a recent item in *The Economist* (29.09.12: 9) which reports on reactions to a Taiwanese fishing fleet and patrol ships entering the disputed waters around Senkakus/Diaoyus. The skirmish that ensued and resulted in Taiwan's withdrawal was notably with Japanese vessels rather than Chinese. Dorraj and Currier (2008) also discuss Iran-China relations in the contemporary era and the extent to which they interact in economic terms. The authors in this instance begin with an historical overview of the psychological identification with one another of the two states to frame the instances of co-operation and interaction under assessment. Though they do not provide an in-depth analysis of the use of rhetoric, their article is a significant improvement on that of Djallil because it does include the rhetorical facet of the relationship. This rhetoric is important in framing and legitimizing relations between two states. It constructs a common sense view of why interactions and support for one another are offered and accepted: of course they will assist and defend one another (non-militarily), they are peers, who's civilisational and historical experience gives rise to no period of previous conflicts and so creates the grounds for trust and amity.

This more comprehensive assessment is needed to understand the full complexities of the Iranian-Chinese relationship, for it is these allusions to trust and friendship, to confidence, which

enable China, for instance, to back down and accept proposed sanctions against Iran in the UN, without being labelled as betrayers by the Iranians, and putting the economic interdependencies between them into crisis (UNSC press release). Notably, China is far more intertwined and dependant on the maintenance of close ties with the USA than with Iran and yet does not show the same pattern of reinforcing interactions with such rhetoric. Nor does it apply such a strategy with the EU or South Africa. In this respect it is possible to take the lead from what is not said, or documented. Inference to this rhetoric forms an almost constant backdrop to relations between the two powers for specific reasons which must be examined in closer detail for a better understanding of the starting point of an analysis of Iranian-Chinese relations. To clarify, it is not enough to simply state sources that include or exclude such rhetoric but rather to suggest, based on existing research, what the strength of patterns of interactions suggest in terms of both diplomacy and security, particularly between two states which have no formal, binding alliance with one another.

Ben D. Mor in *Credibility Talk in Public Diplomacy* (2011) explores the wider implications and uses of rhetoric as a political tool in the accumulation and maintenance of soft diplomatic power. Though the article is predominantly written with reference to the use of rhetoric by one party *against* another, and specifically in relation to Israel and the Qana bombing, it is highly relevant in its general assessments. Mor assesses rhetoric in relation to the politics of credibility and 'credibility talk' as an act of power which has deep psychological roots intimately intertwined with emergent social orders and identity stability. This is reflected in the work of Morin and Gold (2010) which recognises rhetorical action as the strategic use of a set of claims to convince a given audience for gain maximisation (ibid, p566). In this light credibility is not a 'real world' tangible entity but rather it is created, reproduced and reinforced through interaction. Credibility construction is the product of the emergence of a normative structure produced itself out of identification with the credible and accepted rhetoric of actors regarding the decisions made and more importantly the social, cultural, political, economic and historical drivers of those decisions.

China and Iran are both ancient civilisations which were once great powers and joint guardians of the Silk Road (Fischel, 1951). They have also been at the mercy of European expansionism and of colonialism. In identity terms they are both societies structured around a sense of shame, over guilt favoured in more western societies. Unlike guilt, which is tied to the individual, shame is a social concept concerning the wider implications of actions on reputations not just of the actors but their wider familial and social network. Here the similarities between the two societies end. Iran is a theocracy, ruled by the tenants and laws of Islam above all else. China in turn is truly secular, a society constructed around a system of filial piety (Jacques, 2011: 344). Their customs, practices and

languages are different. Even their regions of interest do not converge as much as one would expect. China is of Asia and its primary, regional interests are of Asia. Whilst Iran could technically be classified as being of Asia it is classified as belonging to the MENA and its interests highlight its support of this classification despite it being a non-Arab state with more cultural and linguistic commonalities with Asian states such as Afghanistan and Turkmenistan (Kurtaran, 2011; Page). They are not Kin countries in the sense posited by Samuel Huntington (2002) nor do they constitute the type of imagined community supported by benedict Anderson (2006). Nor have they committed to any formal binding, internationally recognised alliances. In addition, in the contemporary era there is also, a distinct lack of similarity in the way in which each is viewed by the wider international community. Whilst commentators and scholars alike allude to China's potential and increasing dominance in the coming century, Iran is often viewed (or dismissed) as a pariah state of little influence (Burman, 2009:187). Regardless, they do have mutual interests which need to be catered for, and defended against outside interference due to Iran's international pariah status as an enemy to Western interests. In this respect rhetoric of shared experiences and mutual trust and respect are legitimizing, they construct credibility and serve as a 'validating tactic' (ibid, 418). Mor highlights that 'actors rarely make assertions without simultaneously trying to back them up' (Mor, 2011: 418). China is heavily involved with Iran's energy industry and dependant on its exports of hydrocarbons. As such it is eager to pursue joint explorations of Iranian energy fields and reluctant to support UN trade sanctions against Iran which could harm such interests (Swaine, 2010: 3). In contrast, China is also eager to maintain its international presence and be accepted as a 'responsible power' (ibid). The latter of these aims are at odds, to an extent, with the former.

Such interests then appear to be lubricated by rhetoric of underlying moral and value-laden influences of friendship and goodwill which are legitimating, and far easier to sell to the populace and harder for international peers to argue against since it is a tactic that all use (the most obvious of which being the US and the UK and their 'special relationship'). China and Iran are constructing a friendship and confidence in one another based on shared norms, values, and historical experiences which, being accepted by the domestic and international communities either grudgingly or enthusiastically, supersedes individual actions or decisions. Specifically, China is able, when necessary and under pressure from the United States, to accept sanctions against Iran without incurring the latter's wrath or losing its 'friendship'. Iran in turn can commit to uranium enrichment or pursue economic and cultural foreign policy interests in the NIS states of Central Asia without incurring significant suspicion from China. They are friends, they share trust, and when required, a degree of transparency, or so the rhetoric is constructed to suggest. In this respect then, rhetoric acts as a security blanket. Constructed frameworks, it should be noted, reinforce as much as they are reinforced.

The rhetoric of friendship can also been seen as a commitment, either to the status quo of trust and goodwill or to its development. In 2011, the 40th anniversary of the establishment of modern diplomatic Iranian-Chinese relations, Chen Zilli, during a visit to Iran, assured his audience that 'China is willing to seize this opportunity (the anniversary) to further consolidate political mutual trust, [and] enhance co-operation' between the two states (Chansoria 02.05.2011) Underpinning this, or rather being underpinned by this, is the concept of trust. Trust in this context has specific connotations and is related to risk and safety in security terms.

Trust and Risk

Internationalisation and globalisation, have transformed the nature of conflict and contention, and how they are interpreted. Traditional politics tended to be synonymous with territory and its defence or expansion (Nasu, 2011:2). Threats and confrontations were tangible, the enemies could meet on a battlefield, they could fight and the loser would be beaten, and generally stripped of some form of possession, usually land. States that were able to, built up their stores in preparation and to deter interlopers or invaders. Coker (2002) posits that the contemporary globalised world of high international economic and political interdependence has seen a shift from deterrence to reassurance, from 'active confrontation to co-operative agreements' (p54). This is particularly relevant to the field of security and definitions of risk which are no longer territorially bound but interlinked with both the promotion and defence of legal norms. In this respect risk is no longer a variable but a way of thinking, a result of an impervious vulnerability which is an inherent condition of the international system. This can be best seen in the new wars that have been waged in recent years – the War on Terror being a prime example. Terror, once a tool of the state is now borderless. It is, as Coker (2002) states, not an entity that can be secured against but rather a risk that must be managed, through surveillance and the control of panic or fear escalation (p61). Threats now are more permeable and invasive. They cannot be defeated by the construction of a new international or security system but rather their effect must be safeguarded against. In this respect the new security agenda is one that manages not security but rather insecurity. To manage these challenges states cannot work alone, coalitions, alliances, agreement and treaties are essential for any attempt at harmony and stability, in both political and economic terms, as is trust.

Despite the existence of an expanding body of work on the concept of trust, it is a normative term and so value laden. Though its definition has been highly debated across the social sciences in the previous decade, no single definition of exact fit has been achieved. It is, as with many concepts, far easier to pin down what it is not, to identify it in relation to its other if you like. Despite this, a degree of convergence has developed with regard to the constitutive elements of trust. A Kydd (2007),

holds with the rational choice school of thought that, in the discipline of International Relations, trust has tended to be equated with the willingness to take risks on the behaviour of others, being the sum total of risk assessment and self-interest. This rationalist approach has limitations in its applicability as it omits consideration of the role played by information and information flows. Game theory, as Abbott points out in his 1993 article: '*Trust but Verify*' specifically highlights the strategic structure of *interdependent* relationships. Abbott goes further to outline the two strategies used to produce information: verification and assurance. Information here is of particular importance in the construction of trust with regard to the absence of formal alliances. Indeed, to talk of levels of trust between states that are highly interdependent and signatories of legally binding treaties or agreements is a rather moot point. Trust is of limited concern in this respect because the level of risk concerned is also limited by binding agreements. This not to say, of course, that the agreements themselves have any physical power. They are, after all, only binding if the relevant parties recognise them as such, and so legitimize them.

It could be argued, and Abbott appears to tacitly assume, that this is where trust becomes an issue or plays a role. The interdependent nature of treaties and agreements, generally amongst like-minded states makes backing out of an agreement highly problematic. The old adage that liberal democracies do not go to war with one another is not based on a deep trust and brotherhood between them but rather the result of high interdependence with one another and dependence on the status quo and the world system which offsets the risks of betrayal. Indeed, a cruder example would be that of China, which buys significant US bonds, the cashing in of which would undoubtedly be disastrous for the economy of the latter, but of course not until after it has first crippled the former's economy. A better understanding of Trust and the ways in which it is constructed is considerably more informative, and arguably more important when applied to relations between states which lack the formal and legal articulations of cooperation. As stated above, China and Iran are not kin countries, in Huntington's use of the term (2002), nor have they committed to a formal alliance with one another. But, as previously stated, there is recorded evidence of continual rhetoric of trust and acts of confidence: China may have voted in favour of UN sanctions against Iran but the government is also consistently on record as advocating the opening of discursive relations between NATO powers and Iran (Farrar-Wellman and Frasco, 2010). China, controversially, has also gone so far as to employ third party 'Black Knights' (to be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter) to facilitate trade in order to bypass such sanctions (Kozhanov, 2001).

Hoffman (2002) highlights the use of the rhetoric of trust by individuals as diverse as Karl Deutsch (1957) and Kofi Annan (2000) to promote peace and security, in which trust is seen as the tie

that enables and binds such commitments. Hoffman raises the important point that cooperation is not dependant on trust but rather can be coerced. The aim of international sanctions, as posited by the US government, is to pressure Iran into abandoning uranium enrichment, or rather to enter into a binding agreement to do so. If Iran were to comply, to effectively 'cooperate', with the international community it would be the result of coercion – cooperation without trust. Hoffman identified the need to be aware of the alternate structures of relations and degrees of risk and obligation involved in order to better assess the nature of trust, risk and security (p376). This offers important considerations, and contrasts with Abbott who recognises trust as being of lower importance in formal, binding agreements and alliances. Formal agreements then are more stable and less inclined to fail or be aborted by either party, unless of course one member has been coerced into compliance in which case trust may not be lost for it was never present in the first place, which can be highly destabilising for security. Under examples of coercion, hoodwinking should also be included: during the Khatami presidency, Iran suspended nuclear development as a goodwill gesture to the EU which requested six months to present a 'safer' alternative. Three years later Iran called of the suspension as it became clear that no such alternative would be offered, other than Iran's total abandonment of the endeavour.

With regard to the perception of formal alliances being more stable there is a challenge that can be offered, and indeed is, implicitly, within this thesis. If formal alliances are legal entities – contracts if you will, then they may be difficult to withdraw from. Difficult is not the same as impossible and requires the formal acknowledgement of a breaking of a term or pledge or of the agreement no longer being applicable or valid. In short, this process, being legal and contractual would take very little time to execute in relative terms. The dissolution of a normative, or tacit alliance however, is a much more laborious task. As this latter form of alliance is dependent on the construction of a narrative of alignment and support over time then its disavowal and so an alternative narrative would be equally laborious. If US-Iraqi relations are taken as an example, then you can see that the support given to Iraq during the first gulf war hindered the ability of the USA to gain adequate domestic legitimacy to invade in 1991 (Khaloozadeh, 2011:1). It was not until 2003 that the alternative narrative of Iraq as a troublesome, untrustworthy state enabled a harder stand on the Iraq issue – bolstered as it was by the general fall out of 9/11. (ibid :1) In this respect then the stability and security of formal, over informal, alliances are brought into question

The specific interaction between Iran and the EU introduced above can also be explained within the framework of a study by Larson (1997), though for different but equally pertinent reasons. Larson (1997) applies social psychology to identify issues with trust in the international relations between states and the negative effects, and 'missed opportunities' that can arise from inadequate

interpretations of behaviour. The article highlights the tendency of policy-makers, preoccupied by the Realist lens of self-interest and power politics to incorrectly analyse an opponent's aims and interests. A point to note here is the way in which it is assumed by Larson that states meeting to evaluate trust/risk benefits view each other as 'opponents' (p701) rather than, for instance, peers. Larson suggests that prudent policy-making rests on the need to be able to adequately asses the level to which an 'other' state is interested in entering into an agreement, as well as its reputation, past and present with regard to similar endeavours elsewhere. Like Hoffman, Larson agrees that distrust has the ability to hinder or prevent cooperation. Difficulties can be bridged by lower risk 'test' agreements and 'good faith' concessions and Larson also suggests that past reputations can be overcome in order to pursue common interests. It is important to note here that though such issues can be overcome, this does not mean that they will be. Though offering a social psychological analysis to trust and risk, the article would benefit from an acknowledgement of the cognitive factors at play within the schemata of the policy makers concerned. With such a consideration, questions necessarily arise with regard to the conditions and perceptions that require reassessment in order to develop previously contentious relations. The steps required for Egypt and the United States to develop closer, less suspicious, more confident ties with one another, for instance would be considerably smaller and more level than those required by Iran and the United states. This is based on significant psychological dispositions, based on historical experiences and feelings of betrayal.

This hindrance of trust is also highlighted by Morin and Gold (2010) in their analysis of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and its decision on access to medicines. Here the truth seeking deliberations between concerned parties were encumbered by their distrust. Another hindrance was the rhetoric of both intellectual property rights (IPRs) and access to medicines that were both committed to but appeared to be incompatible. They became trapped by their own mistrust and the rhetorical frameworks that they had constructed. This article debates the nature and effects of trust, risk and distrust within the theoretical space that lies between rational choice and Constructivism, positing that in the building of agreements and cooperation both discourse and strategy are of significant importance and distrust an impediment to progress. This can be seen in the contemporary post-Cold War era as the United States and Russia, through membership of international bodies such as the UN, were able to enter into dialogue and work together in the interests of common aims, such as a commitment to the War on Terror. A more lucid example would be the cooperation displayed between Iran and the United States following the invasion of Afghanistan, to try and set up a stable, and legitimate government there. Inkpen and Currell (1998), also assess the nature of trust, building on current understanding by crucially noting that '[r]isk is a pre-condition of trust' (p3). To trust is to appear to be, and to actually be, vulnerable. The importance of confidence building measures here,

as with Larson (1997), are again highlighted as the greater the level of risk the higher the level of confidence needed to develop relations and commit to agreements. It should be noted that this article applies the language of trust and risk to corporate joint ventures, rather than to states and so is limited in its applicability. The overall analysis is relevant, however, with regard to the nature of, and relationship between, trust and risk. The essence of the argument is valid: Trust is a necessary consideration in the evaluation of risks and security and is underpinned by degrees of confidence in potential partners based on track records and interpretations, on psychological analysis.

Fisman and Khanna (1999), summarise trust as being the condition in which the level of belief that the other will act in a way that is beneficial to the state is significantly high for cooperation to be considered or committed to. The authors discuss the correlation between information flows and levels of trust as a critique of both the traditional view that 'trust is a purely historical residue' (p79); (Dore, 1987, Fukuyama, 1995) as well as rational utility-maximisation (Fudenburg and Tirole, 1992). Three types of trust are identified: deterrence based, knowledge based and identification based trust (p80). All are positively affected by information flows to decrease the assumption of risk. This article adds to existing literature on trust and risk in that it overtly recognises and analyses the roles of information and knowledge transfer in agreements, or desires, to cooperate. That the greater the activity between information flows and the giving and accepting of data and transparency then the greater the potential for trust to develop. Iran and China verbalize their relations in terms of trust, which is rooted in historical interactions and positive track records of no significant conflict with one another (Dorraj and Currier (2008:65). In this respect their trust can be assumed to be historical residue. The levels of trust, or confidence, that they express in one another can also be shown to be the result of myriad confidence building measures and information flows between them. As with Larson, the article has limited applicability across relations with non-likeminded states/partners, however. Information flows, and thus greater transparency may, and in many cases do, produce fertile ground for cooperation. There are instances when the information flows, or transparency, are misinterpreted or denied. In the case of Iran's nuclear ambitions, it can be argued that Iran cannot be transparent enough for the United States who are dedicated to suspicion, no matter what. In this respect, what is needed is a common ground that considers Fisman and Khanna's information flows and their impact on co-operation whilst also recognising the psychological factors listed by Larson, as well as the significant considerations of Rathbun (see below).

The United States and Europe may fear Iranian intentions regarding weapons of mass destruction and cite a lack of transparency in Iranian affairs as a foundation for their concerns. China does not share this view but rather describes Iranian intentions as appearing to be clear to them (Scott,

2015:1). Notably, China has greater access to Iranian firms and technology production as a heavy investor in this sector (Leyne, 16.04.2010). This idea of trust and identification, be it ethnic, historical or societal, is developed further by Rathbun (2012). Rathbun discusses NATO and challenges the constructivist assessment that it was created as a result of the shared identification of its founding members. The author states, rather, that its foundation rests, instead, on moralistic trust. NATO can be identified as a community of democracies underpinned by western ideological values and interests. Its creation was also a reaction to security concerns surrounding the USSR. Such a multilateral committee brings risks, such as the fear expressed by the United States that it would become trapped in European conflicts and be at the mercy of more opportunistic members. The United States' commitment to the NATO alliance, it is argued is best understood through the lens of moralistic trust which allows for states to interact and begin to co-operate based on future expectations of positivity. Rathbun identifies what ensues as a '"virtuous circle' of co-operation" (p325). In this model members create a spiral of trust, cooperation, collaboration and deeper trust. This article supports social-psychological influences on relations between states, highlighting the compatibility of ideational variables and strategic interaction, or rather creating dialogue in the space between rational theory and constructivist accounts of risk and security, it also echoes the approach, if not the specifics, of a hermeneutic understanding of trust, risk and cooperation, being similar to Gadamers hermeneutic circle (the hermeneutic approach will be discussed in greater detail in the theory chapter, but the link to approach in this article is interesting to note as the security interests of trust and risk are generally preoccupied by more classical paradigms) .

The world has moved away from the theoretical lens of Classical Realist theory in which, under anarchy, all must be out for themselves and trust is the luxury of the domestic society. The world is highly interdependent and growing more so at a rapid rate, as the 2008 financial crisis shows: a domestic crisis in the United States which sent reverberations across the globe. In this ever-shrinking global village (Mcluhan, 1967:3) states and non-state actors must cooperate at all levels and spheres, from the territorial to the diplomatic. One area of significance, which was highlighted by the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre – the symbol of US economic hegemony – and compounded by the above mentioned financial crisis is the sphere of security, specifically for the interests of this thesis, economic security, and going hand in hand with that, the greater securitisation of previously marginalised issues.

Economic Security

Mesjasz, in 'Economic Security' (2004), analyses the significant increase in debates, in international relations, concerning interpretations of security, as both a concept and an activity. Traditional thought,

such as that posited by Realist scholars, puts security within the realm of military and political policy (Burchill et al, 2005). Contemporary scholars also acknowledge its importance in the societal, environmental and economic realms. Due to strong links between the different sectors, and areas of overlap, Mesjlasz acknowledges the difficulty in isolating economic security alone for assessment, though does not recognise such isolation to be impossible. This builds on Cable's article (1995) in which the modern era is identified as one in which the potential threats that must be safeguarded against by actors are significant and ever-increasing. Increased interdependence, as a result of marketisation and liberal economics, Cable states, has resulted in economic security becoming an increasingly common concern within its own arena, rather than as a marginal factor of military or political concerns. Economic interests in this respect also hold factors such as migration, environmental degradation and political ideologies, which Mesjasz prefers to classify as a third security sector, entitled 'human security'. The two-way influence of affect and effect between the different areas is, however, inseparable.

The foreign policy aims and interests of an actor, region or system are, irrevocably dictated by not only their ambitions but also, and arguably more importantly, their economic capabilities. In this interdependent world states attempt, where possible, economic punishment over military strikes (Mueller and Mueller, 1999:43). Indeed, it has been the US policy towards Iran to apply economic and trade sanction over military intervention. Though the reasons for this are far from limited and certainly beyond the scope and interest of this thesis, it nevertheless serves the point that the best way to 'manage' and contain Iran, to exercise any form of control over its nuclear ambitions – peaceful or otherwise – is to hit it where it hurts: to stunt its trade capabilities and negatively affect its economic progress (Fayazmanesh, 2003:222). In the international arena, indeed globally, the growing role and dominance of economic capabilities was highlighted by the 9/11 attacks on the US. Al Qaeda, it seems, in wanting to attack US hegemony did not do so my attacking its various military bases (with the exception of the *secondary* attack on the Pentagon) but rather the World Trade Centre – the standard bearer of US and Western dominance and control.

Securitisation is a contrast to traditional security paradigms which focus on material threats. It aims, according to Buzan et al. (1998) to analyze the conditions in which the profile of an issue is raised and reconstructed, based on the interpretations of the policy-makers and actors involved, to constitute a security concern (securitised). The source highlights the central concerns with 'who securitises, on what issues (threats), for whom (referent object), why, with what results, and not least, under what conditions.'(1998:32). It must be noted that unlike military evaluations, the securitisation of an interest does not mean that lack of containment or understanding would mark the death or

survival of a state, but rather that the interest has been reclassified as an existential problem/threat that must be acknowledged and either safeguarded against or adequately managed. Williams (2008), notes that it was only in the post-Cold War, unipolar world that economic security has moved from the periphery of domestic concerns into the international arena. In this respect Williams' findings appear to have been endorsed by the 2008 financial crisis, a domestic mortgage issue in the United States which reverberated around the globe, affecting particularly Europe but also being felt, to lesser degrees, in the MENA and Asia. In the new world order, Williams acknowledges, a state's reputation is more greatly influenced by its trade and development capabilities – by its economic prowess than by its hard power resources. In such an environment, issues with the capacity to retard the economic potential of an actor, both domestically and in light of its regional stability vis-a-vis investment attraction and the autonomy of the private sector, have become securitised. This securitisation, Buzan states, authorises the legitimation of the use of extraordinary means to counter potential problems which may arise (1998:25).

This point is neatly illustrated by Kozhanov (2011), who recognises the power and inclination of states to circumvent international economic and trade restraints in order to pursue economic gains and goals. Here US companies are shown to have exported equipment to their Branches in Brazil for re-routing to Iran (p146). These states, labelled 'black knights' are further described as pariah, or low trade, states which lack the ability to compete, in the economic arena, against powerhouses such as the United States or the EU. Kozhanov also highlights the overlap between geo-politics and economics as he notes China's refusal to cut trade and economic ties with Iran, in the interests of upholding international sanctions, due to the position of Iran as 'a crucial element in China's energy security' (p150). Kozhanov, interestingly, does not distinguish between 'black knights' and what Early (2011) entitles 'sanctions busters'. Early differentiates these as acting in the interests of either political (knights) or economic (busters) incentives, whereas Kozhanov either chooses not to distinguish, or possibly sees no distinction to be present, as the end result is the same regardless of the means. The intentions of the knights or busters, according to Early, have a specific effect on the likelihood of sanction success. Early builds on the work of Hufbauer et al (1990) and analyses the negative impact that black knights and sanctions busters have on sanctions outcomes. Black knights and sanctions busters are third party actors; be they states or companies that trade with the sanctioned states for political or economic profit of some kind. They can also be employed by another state to sanctions bust on their behalf. This has been seen in Iranian-Chinese relations, in which forbidden bilateral trade between the two has been conducted via a third party black knight so as to evade the attention and knowledge of the international body that has applied the sanctions.

A higher profile case would have been the deviation of the Turkey-Iran deal, to include Brazil, at the 11th hour, so as to avoid the penalties of ignoring sanctions imposed on Iran (Kemanade, 2010:99). Whether the actions concerned are an attempt, by the parties involved, to either circumvent or to undermine the effectiveness of sanctions is of significant relevance in the context of Iranian-Chinese relations. It is not in Chinese (or Iranian for that matter) interests for sanctions against the Islamic republic to be upheld in so far as the sanctions generally transfer to Iran's trading partners in the public and private sector, directly affecting China's, and Chinese companies', abilities to manoeuvre. They are profitable, or advantageous though, with respect to the fact that there results, in Iran and Iranian markets, no dominant western presence or monopoly, it is free ground for states such as China (Jacques, 2011: 134). China, whilst aiming to be a responsible member of the international community, is also a developing powerhouse. As such it may be interested in circumventing sanctions imposed on one of its chief energy supplies, and significant market. It must not, in maintenance of its coveted international reputation, be seen to undermine such sanctions, for this is at odds with its international foreign policy aims of harmony and diplomacy (Levrett, 2014: 2).

The greater securitisation of economic issues has also been noted in relation to China's currency and its inclination to undervalue the RMB (Yuan). Eichengreen and Tang (2011) evaluate the external impact of the exchange rate policy as a negative impact on foreign firms attempting to access Chinese markets. Morrison and Labonte (2011) go further, to provide an overview of the economic issues surrounding the current debate over China's currency policy. They identify the economic costs and benefits for both China and the USA and the possible implications if China were to allow its currency to significantly appreciate or free float. Most interestingly, whilst both articles register US concerns for another state's domestic currency, the latter also evaluates the proposed legislation in the US 112th congress, which seeks to address China's currency policy. Here we can clearly see the securitisation of an economic issue. China's domestic currency has been re-evaluated as an international concern due to its potential impact on a second state – namely the hegemonic USA. Economic strength is an important concern for any state wanting to interact in the international arena, and to grow and develop. As such the securitisation of economic issues is a key foreign policy issue for any state, but particularly, in this instance, for Iran and China, two significant powers in their respective regions who are on a drive to development.

Economic Security as an Aspect of Foreign Policy

Debates regarding the interpretations of security have increased significantly in IR in the current decade. Scholars have become concerned with concepts such as the broadening and deepening of security predominantly, and to a lesser degree regarding the foundations of security (Mesjasz, 2004).

Any discussion of security necessarily needs to outline adequate definitions and interpretations. Broadly addressed, security is specified in the military, political, economic, societal and environmental realms. The aim of this research is to address the nature and political economy of Iranian-Chinese relations, which itself can be difficult to isolate due to its strong links with the other realms (Mesjasz, 2004). Traditional paradigms refer to security in military and national terms, in other words with regard to raison d'état, balances of power and alliances, as well as international security. In the modern era of interdependence and globalisation the range of potential threats to be considered by a state or actor have widened significantly. In the ever more interdependent world of marketisation and liberal economics, economic security is an increasing concern as an arena within itself, rather than a side-line of military or diplomatic concerns (Cable, 1995). Indeed, apparently non-directly economic factors such as migration, corruption, environmental degradation, political ideologies are all affective of and affected by economics and so must be considered within the realm of economic security concerns. The foreign policy preferences and goals of a state, actor or system are ultimately set within the limitations of its economic capabilities and ambitions. Bilateral agreements on cooperation, conflict and development have been conducted within the constructed perceptions of threats and fears vis-a-vis economic security (Rousseau, 2006). Note here that the key word is perceptions. A threat is only thus when perceived to be so, identical actions by two ideologically different states would be perceived by the viewer in very different ways as a result of constructed perceptions and interests (Rousseau, 2006). Iran's nuclear programme for instance, receives very significantly different, and divergent reactions from the USA and China.

Economic security then refers explicitly, not to the accumulation of monetary wealth or influence, but to increased trade and economic benefits and, more importantly, to the greater independence and autonomy that economic development permits, to the political role of economics and the securitisation of its interests (Cable, 1995:307). In this respect state integration is elevated to an economic security interest in foreign policy terms. The role of the economic interests of both state and non-state actors can act as an agent for change or evolution above the global/regional structures that Neo-Realists such as Kenneth Waltz would suggest (1979) or even the shared ideas and ambitions of political elites as versions of Liberal theory contend based upon this concept of securitisation.

Securitisation, a concept traditionally connected to the Copenhagen School as a contrast to traditional security which favours materialist approaches to the subject. Whilst traditional paradigms focus on the material dispositions of a threat, such as military capabilities and power distribution, securitisation seeks to address the extent to which an issue is constructed into a security concern by the concepts and interpretations of the actors involved. It is very much concerned with "who

securitises, on what issues (threats), for whom (referent object), why, with what results, and not least, under what conditions" (Buzan et al. 1998:32). For an issue to become securitised does not mean that it is deemed essential for the survival of the state, rather that it has been re-evaluated as an existential problem by a given actor, predominantly through rhetoric. In reference to this subject, the economic realm was traditional considered to be a peripheral concern of domestic security (Williams, 2003:512). With the fall of the bipolar era, however, the new world order became ever more centred on liberal economics and capital free markets. A nation's standing comes to be less influenced by its military and hard power capabilities than by its economic prowess which results in an increase in trade and development opportunities and resultant soft, diplomatic power. Issues which are capable of affecting the economic potential of a state such as the economic sanctions against Iran and regional stability vis-a-vis investment attraction and the autonomy of the private sector became securitised and so legitimize the use of extraordinary means to counter potential problems which may arise (Buzan et al. 1998: 25).

Economic security has been a significant foreign policy interest of both Iran and China through-out their long histories. Both independently and with respect to one another. Their historical association can be traced back to their roles as joint guardians of the silk routes. Many scholars write at length about the silk roads as agents for the transfer and transportation of culture, language, religion and knowledge, which of course they were (Bentley, 1993; Elisseeff, 1998; Christian, 2000; to name just a few). They also served a more practical purpose: interest in, and protection of, the silk roads was, ultimately, born out of mutual gain and a common interest in trade preservation and protection (Abidi, 1982:15). During the subsequent Colonial years both states were at the mercy of European, or as with the case of Japan, European *modelled* empires. Their economies became tied to the 'mother' land which exacerbated their underdevelopment relative to European technological and economic prowess and evolution during these times of Iranian shame and Chinese humiliation. Certainly these experiences of subjugation left each civilisation far worse than they found them and coupled with feelings of victimization and assault, in the decolonized era, they were painfully aware of the need to develop, to industrialize and to prosper. For such ambitions a prospering economy was required and so economic security returned to centre stage in the arena of foreign policy formulation and application. Though in reality it did not, during the years of shame, leave the agenda so much as the agenda was superseded by Colonial dictates and control. In the contemporary era both states are actively committed to economic development and, more importantly, economic security.

Panitchpakdi and Clifford (2002), in their opening chapter, highlight the nature of the divided contemporary world. On one side of the divide are states and actors who are in a position to benefit

from globalisation and the wealth and openness that it creates. On the other side are those states who are in no such position (p1), the resource poor, the underdeveloped. For both China and Iran development is crucial for the achievement of a true return to the international stage on a level playing field. It is often written, in Western history, that colonial missions were civilising ones. That the colonies, before occupation, were backward, barbarian, lacking in any real potential for advancement. Robert Bickers (2011) notes, however, that the China arrived at by the British was far from such stereotypes. It held "its central place in the global economy" (p9) with an internationalised trading system with its neighbours near and far. Indeed, when British troops sailed north to force access and the opening of trade opportunities with Chinese ports it was not the superior organization, intelligence, or civility of the British that was responsible for their success. Indeed, no clear winner was recognisable in advance until the arrival of British steam ships which brought with them the ability to sail regardless of wind patterns and so a vital and winning advantage (p82).

China first tried, under Mao (0942-1976), to develop at an accelerated rate within the framework of a communist manifesto, highly influenced by Stalinist Russia. The Death of Mao Zedong and the rise of Deng Xiaoping (1978-1989), coupled with the failure of initiatives such as the Cultural Revolution and the numerous 5 years plans surrounding it (which culminated in the death of a reported 4 million Chinese) led to the development of a new system. The Chinese state was restructured into a "'Harmonious' combination of capitalist development and sustained Communist-State apparatus' (Wu and Lansdowne, 2009). This merge between east and west, between Cold War era first and second world ideologies, is suggested by Xudong and Junxiang (2009) to represent 'the interaction between emulation of the west and resistance to its intrusion in modernising endeavours' (p47). As such liberalization of the market did not run parallel to the liberalization of government. The latter maintained its socialist order and ideals in separation from capitalist, economic, reforms, but regardless of this, the twin peaked system nevertheless resulted in China rising to a position of recognition: a significant member of the global economy and a member of the WTO in 1999. Xudong and Junxiang, in their modern history of China, highlight that the drive to develop is not new, but rather modernisation is one of the few lasting themes throughout its history (p48) and that the colonial experiences taught them well the need to learn the "advanced skills of the barbarians to restrain them" (p54), or rather to restrain the power they have over China.

This capitalist development and market economy has been the push and pull of China and its commitments to trade relations with a staggering array of actors in Asia, North and South America, the MENA and Europe. The result, from 1999 to 2006 alone was an annual increase in GDP growth rate from 7.1% to 11.4% (Chinability, 05.11.11). Increased trade has brought with it significantly

improved diplomatic relations. Ellings, Sheldon and Simon (1996) wrote about south east Asian security and the fears of neighbours near and far regarding the ultimate ambitions of a rising China (p36-7). A belligerent power whose military development must surely be a primary concern, was assumed to be a future challenge to Asia, and those interested in Asia: one that must be monitored and prepared for. China's military development, as has transpired, appears to be more of a second-tier concern and its foreign policies appear to be set to appease rather than to distress. China, thus promoted its 'Five Principles of Coexistence' (Garver 2012); a commitment to the fostering of trust, respect, co-operation and equality with its Asian neighbours in the interests of a harmonious order. Regional initiatives, were established, and supported by China, such as the ASEAN which sought to operate on a basis of democracy between nations to address security and developmental needs and concerns (Beeson, 2004:33).

China, as a rising power committed to an accelerated rate of development is, naturally, a significant consumer of resources, specifically hydrocarbons. It is also a late arrival to the international scene where existing powers already dominate the market. China needs oil, natural resources of all kinds, and fresh, un-monopolised markets (Burman, 2009:203). Iran in turn, following the 1979 revolution and the 1980-88 Gulf War, was left with a crippled economy and feelings of resentment from the USA and Europe. Afrasiabi (2003) recognises Iran's foreign policy as deriving from two sources – its turbulent regional environment and its faction ridden polity – in the run up to 9/11. The attacks on the World Trade Centre, however, changed the security landscape globally. It also highlighted the increased role that Iran had been playing since 1990 as a mediator and crisis manager (p257). Reflecting China's 'harmonious world' policy, but in no apparent way influenced by it, Iran has sought to develop diplomatic ties with regional powers and to actively promote regional security initiatives such as several ceasefire agreements between Armenia and Azerbaijan since 1994, the general agreement on the establishment of peace and national accord and protocol on mutual understanding in 1997, the OIC, of which Khatami was a chairman in the late 1990s (p258) and the ECO. Afrasiabi also highlights a growing pressure and security concern for Iran regarding water resources which it shares with Afghanistan. This could certainly explain Iran's interest in mediating the peaceful settlement of governance issues between the US and Afghans following the US invasion post-9/11. In this respect the article very much addresses the eastward looking priorities of Iran. Vakil (2006), however, suggests that, just three years on there has been a significant shift in Iranian foreign policy towards a balancing of East and West. Vakil argues that Iran has cultivated relations with powers such as China, Russia and India for economic and political coverage that cannot be found in the west and to counterbalance the threat of western sanctions (p51) as a result of fears over its nuclear energy policy.

Hashim 1995, argues that the state, under Ayatollah Khomeini abandoned the secularizing and modernising ambitions of the Shah in favour of a theocracy under religious law. Iran's constitution was redrafted to include a commitment to the regional exportation of the Islamic revolution. Under Rafsanjani, following the death of Khomeini, this foreign policy interest was superseded by the national awareness of the need to execute a more pragmatic foreign policy approach. The reasons underpinning this turn were based on an economy crippled by the eight-year Gulf War, poor regional trust, limited allies, and a need to recover and move away from unprofitable isolationism. Ehteshami and Zweiri (2001) show that this pragmatism, despite being maintained and developed under the Khatami presidency (1997-2005), seems to have faltered somewhat under Ahmadinejad (president from 2005-2013) (p151) and his nuclear programme. It should be noted, however, that the reinstating of the nuclear programme, though supported by Ahmadinejad was not enforced by him, but rather was committed to by Khatami shortly before he left office (Sauer, 2007: 616). Regardless of such facts, however, the nuclear issue, and whether development is for peaceful or hegemonic means, remains one of international interest and concern and has resulted in numerous UN and US sanctions being applied to Iran and any state wishing to trade with it. This has further exacerbated Iranian options for development, economically and technologically (Sauer, 2007: 614).

Iran has the hydrocarbons and markets that China seeks, and in return can provide the technology and trade so vital to Iranian developmental and economic security interests. Iran, however, is an international pariah and China a successful, responsible member of the international community. Michael Swaine (2010), draws attention to the difficult situation that China is in in colluding with the Islamic republic, likening it to a 'tightrope walk'. Swaine recognises China's interest in Iran as being based on the latter's role as a major political and economic power in the Middle East with significant hydrocarbon supplies and diplomatic ties with developing nations (p1) as well as potentially developing nuclear weapons. In developing relations with Iran, China achieves influence and presence in what is arguably one of the most important geo-strategic and economic regions in the world. It also supports China's commitment to peaceful and productive (as well as profitable) ties with all major powers and regions. Both Chinese and Iranian Policies are anti-hegemonic in character. Rather than seeking to align with the dominant superpower both states prefer the maintenance of a non-threatening international system of regions and regional powers concerned with their own interest areas (Leverett, 2014: 2). China specifically sees this as the most conducive system for it economic growth (Swaine, 2010: 2).

In line with mutual foreign policy interests and developmental directions. Iran and China have engaged in significant trade deals regarding hydrocarbons. Iran has also received investment in the

sectors of infrastructure, energy and technology. It is also a vibrant and thirsty market for imported machinery and crafts. The high traffic of goods and knowhow exchanged between the two states is conducted by states and firms alike as though China appears to be giving more than it is receiving, Swaine highlights the positive impact of such corporate activities on the home economy and the maintenance and development of Chinese economic prowess as well as economic security as it has the stable monopoly of Iranian markets and purchases as well as a testing ground for the development of new products and the improvement of existing ones. Iran in turn receives much needed foreign direct investment (FDI), technological knowhow and an injection of life into its stagnating economy.

Iran and China have a long history of positive relations of trust, friendship and respect. This is an important aspect of their relationship, formal or otherwise. Regardless of such rhetoric, however, the relationship is ultimately underpinned by the sympathies and interests of the actors concerned. In their differing degrees of development both states need to obtain and maintain economic security in order to develop and ultimately influence. It is the securitisation of these economic interests that most effectively drive Iranian-Chinese relations, and their ambitions politically, with regard to their abilities to influence regionally, extra-regionally and internationally. For influence, or rather the influence that a power can have over proceedings, issues, agendas and agreements is a representation of their success and development.

Regionalism vs. Spheres of Influence

Whilst it is tempting to position Iran and China into regions and discuss their regional roles, this raises certain issues and complications for the conduct of this thesis. China is unarguably of the Asian region and many of its foreign policies are constructed with regard to its regional interests and neighbourhood relations. Iran in contrast is positioned certainly politically, and arguably territorially, within the MENA region based upon its foreign policy directions, and central aims, interests and security issues. It can, however, fit equally well, though perhaps not quite as neatly, within 'Asia'. Regions are territorially bound geo-strategic concepts which limit a certain understanding of Iranian-Chinese relations. To talk of the regional relations or policies of either state is, to an extent, to homogenize the 'other' within their given environments. That is to say that Iranian policies and concerns regarding Turkey are very different to those regarding Iraq. China in turn has significantly different relations with Japan than with say Pakistan. To talk of Iran as being for a MENA state also limits analysis of its interest and influences in Asian states such as the former Soviet republics in central Asia, and likewise with regard to China's interests in Africa. In order to attempt to side step such limiting and murky waters, what is proposed instead is an assessment of Iran and China, their relations with one another and their wider interests in terms of Spheres of Influence.

This is not to say that regional relations will not be discussed. Economic security is best achieved within an economically stable region after all. Regional initiatives for security and cooperation play important roles in the foreign policy interests of both Iran and China and this is not being disputed. What must be clear, however, is that the analysis is of Iranian-Chinese political-economic relations and the extent to which they can be classified as a Tacit Alliance. In such an endeavour what is important is to consider the roles of norms, values and interests and the construction of cooperation and acceptance. In light of this what is more informative is the mutual recognition of each state for the other regarding their areas of influence, in political and economic, but also cultural terms. Iran has influence in some of the NIS states of Asia which does not cause conflict with, or seek to challenge, China's regional superpower role. Likewise, Iran is not raising concerns at Chinese involvement in the MENA region, whatever its guise. This is more telling of the understanding, commitments, levels of trust and identifications of risk that each holds towards the other.

Whilst it is easy, and rather tempting to identify their respective spheres of influence based upon existing literature, this runs the risk not only of compromising originality but also of attempting to squeeze analysis into a model of best fit which may compromise the ambitions of this thesis. So whilst literature will be reviewed regarding the concept of spheres of influence, it will not identify the spheres that will be considered relevant to the author. A full analysis of the spheres and areas of influence of the two states concerned will be discussed in greater detail than this literature review would permit in the following chapter.

Spheres of Influence

The concept of spheres of influence (SOI) is traditionally associated with the Realist and Neo-Realist schools of thought in IR, and the pursuit of traditional power accumulation and maintenance (Burchill and Linklater, 2007:47). It allows more dominant powers to direct their weaker charges, and to dominate and set their agendas. In this respect spheres of influence then are tools for control, being predatory in nature, and a form of neo-colonialism or neo-imperialism (Resis, 1981:417). The space, generally physical territory, over which competing spheres overlap is where conflict is most likely to result. SOI then are as much strategies for the growth and enhancement of dominant states as they are mere geographic areas. For the most part different spheres are acknowledged and respected to an extent by the dominant powers (ibid: 418), and considered part of their security concerns. Albert Resis (ibid) illustrates this point clearly and succinctly in his assessment of Soviet war time diplomacy prior to the Cold War and its iconic sphere of influence agreements. The article focuses on Stalin, and Russia's preoccupation with its 'security Zone', its sphere of interest, which must be protected and

strengthened against Axis aggression (p418). Britain, the United States and Germany are also shown to have specific areas of interest which are reconstituted to present geographically located spheres of interest based on ideologies and rhetoric of shared experiences and/or ideologies between the dominant power and its internees. Generally, these lesser states of interest are within territorial proximity to the main power and so geo-strategically important in an environment of advancing neighbours.

Resis, whilst discussing the diplomatic manoeuvres of the allied and axis powers in relation to their respective spheres, talks much of spheres of influence and of interest. Significantly, he does not, however, distinguish between the two. It is true of course that spheres of influence are born, first out of a sphere of interest or commonality. The former is best described as a potential, but not necessarily automatic, evolution of the latter. SOI are depicted by Resis as predatory and selfish in nature, a tool for survival and excellence under the overarching umbrella of anarchy, in line with Classical Realist thought. Spheres of interest underpin this and are one and the same. To what extent this is so is debatable. Interest does not necessarily denote influence, nor does it suggest that a battle for subversion will ensue. An actor can exercise both interest and influence over a body, be it territory or company, in equal or asymmetrical measure. Conversely it can also have interests but little or no influence, or indeed significant influence, though possess very little interest with regard to its main foreign policy aims and ambitions.

Ronald Steel (1972), offered an analysis of US policy in the 1970s. He suggested that what the United States needed to pursue was neither a policy of isolationism, nor excessive interventionism. Steel called for the United States to expand its 'cultural, social, political and economic ties with all nations of the world community' (p107). What is called for is for US policy makers and executors to create and maintain for the United States a 'global sphere of influence', in which it is able to act as the universal peacekeeper and arbitrator, in line with its role as a superpower. In this respect Steel acknowledges spheres of influence as the necessary tools for the maintenance of balances of power globally. He marks global interventionism as a less viable policy than the development of SOI in areas necessary for security (p114). It is a process of manipulation of economic assistance, covert intelligence gathering and, occasionally and when warranted, use of force (p110). It is important to note, however, that Steel commits to the argument that 'a power balance [and so its tool: SOI] does not depend on ideology, nor does it presume eternal allies' (p112). The interest of one state in another or a set geographic space then is not dependant on commonalities or shared histories or experiences. Resis' argument that the Soviet Union had a natural sphere across its borders, over certain neighbours based on tangible commonalities then is either misplaced or denotes divisions between interests. This

is to say that spheres of interest and/or influence mean different things to different policy makers. The very semantics are an issue, dependant on the theoretical framework employed. To talk of interests or influences within the Classical Realist framework will be to pertain to ideas of control, subversion, hard power security concerns and asymmetrical power relations; to talk of influence and interest as dominance. The application of alternate theories will naturally give rise to alternate explanations.

Gartenstein-Ross (2004) wrote a challenging article of spheres of influence in the relationship between Christianity and Islam. What is most important is his commitment to an analysis of SOI within a framework not of Realism or Neo-Realism, but through the employment of Liberal theory. He argues that Muslims and Christians view SOI as 'more important to their religion than to nation states' (p225). In this respect then SOI are underpinned less by power relations and security ambitions than by history and experience. This article is of course a discussion of faith and religion rather than states and relations between them, as such it is possible to argue that SOI in this context cannot be applied to the state which, in Realist guise, is inherently different to, and divorced from, the whims and inclinations of the domestic populace. The case stands, however, that an alternate application results in an alternate reading of events, processes and thoughts. As much as this statement may be common sense, it is a common sense that must be highlighted rather than overlooked and subsumed. It is the inclination of many, when thinking of spheres of influence to relate back to its most vivid materialization: The Cold War. This bipolar order had a specific nature, involving the development of SOI in an environment of ideological clashes and military arms races. Influence here was a matter of power but only in so much as it was created in and for this environment. Gartenstein-Ross utilises Liberal theory because, he argues, it shows how perceptions affect behaviour in the international arena. It also highlights state-society relations and their international impact (p234). This is of course a key concern of Liberalism which puts the individual, and his inherent potential for good, at the centre of the system: the international as a reflection of the individual and the state, rather than an actor, is a representative institution (p325).

Paul F. Steinberg (2003), also applies the SOI concept outside of the Realist nation-state framework. Stenberg, using Costa Rica and Bolivia as case studies, uses the SOI concept as a framework within which to examine and explain societal responses of developing countries to global environmental issues (p11). This article is important to the development of this thesis not because of its vested interest in the ecological commitments of south American states, that is of course of little concern to this endeavour, but because, like Gartenstein-Ross, Steinberg applies the SOI theory in a non-Realist framework, showing the relationship between, and influence of, the domestic and its

societal interest on the nation states as a representative, directly influencing its international actions and relations (p14). This article supports the previous one as it shares the underpinning assumption that there are different, but equally valid, ways of reading and understanding concepts of influence and interest and their impact on relations in the regional and international context.

Richard Pomfret (2005) presents a case study of the five newly independent Central Asian countries of the former USSR and their choices between multilateralism and regionalism with regard to their trade policies. Whilst the article is predominantly a trade policy analysis it offers a significant understanding of spheres of influence, and their natures. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Pomfret advises, created a framework within which the former Soviet states could maintain economic ties (p45). It is also suggested to be an agent through which Russia can continue to exert political leadership over its new neighbours (and old empire). Here the influence exerted (or sought) by Russia is dominant and coercive. It is not merely the expression of interest but a commitment to intervention and persuasion. China is also discussed in the article. Interestingly the influence that is exercised by China is one of interests and economic and trade relationships and agreements: of economic flows. It is noted (p53) that whilst China (and Russia for that matter) follows anti-hegemonic foreign policies, the CIS states do not; and most notably, there has been no pressure exerted by China to persuade them to do so. So here we have the expression of two types of influence – dominant and coercive, and economic and non-coercive.

This article supports an earlier analysis of Chinese spheres of influence, completed by Ross H. Munro (1994). Munro, in 'China's Waxing Spheres of Influence', analyses the different relationships that China has with its neighbours in three regions – Central Asia, South Asia and East Asia. China, with the fall of the USSR, saw an increase in its relative regional power which has resulted in the expansion of its hegemony. What is notable is that though Munro discusses this expansion in relation to South East Asia, he notes that it is executed with the *cooperation* of Thailand; Japan has adopted a policy of engagement with the rising power, Burma is an ally at the governmental and societal level with a boom in entrepreneurial endeavours in the private sector (p5). The sphere of influence here then is not one of domination and coercion but rather, as Ross claims, one of mutual interest and choice, resulting from numerous confidence building measures executed by China (p9). This is influence which grows from a proactive and pragmatic foreign policy of economic cooperation and engagement with landlocked and overseas neighbours which appears to be peaceful and non-coercive. Unlike Classical Realist analyses, these spheres of influence can be defined in relation to cultural, historic and economic ties and ventures; they are not mere tools of statecraft or military tactics.

In this respect, and importantly for this thesis, Munro's article highlights the dominance of interest over influence. This is to say that the driving factor behind China's pragmatic and interactive foreign policy is based on its interests in security and access to vital resources, economic enterprises to aid growth and GDP increases and bilateral and multi-lateral initiatives aimed at the maintenance of a relatively stable Asian continent on which it grows. The theoretical framework within which this thesis will be conducted will be a constructivist one, as such it is necessary to define the concepts within which Iranian and Chinese policy operate. As has been demonstrated, whilst the concept of spheres of influence has traditionally sat within the realm of Classical- and Neo-Realist thought, the concept can also be applied using a Liberal approach. The terms 'interest' and 'influence' have also been used inter-changeably, this thesis makes a distinction between them, however. In 2008 then Russian President Dmitri Medvedev, in discussing Russians abroad, spoke of the state's 'spheres of privileged interest' (Financial Times 31.08.08). Coming as this statement did, in the wake of the Russo-Georgian war, many observers speculated over the relationship between these interests and traditional influences. That is to say that it was assumed that it was a new description of the old commitment to domination of neighbours. Whether or not such speculation is valid, plausible or a prediction is beyond the realm of this study. What is of interest in the sense of interests over influence being the central focus of foreign policy direction.

Though this section is entitled 'spheres of influence' what is actually referred to is spheres in the non-Realist sense, based on interest (which are not to be assumed to be inherently predatory), over influence. China and Iran have, and continue to foster, relations with neighbouring and non-neighbouring states through the development and creation of ties based on culture, history, economy or religion, and foremost on diplomacy. Such interests, whilst generally focusing on different geographic areas to one another can overlap, but do not, as classical theory suggests, result in conflict. Nor does the interest shown by either of these significant powers ultimately result in them exercising, or attempting to exercise control over smaller or weaker states. These interests are not assumed to form or reflect an imperial mentality or commitment. So for the remainder of this thesis, where the terms spheres of influence and spheres of interest are used, they will not be considered synonymous. Spheres of interest will refer to areas and relationships of interest, for various reasons, but not necessarily as an agent for the development of domination over another state. In turn SOI, whilst denoting influence, will not assume the presence of significant, or overt interests. The following chapter will highlight the spheres of both influence and interest of China and Iran and the drivers behind such interests, be they economic, cultural or historical.

Chapter Two:

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The interactions between Iran and China, across their long civilisational histories, has involved varying degrees of amicability and involvement, as well as periods of cooling and disinterest. The overall relationship, however, has remained relatively positive and, more significantly, lacking in the elevation of specific tensions to the levels of conflict or insurmountable hostility. This condition has not so much laid the foundations for greater interaction but rather has prepared the ground upon which such foundations may be built. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries are periods in which Iran and China have significantly developed new, and strengthened existing, bilateral ties with one another. Areas of mutual interest and involvement constituting political and social sectors of a diverse range – from the development of nuclear energy capabilities to trade and tourism (Gentry,2005:111). This gravitational pull between the two states can, superficially, be seen as a 'natural' progression based upon the previously mentioned historical ties and shared experiences as both great civilisations and victims of colonial expansionism, by some, but there is much more that must be considered. A more traditional reading of the international relations of the two states would recognise their mutual interests as key energy providers and consumers respectively in a wider world of increasing demand and decreasing resources. The relationship in this sense is bolstered by China's dedication to development and a peaceful rise, the energy costs of which are significant to say the least. Iran in turn, as a result of difficult, or non-existent, relations with some key western states, is in desperate need of access to markets, technology and knowledge.

China consistently follows a policy of military, economic and scientific cooperation with Iran. Such cooperation is common knowledge and references to billion-dollar trade and energy deals can be found in popular newspapers and academic sources, often shrouded in a rhetoric of friendship and trust. There is, though, a distinct lack of formal alliance between the two states. In this respect the pattern of relations, being 'something which implie[s] more than friendship and less than official government-to-government contract' (Crosbie, 1974:4), echoes that of the 'Tacit Alliance' Theory (TAT). The proposal of the existence of an intangible relationship, or Tacit Alliance, between states was initially formalised in the work of Coral Bell and subsequently built upon by Sylvia Crosbie (1974). The ideas of a tacit alliance are not based on tangible treaties or programmes but within a framework of unspoken understanding and cooperation.

Tacit Alliance Theory will be addressed in greater detail later in this chapter. An initial introduction is necessary as it highlights the interconnected nature of domestic and international influences on the development, or evolution, of a tacit alliance, along with historical and cultural inputs and traditional security, foreign policy and national interests. In recognition of this, it is necessary, to pursue an analysis of Iranian-Chinese relations using a hermeneutic approach. The first section of this chapter will address this hermeneutic turn, and its merits – that is to say, how it is able to offer the most comprehensive understanding to the relationship in question, and their foreign policy formations. Conventional approaches to FPA suffer from a range of problems which limit their ability to provide coherent or convincing accounts, although the questions which they ask may have some value as the starting point for a more carefully grounded research agenda. This paper explores a hermeneutic alternative with a view to finding a more nuanced understanding of Chinese–Iranian relations.

The second section of this chapter will narrow the framework down further with the introduction of the central theoretical tool of use in this thesis, Holistic Constructivism, and its merits. Constructivism is underpinned by two central tenets: the belief in the power of shared ideas of threats, goals or identities which create a reality within the international arena; and also that this reality results in the construction of the ideas and interests of the actors involved (Nia, 2011:280). The relationship between China and Iran represents a Tacit Alliance, informal and intangible in nature. This Tacit Alliance has been constructed and resurrected over time as a result of similarities in norms, ideas and historical experiences. This relationship, constructed through identity and cultural and historical narratives is best analysed within a Holistic Constructivist theoretical framework. Holistic Constructivism with its emphasis on the dual roles of domestic and international influences, allows the most comprehensive analysis of all factors of effect within the Chinese-Iranian alliance, enabling the combination of an analysis of explanations regarding ideational and normative factors at the international level and issues of social identity and domestic concerns at the national level (Burchill and Linklater, 2007:197).

Moving on from this, but necessarily interrelated, will be the third section which defends the use and application of cognitive approaches to FPA. The psychological influences in foreign policy formation specifically and society and identity generally, are of particular importance in the application of TAT with regard to the practical understanding of the roles not just of identity and historical experiences but also of processes such as knowledge assimilation and frameworks as well as concepts such as fundamental attribution error and schema theory which will aid analysis of the greater securitisation or de-securitisation of existing perceptions. Economic security is increasingly

considered an arena within itself, the foreign policy goals of an actor being framed by its economic limitations (Cable, 1995:305). The result is an international system underpinned not by power but by social norms and values. These, whilst outlining foreign policy formulation, have a far more intimate relationship with the cognitive factors at play (Williams, 2003:512). Iranian-Chinese relations, therefore, must be analyzed in relation to the construction of social norms and the ways in which they direct foreign policy, above predominantly traditional security concerns. The final section of this chapter will bring the discussion back to TAT. The discussion will posit that this theory offers interesting considerations regarding why and how states engage, building on cognitive approaches to FPA. China and Iran's long history of diplomacy has an effect on their inherent images and assumptions of one another which, as a result, are important to consider in any assessment of their relationship, specifically when analysed in connection to the importance and influence of a Tacit Alliance.

Since the central interest of this thesis is, of course, an analysis of Iranian-Chinese political and economic relations, it shall be shown that the two powers have a long history of cooperation which affects their perceptions of one another. This relationship has external implications regionally and internationally (Chomsky and Achcar, 2007:136). Consisting of an assessment of both formal and informal interactions and the influences of both traditional hard power concerns as well as the roles and influences of norms and values, both qualitative and quantitative methods will be utilised, and the research, though occasionally empirical, does not aim to be empiricist. With regard to ontology and epistemology, this research will be conducted and consolidated with an anti-foundational and interpretivist framework. It will assess the extent to which international relations, alliances and the construction of foreign policies are effected by inherent cognitive factors. Since the regional and international arena in which relations are conducted will be shown to be a social construct, interpretation will also need to be utilised and considered (Jervis, 1970:19). This mixed methodological approach, though complex, is necessary in that it permits the greatest array of methodological tools to be used (Creswell, 2011:35). In keeping with this anti-foundationalist approach, the epistemology will be normative. It will show that the patterns of interactions are not born out of a replicable series of considerations, but are uniquely fuelled by individual foreign policy aims with regard to political and economic interests and the maintenance of the Tacit Alliance, so long as this alliance is beneficial to either side.

A Hermeneutic Orientation

Hermeneutics is a critical approach to understanding the dominant discourse on international relations and to offering new interpretations and understandings of the world. It seeks to unpack and challenge the epistemological frameworks, their creation and construction and their roots in the

historical and societal environments of their creators and supporters – these are not 'value free' or independent of external influence (Dingli, 2015:722). They are created for a specific end. The approach suggests that a greater awareness and understanding of the biases and influences of foreign policy-makers and their environments will allow for the greater possibility for change – understood as a slow evolution to emancipation from the dominant and agenda setting powers at play (Koddenbrock, 2014: 245). A hermeneutic approach also acknowledges the importance of identity in foreign policy-making. Whether this identity is informative in its ability to act as an agent for change, or as a reactionary force against past oppressions is subjective. What is important for any analysis of foreign policy behaviour is an understanding of the agency of identity formation and reinforcement, grounded in the historical experiences of each state and their societal makeup (Legro, 2009: 38). Foreign policy is created by people who exist within a knowledge framework, which, despite being in a state of constant evolution, is taken as constant. This knowledge on which interpretations and actions and reactions are based is the result of both the direct and indirect experiences of the state at both the national and international levels. In order to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the foreign policy of Iran and China, this knowledge framework must be deconstructed and the areas of influence acknowledged. To truly begin to deconstruct interests, intensions and ambitions it is necessary to first start with a clear understanding of their histories, experiences, identities, sense of self, and interpretations of their environment. To analyse from a Western lens is simply to compound the existing biases which underpin a western-centric approach to a world which, in demographic and geographic terms, is predominantly non-western.

When thinking of Iranian or Chinese Foreign Policy we are dealing with multiple and diverse sources and histories. This results in myriad diverse meanings and interpretations which cannot be reduced down to one, single, narrative. What is needed is the application of a critical, hermeneutic approach to unpack the details and influences behind its foreign policy and behind the different readings and interpretations of outside observers and actors. Only then can a true attempt at an understanding of meanings and interpretations be possible which will allow Iran and its previous adversaries, weary neighbours or observers to come to the proverbial table within a framework of positive potential outcomes; greater dialogue and improved relations. Which would be to the benefit of many – certainly in economic and security terms.

The development of a hermeneutic approach can trace its roots back to Aristotle and his belief that 'words spoken are symbols or signs [...] of affections or impressions [...] of the soul' (Tierney, 2002:203). In the twentieth century it developed in the social sciences generally and IR specifically, as a challenger to dominant positivist world views. Conventional approaches tend to focus on rationality,

to be western-centric, ignore distinctive cultural variations, and under-estimate the importance of specific value systems, identities and histories. Whereas Classical Realist scholars, from Morgenthau to Herman Khan, endeavour to 'reveal' objective, underlying 'real' truths, hermeneutics is the critical application of various methods which seek to understand situations and phenomena through interpretation both of the details themselves and their meanings for the interpreter. In this context a hermeneutic approach demands alternative ways of assessing and understanding ideas of knowledge and information transfers, or interactions (Walker et al, 20011:3).

Traditional FPA has generally been concerned with the relations between states and actors at the Macro level. The rational approach defends the concept that decisions are made and policies formulated as a result of due methodological, rational and logical process (Jensen, 1982:5). Rationality can be argued to be a rare virtue in human beings, however, who are effected by existing allegiances, identities and personal interests. This is something that needs to be considered since states are not autonomous entities but rather made of up such human beings who are, ultimately, responsible for agendas, policies, actions and interpretations. What is sought is an understanding and explanation of what drives state interactions, their interests, motivations and intentions. The vast literature available tends to be in the form of case studies and theoretical models that seek to generalize, to predict based on the construction of 'patterns' of behaviour and policy structure, such as balance of power, democratic peace theory or mutual assured destruction. Such generalizations across states raise many issues and flaws. Foreign policy is more than this. Viewed also in its capacity to act as a blueprint of the social, political and historical structure of a given actor certainly increases its uses as well as its requirements. The study of international relations has conventionally been centred on security, or rather the securitisation of issues, with regard to, for instance, war and peace (Walker et al., 2011:2). Such approaches lend to the idea that it is possible, indeed common practice, to view activity through the lens of a single, dominant interpretation of common sense. This 'common sense view' tends to be the one best appropriated by the dominant powers of the time.

The foreign policy-making processes and procedures of any given state are inextricably intertwined with their national narratives which, despite obvious commonalities of historical events and processes, are always unique. They and their interests, are influenced by, and constructed around, the state's unique ideologies, domestic pressures, historical experiences, international standing and sense of identity – ethnically, regionally and internationally. This approach tends to overlook the importance of meaning and interpretation which can have a transformative effect on policy implementation. The meanings and influences which underpin a specific foreign policy interest or goal should not be passed over as of lesser importance than traditional security concerns for they are in

themselves the ultimate concerns of a state or actor (Jervis, 1970:21). Intention and interpretation do not necessarily go hand in hand. The intention behind a policy may have little influence on its interpretation, on how it is read by another – or indeed how it is not read by the exterior actor either inadvertently or intentionally – when alternative meanings are silenced in the interests of reinforcing the dominant discourse of a situation or belief pattern.

It should be argued then that the most effective study of foreign policy necessarily dictates the greater development of a more comprehensive system of analysis which is able to address and account for the inherent influences brought to bear by the decision-makers and how they interpret and react to their environment, but more than this, of their very sense of self. In relation to this the political identity of a given state is the complex formation of multiple sub-identities grounded within specific history, patterns of beliefs and experiences. It is never clear-cut and decisive. If this is true of all states generally, to varying degrees, it is especially so of the Asian continental landmass, with its rich mosaic of cultures as well as being the birth place of both three of the world's oldest civilisations and most dominant religions (Boulding, 1984:12).

On various levels it makes sense that Iran and China would gravitate towards one another. There are, however, important considerations that should not be omitted. An essential aspect of China's development strategy is its aspiration to be recognised as a 'respectable' member of the international community. A community heavily influenced by the United States whose relations with Iran have significantly differed to those of China. Other Key powers are also Britain and the other states of Europe whose experiences with Iran have been equally as strained at times. Though it must be noted that a chronology of relations between China and its Western counterparts would also show various incidents of discord and outright violent conflict. China is becoming a key economic power and, more importantly, is being recognised and acknowledged as such by the international community (EUI, 2012:4). China, whilst actively courting the USA and committing to pro-Western, and so pro-US liberal free market economic practices, is consistent in its commitment to cooperation with Iran in various sectors – political, economic, military and cultural – commitments at odds with US wishes.

The inherent problem with any analysis of the foreign policies of both China and Iran are not the policies themselves but rather the interpretations that they produce, and going hand in hand with this, the interpretations which produce them. Foreign-policy decision-making and implementation do not occur in a vacuum. Any foreign policy analyst will be hard pushed to deny that in order to analyse it is necessary to first recognise and address the inextricable problem of how decision-makers view and react to their environment. Problems framed by perception, knowledge structures, pre-determined biases and existing behaviour patterns. China annually celebrated its national humiliation

day – a reflection of past interventions and offences by Japan and European powers, this is an event ingrained in the national narrative of identity that recognises hegemonic powers as self-interested and subverting. Within this knowledge framework then, contemporary criticism and actions by these powers will automatically be compared to the knowledge structure and affect how these are responded to – this fuels a continual lack of faith and trust. This can also clearly be seen in Iranian-US relations where the latter views Iranian policies and actions through a lens coloured by the 1981 Iranian hostage crisis which was viewed as a betrayal and marked the end of all diplomatic relations between the two powers.

FPA has traditionally centred on a structure-oriented study of state-to-state interactions at the regional and global levels. The popular view here is of a macro-political system in which the actions of states are ruled by a system of constraints and/or incentives (Walker, Malici and Schafer, 2011:3). There is much missing from such an approach though, that must be considered in the interests of a more comprehensive, multi-layered approach to understanding, such as the ideologies involved, domestic pressures, international standing, and goals and requirements of an actor. For too long the study of international relations has been Western in focus, be it Euro-centric or US-led. This focus has been twofold in that western interests dominate study but that that study is also dominated by western theories – westerns ways of understanding and explaining. This overlooks important developments in other regions which can have profound effects on the international. For a point in turn see the fall of the USSR and the end of the Cold War. One reason for the lack more accurate predictability was the predominance of assessments of the USSR in relation to the USA, rather than of itself. The result was half a story and lack of preparation for an unexpected outcome. In the contemporary era FPA is ever more hindered by the dichotomy between a world of neighbours, ever closer and more interactive due to technological advances, and a world of strangers who are unwilling, or unable, to understand one-another (Walker, Malici and Schafer, 2011:2). This gives rise to difficulties in understanding which are retarded by conceptual and historical prejudices (Ciuta, 1991:1). Above all it gives rise to misunderstandings and dubious interpretations. China and Iran have both been subject to orientalist analysis and western-centred values in many discussions of their foreign policies. A hermeneutic approach, with its encouragement of greater reflexivity in theory and deconstruction of discourse, rhetoric and ideas allows just such a multi-layered approach in giving credence to the importance of norms and values and inter-subjective understanding.

Behaviour is not a determinant of normative structures or material factors alone. In this respect traditional approaches to FPA, such as the rational actor model, offer too little and omit too much. Material factors gain meaning when analysed within their normative context, in the same way

as ideas. Take for a point, the Iranian nuclear issue. This is a topic of international concern due, according to the USA, to Iran's lack of transparency with regard to intention. But why is Iran's nuclear capability considered a threat? This was certainly not the case before the fall of the Shah. The threat developed due to the US perception that such technology would increase Iran's relative aggregate power and also act as a challenge to US interests in the MENA. This perception of threat is also embedded in the nature of historical relations between the two states. In the context of history – albeit relatively recent history, dating back to the Iranian betrayals of the US in 1979 (the revolution) and 1980 (the Hostage crisis) – and a lack of contemporary cooperation or affection: the US cannot but be suspicious of Iranian intentions. Indeed, in this respect it is likely not possible for Iran to be transparent enough to satisfy US concerns. Concerns that are not present with regard to Israeli nuclear capabilities, weapons and intensions.

Taken from a different angle, China and Iran enjoy extensive economic and diplomatic relations, China likewise states less concern over Iran's nuclear ambitions and supports discussion and dialogue over sanctions (Djallil, 2011:229). Interestingly, China and Iran both come to the table with no history of significant conflict between them to colour their views and historically built stereotypes of one another. Statements towards and about one another are also built within a rhetoric of mutual respect and trust (Dorraj and Currier, 2008:66-7). In comparison the rhetoric involved in either US-Iranian relations or US-Chinese relations is framed by deep-seated mistrust, alongside fears regarding motives and intentions. This is also true of the relations of either state with Russia (as highlighted in the introduction). An abstract model of actor rationality does not consider such psychological dispositions, nor does it consider behavioural motivations. Rather the focus tends to be on the policy process and the organizational context surrounding decisions to explain behaviour (Garrison, 2003:158). In the hermeneutic style, it is impossible to assess a state without considering its representation of the world. This is especially so with regard to Iran and China, with their unique histories and civilisations. They are also states with specific, socially constructed rules and operations and a sense of piety, for Iran it is religious piety and for China familial piety (Jacques, 2011). Democracy in this context, whilst being present to varying degrees is - and must always be - subordinate to the will of Allah or the authority of the state. This is not a minor factor and must be appreciated.

Building on from this, or possibly underpinned by it, is the structure of society around a sense of shame, rather than the sense of guilt favoured in most western societies. Whilst guilt is tied to the individual, or actor, shame is a more social concept. It is not about an action and the ability of the actor to rationalize it internally, to reconcile it with their moral or ethical code. It is about the wider implications of actions and reputations; about how one is seen and considered and how they are

received by others, specifically 'their own'. To put this into context one could use various examples, such as human rights records. A person perceived to be at fault then is not judged on their guilt alone but on how their behaviour reflects the wider society and code of the nation – their apparent betrayals of its dominant norms and values. This sense of shame also has more specific ideological and political implications. Both states view their experience of invasion and control by external powers as shameful. They must necessarily seek to reconcile and resolve this, to build a developed and successful nation on their own terms; on their own ideological paths which place distance between the contemporary nation and its humiliating past experiences. Neither sees themselves as predators but rather as powers looking to return to their perceived rightful place as a regional superpower.

A comprehensive analysis of foreign policy must then be able to explicitly address these issues and their cultural views. The domestic and political structure needs to be considered in this alternate light, through a non-western-centric lens which is able to challenge existing assumptions and representations of democracy, theocracy and respect – of the normative condition. The structure of society and the political system needs to be critically unpacked to enable the right questions to be asked, and so the right issues to be analysed. To apply this to the much debated 'nuclear issue' it may be better suggested that in order to assess the true degree of an Iranian threat is not to ask what Iranian capabilities or intentions would be if it were to develop nuclear weapons but to ask what the development of nuclear technology represents to the developing, pragmatic nation. Certainly it is interesting to note that China is far less fearful of Iran's nuclear intentions than the US. China is also a non-western, developing nation which regards democracy as of secondary importance to the authority of its ruling elite. It is feasible that this attitude towards Iran is based on economic and strategic pragmatism. It is equally plausible that it is the result of the interpretation of Iranian foreign policy through an alternative, non-western lens.

A hermeneutic approach which enables the study of the theory and practice of interpretation is of invaluable importance. It allows the consideration of all aspects of interpretation – tangible and intangible – tacit and overt with regard to presupposition, pre-understandings, language and semiotics. To go further is to suggest that to address and assess Iranian-Chinese relations is to necessarily utilise Gadamer's Hermeneutic circle (1975) for to understand the whole is only possible in reference to its individual parts – colonial legacy, historical situ, civilisational achievements, regional position (as introduced in the previous chapter and to be discussed further in Chapter five) – which again need to be understood in turn by reference to the whole, in other words, reactionary politics and regional and ideological ambitions and existing relations, or lack of, with other states.

Constructivism

The Cold War, in academic terms, did not just open up opportunities for greater critique concerning the evident inadequacies of the traditional theories of IR (rooted in the Realist and Liberal camps) to adequately predict, or even to understand, the nature of its end. The end of the Cold War also led to the creation/awareness of the existence of greater space than the dominant paradigms were willing to acknowledge. This space became a breeding ground for approaches and interpretations of the nature of international relations that were more critical in nature and enriched by their awareness of the hidden influences, causes and effects of the previously overlooked, yet powerful, agency of culture and experience. Constructivism, a meta-narrative introduced in the work of Nikolas Onuf (1989) is one such development, though there are debates regarding the extent to which it is an actual theoretical approach. Alexander Wendt (1987) argues that Constructivism is too permeable and its precepts too broad for it to classified as anything narrower than an approach. Adler (1997) in contrast insists that it is very much a theory in progress and that it is still growing and developing but maintains a rational and reflective essence which marks it as a growing theoretical approach. Regardless of this particular debate concerning the exact nature and classification of Constructivism, it does offer researchers a unique tool, or lens through which to view worlds (Balzacq, 2005:173). Whether accepted as an ontology, a paradigm or a method, it is one such approach to refocusing our understanding of relations between actors (Marcel, 2001:3). Indeed, its success in rising to the level of an accredited contender to traditional mainstream theories arguably lies in its attraction as a 'middle ground' theory which critiques the mainstream without allowing itself to sink, or rise to the grey zone inhabited by post-modern peers restricted by theories of structural determinism or their insistence in scientific, causal explanations (Guzzini, 2012:147-8). Constructivism provides a new lens through which to view existing issues or beliefs in IR theory, such as those regarding the meanings of concepts such as anarchy and the balance of power.

Constructivism posits that many of the 'core assumptions' of classical IR paradigms are 'socially constructed', formed by continual social processes and based on material foundations such as military capabilities, structures and institutions (Velody and Williams, 1998:6). Constructivist theory, in contrast, rests on two fundamental tenets. The first is a belief in the power of the shared ideas that are determined by human interaction and association. The second is that these shared ideas result in the construction of the ideas and interests of the actors involved (Wendt, 1993:394). These ideas and interests are not primordial, but framed within, and compounded by social practices. The primary proponent of this theory in the study of international relations is Alexander Wendt in his seminal piece 'Anarchy is What States Make of It' (1992). Wendt addresses the Realist claim to the existence of an

anarchical international system with each state following their own raison d'état as much as their relative power will allow (Rosecrance and Stein, 2006:23). Wendt posits that if such concepts are socially constructed then they are fluid and so have the capacity for transform through social practice. That is to say that states will only act in a traditional hard power manner if they first buy into the idea that they exist within an anarchical system of negative interests (Burchill and Linklater, 2007:196).

Iran has been, until the recent negotiations between the former and the P5+1, the recipient of numerous US-led UN sanctions as a result of its nuclear programme (Naji, 2016: 1). This programme is justified by Iran as being for domestic power capabilities only, with no intentions of gaining nuclear weapons (Béja 2011). Despite Iran being a signatory of the NPT, numerous members of the international community, such as the USA and EU member states, are dubious of this claim, fearing the worst and reacting appropriately. Indeed, no other state in recent decades which has developed a nuclear programme has been the recipient of such international scrutiny or criticism (Diamond, 2012:3). Iran and many (but not all) western powers were at a stalemate. The USA, it appears, was convinced that Iranian intensions were expansionist and that Iran was incapable, in the face of such confidence in its irrationality, of acting in a way deemed transparent or considerate enough – short, of course, of abandoning enrichment all together. Conservative actors, rooted in Realist theories of balances of power and regional hegemony understand this nuclear programme in the only way that their reading of actions and intentions allowed. They viewed it negatively, as a precursor for nuclear weaponisation and, therefore, a security threat to the MENA generally and Israel specifically. Realists believe in a system of self-help under anarchy, with peace as the mere absence of war. To view the world in this say is to construct a reality in which the powerful are dangerous and to be feared, or hindered in any way possible. If you believe that the state of nature is short, brutish and harsh, a condition of all against all (Hobbes, 1996:9) then you will necessarily believe that Iranian intentions must be to gain greater military power with which to dominate and challenge others.

According to portrayals and interpretations, the nuclear issue was a mark of Ahmadinejad's presidency, which ran from the third of august 2005 until the third of August 2013, and a point on which Iran long refused to negotiate. Here, however, there is a fundamental fallacy. The first point to mention is that the recommencement of the nuclear programme was instigated and signed off by the moderate Khatami before the Ahmadinejad's election to office in 2004. Iran has also not refused to negotiate – rather it has refused to abandon enrichment (which, interestingly, to the US is the same thing but to Iran is very different). Iran has offered a variety of compromise gestures, all of which have been either ignored or refused by the US. It is important to remember that the original suspension of uranium enrichment was an act of good faith by the Iranians as part of a negotiation process with the

EU3 over their concerns of Iran's intentions. The six-month suspension was dragged out by the EU3 for three years with no compromise offer. Add to this the colonial experiences of Iran, and the EU3/west in general can be interpreted as trying to undermine Iran again, to restrict its developmental capabilities and so keep it subverted and inferior.

To understand that anarchy is not necessarily the mother to chaos and creator of insecurity and self-help is to construct an alternative reality. To understand states and relations on a case by case basis would be to acknowledge the long and progressive history of the Iranian people as both glorious and marginalised (Diamond, 12:4). This identity and memories of past injustices, as well as strengths and progressions is deeply imbedded in the Iranian psyche and directly affects its behaviour and willingness, or reluctance, to cooperate with international peers. Its history as one of the victims of colonialism also uniquely influences and structures its understanding of the powers and intentions of previous colonial powers as well as the consequences of bowing to hegemonic demands.

Such constructions are not new and China has been treated to an equal, though less hostile measure of scrutiny during its rise. Indeed, in a book by Ellings et. al (1996) on Asian security it is worth noting that the general consensus of the dominant actors was that China was to be viewed with suspicion, that it may well be intent on developing its military capabilities with the intention of becoming the regional hegemon and a challenger to external actors. It is interesting how closely the rhetoric regarding China then reflects the rhetoric regarding Iran today. And of course it is important to point out that, when understood within the historic and normative framework, China's rise can be attributed to ambitions regarding perceptions of self-respect and historical right and place rather than the Realist power desire to resurrect the tributary system for the purpose of subjugating neighbours (Zhou 2010, 31). Indeed, in light of the colonial heritage not just of China but also its neighbours, it can be understood that China's independence and suspicion of Western and Japanese interest is more about maintaining its anti-hegemonic foreign policy interests than because it sees them as potential targets for future undisclosed plans.

Constructivists, such as Wendt (1992), John Ruggie (1998), and Christian Reus-Smit and Martha Finnemore (1996) refer to ideas as the perceptions of threats, fears, goals and identities which create a reality within the international arena (Velody and Williams, 1998:40). This perceived reality exercises huge influence over actors; it can challenge materialistic power interests, goals, and concerns. For instance, the military build-up of a state can produce different reactions in its neighbours. A neighbouring ally would be relatively unconcerned, whereas one at ideological odds with the state, or one with a history of political tensions would view it with concern or as a threat (Burchill and Linklater, 2007:189). This can be seen in the current system. Iran's nuclear programme

is a major security issue for non-familiar or unfriendly states such as Israel and the USA. China, however, is less concerned, preferring to support and call for greater dialogue between Iran and other powers and expressing confidence that Iran is, as it states, enriching uranium for domestic energy needs only – indeed China is positively assisting Iran in this endeavour (Gentry, 2005: 118). Actions and reactions, therefore, are determined not by traditional power politics but the perceptions of the observers and players. To apply this to foreign policy, anarchy is not a non-variable; it is dependent on the perceptions of the states concerned. Security concerns also are not the main dictates of foreign policy, as Realists assume, but rather the influence lies with social norms which are fluid and so subject to change and transformation. It is not a zero-sum game of absolute gain over absolute loss but an instance of concepts where cooperative and collective security can be equally, if not more, important and effective than perceived 'self-help' (Wendt, 1993:392). In challenging the founding assumptions of anarchy and self-help and the uses of language in the construction of reality, greater analysis is possible with regard to the interests, identities and resultant behaviours (Velody and Williams, 1998:34). This allows the development of a systemic approach aimed at understanding these interests in the context of meanings and social values as opposed to a context of power. That is not to say that power is ineffectual or irrelevant but that the nature of power and its use needs to be addressed as much as the mere pursuit of it alone.

Constructivism refers to a theory of knowledge in which emphasis is placed on the active processes inherent in the production of knowledge. This is epistemologically opposite to traditional paradigms which view knowledge as a set of unchanging propositions (Somekh and Lewin, 2005:334). This is to say that since all forms of practice and theory are underpinned by beliefs and assumptions, these must be deconstructed in order for the social and political world to be understood. Constructivism does not offer an alternative world view to the one posited by Classical Realism or Liberalism. Rather it provides a framework for the analysis of the construction of institutions, identities and behaviours (Velody and Williams, 1998:8).

Constructivism is not a catch-all term, however, and within it sits considerable cleavages in interests. In the 1990s Constructivism branched out into three sub-theories. Systemic Constructivism as championed by Wendt is concerned with interactions at the international level – interactions which occur only in the external domain whilst giving little credence to domestic influences and occurrences. Unit level analysis, on the other hand, is concerned wholly with domestic norms and their effects on national interests (Burchill and Linklater, 2007:200). Holistic Constructivism acts as a bridge between the two, which are suggested to be both affected by, and effective of, one another (Nia, 2011:280). Holistic Constructivism allows the most comprehensive analysis of all factors of effect vis-a-vis the

Iranian-Chinese alliance. Holistic Constructivism as advanced by John Ruggie (1998) will enable the combination of an analysis of both explanations regarding ideational and normative factors at the international level as well as addressing issues of social identity and normative concerns at the domestic level (Burchill and Linklater, 2007:197). This enables a greater explanation of ideational and normative structures with regard to the international, whilst also addressing the social identities which have been engendered as a result. It addresses changes within the modern state as well as tectonic transformations in the relations between states (Burchill and Linklater, 2007:198). It addresses ontological and empirical issues and as such will be most relevant to this research piece. In order to address Iranian and Chinese foreign policy aims and interest and how these affect their relations with one another it is necessary to do so with a conscious analysis of effecting factors at both the domestic and the international level.

Bilateral relations between China and Iran have expanded and strengthened in recent history, as they communicate and cooperate not just in the (obvious) military and energy sectors, but also in fields like tourism and education (Gentry, 2005:111). Through the Realist lens of course we can note that China is a developing country with huge energy consumption requirements and so in need of new and undiluted markets on which to ply its trade (Kemp 2010: 75). Iran and China have a more 'natural' bond, however. Their contemporary mutual interests are underscored by historical ties and similarities of experience regarding their heritage of ancient civilisations and rich, persistent and assimilating (rather than assimilated) cultural identities on which they have each built strong national identities (Bickers 2012 and Scammell 1989). They both share a commitment to an anti-hegemonic foreign policy – though of course it should be noted that the strengths and commitments to this have always been asymmetric and fluid. Iran is largely Shia and a central pillar of the 1979 revolution was to export the revolution. In light of this, and if one were to follow the works of thinkers such as Samuel Huntington then it would be acknowledged that there is great potential for conflict between Iran and China which has very real concerns regarding its Muslim minorities. Iran has publicly denounced support for Asian Islamism groups, however, preferring to maintain ancient Silk Road ties into the future (Gentry, 2005:111).

This interpretivist epistemology, with its ontological focus on norms and values provides a sound foundation for the development of a more nuanced theory of the roles of agency and change (Hopf, 98:172). It also enables Constructivism to sit comfortably beneath the overarching hermeneutic umbrella. The core of both approaches is the idea of intersubjective understanding. This is to say that an act, be it political, economic or social, can only gain genuine meaning when contextualised, or contemplated in relation to the normative influences and constraints (institutions) which sit alongside

them (Marcel,01:2) l; and it is only once they have been ascribed meaning that they can be understood. Both Constructivism, as posited by Ted Hopf (1998) and hermeneutics, as endorsed by Geertz, then are essential tools for the execution of an interpretive approach which, unlike post-modern interests, allows room for manoeuvre and understands capacities for change. Normative structures are seen as heavy influencers, rather than action determiners. Moreover, they are highly compatible with one another in building a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of Iranian-Chinese relations, the material and normative structures within which they operate and the historical contexts which inform their interests in, and understandings of, the world.

Cognitive Foreign Policy

FPA is the study of activities and relations between the state and other actors in the international arena: "the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor […] in international relations" (Hill, C., 2003:3). It covers a diverse and dynamic area of interest and research as well as bridging the gap between the domestic and the international (Neack et al. 1995:17). Foreign policy is the study of international relations at the micro level, looking at how states interact and why, what motivates expansionism, war and cooperation. Foreign policy is not just about crisis situations, however, but the ideologies of the states involved, their domestic pressures and international standing, as well as their goals and requirements such as the promotion of human rights and liberal democracies by western countries or the creation of the ECSC after World War two to aid economic revival and cooperation as well as creating an environment that would prevent a repeat of the last war through economic interdependence.

The effective study of foreign policy requires the development of an adequate system of analysis. It is an important area of research and study which has borne out various models of analysis which are divided into two camps, the 'traditional approach' and the 'decision-making process' approach. Since the 1950s academics have attempted to create a more systematic approach to the study of the foreign policymaking process, challenging traditional assumptions with the development of a 'decision-making approach' which has greatly enhanced the ability of academics and politicians alike to identify and understand the core determinants of behaviour (Clarke and White, 1989:2). Developments have been made in the areas of contemporary theory, those under analysis are the cognitive and psychological approaches.

When adopting a decision making approach to the analysis of foreign policy making it is necessary to recognise and address the inextricable problem of how decision-makers view and react to their environment. Factors for consideration are perception, knowledge structures and pre-

determined bias as well as the behaviour patterns of the individuals involved as ultimately "the 'facts' of a situation never speak for themselves" (Clarke and White, 1989:135). All knowledge must be underpinned by a theoretical framework to be credible, and the facts proposed must be chosen and assigned meaning before they are valid (Booth and Smith, 1995:3). The process by which the human brain performs this act is called cognition and determines behaviour (Neack et al. 1995:50) in contrast to the rational actor perspective favoured by the traditional approach. Developed by Snyder, Bruick and Sapin (1974) this former approach posits that the individuals involved are not the logical, open-minded and rational creatures previously assumed, but are closed-minded and resistant to environmental or situational changes that may bring into question their inbuilt knowledge frameworks (Clarke and White, 1989:143). Not just being affected by his environmental stimuli but also affecting it in turn and actively responding to it. The schema theory views individuals as having rigid knowledge structures in place on which they rely and simulate new information into to compound existing bias and dispositions. These frameworks are shortcuts to processing knowledge deposits and understanding the individual's world.

After the Second World War the world settle into a bipolar system with influence divided between the two superpowers, the USSR and the USA. Conflicting ideologies and a fantastic arms race escalated to the brink of world destruction. On the surface this appears to be a tale of power politics in the traditional Realist sense with each preoccupied by their own raison d'état and self-interest (Little and Smith, 1991:71). This was a system, however, which with the exception of Yugoslavia (Hobsbawn, 1995:150) divided the planet. The two powers themselves did not enter into direct combat but oversaw various proxy wars. The rational actor model would suggest that when these occurred they were the result of a rational and logical decision-making system which left conflict as the only viable means of conduct. The psychological approach challenges this assumption. A theme developed by Ole Holsti et al. (1962, cited in Neak et al. 1995:) uses the Cold War as its central case study and developed a theme known as images of the enemy and mirror images to explain sustained international tensions and conflict. The data for analysis was gained via qualitative data sources (Neak et al. 1995: p55). All of this data concerning John Dulles (a former American Secretary of State) showed that he held an uncompromisingly hostile view of the USSR regardless of the latter's actions or intentions. That is to say that if the Soviet Union did a 'good deed' Dulles would view it as being part of a bigger bad plan or because it had no choice. They were communist and so the polar opposite of everything that Dulles believed in and supported. This is known as the "inherent bad faith" model (Neak et al. 1995:55). The mirror image model follows on from this but concerns both parties who hold mirror opposite beliefs about each other, viewing themselves as peaceful and cooperative but their enemies as war mongering, difficult and uncompromising. This builds on the basic psychological

belief in the fundamental attribution error which posits that the individual will view his own negative actions as subjective but will view the same actions carried out by an enemy as being a reflection of their innately bad character or any good deeds that the enemy conducts as being purely situational and in opposition to his basic character (Clarke and White, 1989:145). This leads to gross misperceptions and can result in the escalation of conflict or crisis situations.

This mirror image concept is clearly present in the contemporary era and can been seen in the interactions between either China or Iran and other international actors. Following the recent financial crisis, the USA sought to close ranks, to assist the recovery of its domestic economy. This was, the US assured its external audience, not because it was inherently bad or selfish but because certain security measures needed to be executed in the interests of domestic concerns and security. US reactions to Chinese behavior regarding the RMB, however, are somewhat contradictory. The USA has consistently put pressure on China to float its currency, rather than to peg it. The rhetoric in both cases is far from similar, however, The USA is the 'good' guy, looking out for its civil society, China on the other hand does not fare so well but rather is acting in an opportunistic protectionist manner to control trade and profit margins for its own foreign and domestic policy goals.

The USA, Britain and Israel (unofficially) are just three states of several that have nuclear weapons and aim to keep them. They are also gravely concerned with regard to Iran's enrichment programme. These western powers can be trusted with nuclear weapons, yet Iran, irrational and aggressive, it seems cannot. In the wake of 9/11 Tehran publicly condemned the attacks and allied itself with the West in the war against terror. Tehran also supported strikes against terror cells in Afghanistan and played a significant role in the Bonn peace conference. In the build-up to the 1991 Gulf War, Iran was again diplomatic – encouraging cooperation. Despite this, Iran was still labelled a member of the 'Axis of Evil' by President Bush (Chomsky and Achcar, 2007:151). Another reading or interpretation, however, could be that the ultimate ideal for our current superpower is regime change in the Islamic republic and nothing less. Therefore, actions and policies are forced into existing frameworks of bias which silence alternative interpretations or readings that would enable us to view any actions by Iran in a positive light. Such deep suspicion and mistrust has a significant impact in Iranian foreign economic and security policy, for it would appear imprudent to offer any degree of trust to states incapable of returning the compliment.

Taken from a different angle, China and Iran enjoy extensive economic and diplomatic relations, China likewise states less concern over Iran's nuclear ambitions and supports discussion and dialogue over sanctions (Djallil, 2011:229). Interestingly China and Iran both come to the table with no history of significant conflict between them to colour their views and historically built stereotypes

of one another. Statements towards and about one another are also built within a rhetoric of mutual respect and trust (Dorraj and Currier, 2008:66-7). In comparison the rhetoric involved in US-Iranian relations is framed by deep seated mistrust and fear of motives and intentions. Likewise, Iranian-Russian relations, though co-operatively expanding, are framed within a history of Soviet expansionism and interference in the MENA, as are Chinese-Russian relations though these also have the added facet of communist competition highlighted previously (page 7).

The Iranian arrest of British naval personnel in 2006 was viewed by Britain as illegal and malicious. On the other side though, it could be argued by the Iranians that they were simply protecting their borders and arresting trespassers who were acting suspiciously (Norton-Taylor, 2007). This is not just a model of analysis with regard to crisis and conflict situations as the lessons can be applied to the foreign policy making process of a country at the more general level. These mirror images and images of the enemy have a determining effect on governmental behaviour. The IR Liberal statement of belief that liberal democracies do not go to war against one another (Little and Smith, 1991: 71) appears to be true but not as a result of economic interdependence alone. Liberal democracies view each other as they do themselves, innately good and cooperative whilst opposing governmental regimes are seen as ideologically opposite and so innately bad and untrustworthy (Huntington, 2002). This cognitive and psychological approach has an apparent determining effect on most countries' foreign policies.

Another core approach is what is known as the 'operational code' (George 1969, cited in Neack et al. 1995:56). This has been highly influential in the cognitive approach as it looks at the belief systems of political figureheads and how they strive for cognitive consistency (Jervis, 1970: 20) in those beliefs with regard to the international system and their individual view of political life. Leaders hold two sets of beliefs, philosophical and instrumental, the former concerning the basic knowledge framework of politics, conflict and the enemy, as well as assumptions about history and the future. The latter is concerned with the planning procedure, timing, strategy, risks, self-interest and tactics. These two subsections are arranged around ten core questions which produce a blueprint for decision-making, the philosophical beliefs determining the definition of the situation and the instrumental beliefs determining the decisions open for consideration.

The actions and rhetoric of both the leaders and representatives of China and Iran put this into clearer context. Their actions and reactions to external pressures and demands, such as those regarding sanctions reflected pre-conditioned notions of how they each (as ancient, powerful and previously advanced powers), should behave and communicate with 'the enemy', or rather old colonial, neo-imperial powers under which they were once subjugated. According to Walker, who

conducted a study on the Vietnam crisis: "the operational code has been a powerful cognitive approach to determining the 'content' of political leaders' foreign policy beliefs" (Neack et al. 1995:56). Moving on from this Robert Axelrod developed the theory of cognitive mapping which also analyses the impact a leaders' belief system has on his decision-making, actions and implementation though it is only relevant in specific crises (Jervis, 1970:23). It is clear to see that cognitive and psychological factors have a determining effect on the belief systems of political leaders and since it is they that are ultimately responsible for foreign policy statements and implementation then it is plausible to argue that with regard to the operational code, most countries' foreign policy is to a great extent the result of determining psychological and cognitive factors.

The development of psychological and cognitive approaches to the analysis of foreign policy have been many and varied, although they work together to provide an insight into the belief systems and structures held by political leaders and decision-makers in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Cognitive and psychological approaches give a clearer understanding of Iranian-Chinese relations; of how and why they are sustained and how potential crisis situations, such as China bending to international pressure and backing further sanctions in 2006 are prevented from escalating (Vakil, 2006:52). These approaches also allowed greater analysis with regard to the perceptions of intentions and possible courses of action open for consideration (Bayliss and Rengger, 1992:249). In non-crisis situations these determinants are still in play. Foreign policy decision-making and implementation is carried out by human beings who are socially conditioned creatures with pre-set bias, assumptions, and knowledge frameworks or schemas which direct their thoughts, perceptions and decisions (Jervis, 1970: 23). Since it is human beings who are making foreign policy and they are pre-determined to a great extent by their inherent cognitive processes then it follows that the policies they are making will be constructed and hindered in the same manner. The rational approach suggests that decisions made are done so through a long methodical, rational and logical process (Jensen, 1982:5). Human beings are not rational. The bureaucratic politics model advocates the idea of a pack mentality or rather departmental allegiance and career self-interest (Jensen, 1982:7). Before a person is part of a department they are first and foremost simply a 'being'. Before they have the time and mental capability to approach a decision in a purely rational and logical way they have to ingest the data through basic sensory perceptions and pre-conceived knowledge structures.

How far are Chinese and Iranian foreign policies the outcome of determining psychological and cognitive factors? These factors have a huge and powerful role to play in not only the implementation but also the initial policy making process. The foreign policy goals made are a reflection not of rational objective decisions made but the belief systems, ideologies and bias of the

people who set those goals. Cognitive and psychological factors are inextricably intertwined with foreign policy goals, decisions and procedures.

Tacit Alliance Theory

The proposal of the existence of an intangible relationship, or Tacit Alliance, between states was initially formalised in the work of Coral Bell and subsequently built upon by Sylvia Crosbie in 'A Tacit Alliance: France and Israel from Suez to the Six Day War' (1974). Crosbie analyses the informal alliance developed between the two states in the 1950-60's (1974:660). These ideas of a tacit alliance are not based on tangible treaties or programmes but within a framework of unspoken understanding and co-operation. This alliance can be traced back to feelings of sympathy openly expressed by the French towards the Jews in the post-WWII period. The French assisted the Jewish communities via immigration to Palestine and arms supplies. The relationship grew into a tacit alliance out of mutual need. France's loss of its position in the Middle East combined with its loss of Indo-China and the loose structure of the Fourth Republic resulted in France viewing Israel as a suitable counter to other Western Powers (Crowe, 1974: p660). These ideas of a Tacit Alliance were further developed by Coral Bell (1977) who applied the theory to the Cold War relationship between the US and the USSR, that is to say that relations and decisions are not always based on tangible and recordable decrees, treaties or programmes but within a framework of unspoken understanding and co-operation.

Gregory Moore (2014) contributes to the work on Tacit Alliance theory in his assessment of the end of the tacit alliance between China and America in 1989. Though this article is predominantly concerned with the events that brought this collusion to an end (ibid, p541), it does also identify the normative underpinnings of the relationship in so much as 'mutual perceptions' and concepts of 'friendship' (ibid, p:540) are highlighted. Moore assesses this relationship within the theoretical framework of Wendts 'Cultures of anarchy' (cited in Moore, 2014: 540) to give a thoughtful account of the shift in ideologies and cultural processes which result in the demise of the alliance. What is not considered here however, is an assessment of the very construction of the relationship itself. Though ideology and friendship are identified as factors within the alliance, no consideration is given to their role in its very construction. This lapse is also present in the analysis of Israeli-South African relations analyses by Polakw-Suransky (2010) in the 'Unspoken Alliance'. Here again the pragmatic drivers of Israeli-South African relations are identified (p32), as well as the processes of identification and co-operation building, leading to trust formation. What is omitted however, or rather taken for granted, is the role that such rhetoric plays in the initial construction and then continued maintenance of the relationship. Coral Bell, in contrast, identifies these dynamics very well, emphasising the role that empathy and sympathy played in French overtures to Israel during the 1960's. Again though the

normative construction, though identified as relevant, and indeed essential (p131), was not analysed at the base level vis-a-vis the process of assigning such importance to these norms and values. This of course is to be expected as the publication was not intended to fulfil such a purpose. This thesis however does state such intent. The creation of a Tacit Alliance, and then its subsequent maintenance, is a complex project, and one that underpins specific overarching pragmatic interests and complex interactions. As such its very nature, its creation, is one that warrants analysis in order to better understand the complexities of relations between states in the absence of formal alliances and indeed, in the case of Iranian-Chinese relations, in the face of much international pressure and criticism.

The relationship between China and Iran represents a Tacit Alliance, informal and intangible in nature. This Tacit Alliance has been constructed and resurrected over time as a result of similarities in norms, ideas and historical experiences. This relationship, constructed through identity, cultural and historical narratives, is best analysed within a holistic constructivist theoretical framework which will show the relationship to be powerfully influenced by normative and ideational factors at both the domestic and international level. This holistic constructivist framework, which incorporates the analysis and application of cognitive FPA will best enable the analysis of the presence of tacit alliance between Iran and China and the ways in which it is structured. The states involved are highly complex and very secretive however, which makes data analysis quite difficult with regard to restrictions on the accessibility of such data. As such the following chapter will develop this thesis by introducing and developing the methodological framework within which such an analysis will be conducted, and it is to this endeavour that the thesis will now turn.

Chapter Three:

Methodological Approach

Introduction

Having established the theoretical approach to be taken, it is now necessary to establish how the research will be carried out, identifying key procedures, strategies and research methods that will be utilised to collect, analyse and present the evidence upon which this endeavour is founded. This will certainly address questions of ontology and epistemology, which are 'crucial because they shape what we think we are doing […] how [...] and [to what end]' (Marsh and Stoker, 1995) as well as tautology, within an overall theory driven evaluation.

Theory driven evaluation is a relatively recent approach to social science research, and is demonstrated by the work of Huey-Tsyh Chen (1990). Methodology provides the theoretical underpinnings for understanding which sets of methods can be applied to a set case and the logical connection of elements. Chen, whilst acknowledging this, highlights the role of theory in this pursuit over traditional 'black box impact assessment'. Substantive knowledge (or theory) is important for without it, only a one-dimensional understanding is achievable. This is to say that in order to evaluate change, it is necessary to first be fully conversant with the pre-change status quo, through the incorporation of both normative and causative understandings (Chen, 1990: 14). This theory driven approach is in contrast to the black box approach to evaluation which fails to consider, or register, the political and organizational contexts of data, with regard to input or outputs – that is to say, between official goals and operative goals (Chen, 1990:18). This is important to mention here as this project is theoretically driven by the application of TAT to the political economy of Iranian-Chinese relations and what this is able to reveal regarding the motivations and interests which underpin their relations with one another, and in the face of third party interests.

The title of this research and the core research questions have been clearly established and introduced in the introductory chapter. There are, however, two dominant approaches to social science research which need to be considered. These are either seeking to offer tautological claims or interpretations of phenomena. Tautological claims aim to understand and explain the nature of social processes/relations and causal factors, such as the nature and implications of a formal Chinese-Iranian alliance for instance. The latter in contrast has an overriding interest in offering interpretations of such phenomena, such as interpretations regarding the lack of a formal alliance between the two aforementioned states and the potential reasons for this. In this respect establishing the

tautological/interpretive ambition of the research project is necessarily the first, and most defining decision to be made. A foundationalist approach consists of the belief in a 'real' out there world which exists independent of the researcher's awareness and understanding of it, but which is, nevertheless objectively observable, as posited by scholars such as Brown (1994) and Romaniuk (2014). An anti-foundational (interpretive) approach, in contrast holds that there are many worlds, rather than one, which are the result of (social) constructs and as such can and need to be interpreted in different ways which are phenomena and situation dependant. In relation to this, objectivity is an illusion with the researcher being present in the research, a fact that s/he should recognise and include in overall evaluations.

The second issue to address is whether it will be foundationalist or interpretivist, which is to say whether it will be a quantitative or qualitative study. Indeed, historically these two approaches are viewed by many protagonists as being mutually exclusive and forming a wider debate regarding the 'issue of quantitative precision versus descriptive richness' (McQueen and Knussen, 2002:27). There are reasons for this apparent chasm between a procedural and a philosophical approach. Whilst a quantitative approach concerns itself solely with averages, variations and relationships – causal or otherwise – the roots of the qualitative approach can be found in anthropology and interpretivism. The space between them is not necessarily so vast, however, the central aim in each case is to explore, describe, explain and predict. The difference is not in ambition but in the path travelled, in this respect they can be viewed merely as opposite ends of the same spectrum, rather than mutually exclusive. To adopt research methods which are solely one or the other is to pursue an exclusionary methodology. Whilst this may work for some research topics, it is not always the best course of action for the creation of the most effective research endeavour. Rather a mixture of research methods can be, and indeed increasingly are, used to produce and support more concrete and legitimate results. There are a variety of mixed approaches and their supporting scholars, including parallel database design (Hall-Kenyon et al. 2009), data-transformation design (Kaldjian et al. 2006) and multi-level design (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2002) to name just a few. All advocate that the most comprehensive research results benefit from a mixed methodological approach (Edmonds and Kennedy, 2013: 152). For the purpose of my research I will be applying the latter, multi-level, approach, as detailed below, but it is necessary to first state the ontological orientation of my work. This will be followed by an assessment of the perceived positive and negative characteristics of both qualitative and quantitative research methods and then a discussion of the mixed methods approach to be used for this research.

Ontology refers to that which we believe to exist, our foundational or underpinning, common sense assumptions about the world. These are important to outline at the onset of the methodological

discussion and, for this research endeavour, regardless of acknowledgment or recognition, there exists a 'real' social world which is constructed of myriad variables, how this world is understood, however, is (and can only ever be) the result of the development of interpretations regarding the nature and interactions of its constituent parts (Neak et al. 1995:50). In the same vein, there exists a progressive international, or global political economy which can be quantified in terms of presence only. Again the relationships between its constituent parts (including states, MNS, and NGOs), can only be analysed as interpretations due to the myriad differences in time, culture, development and discourse between them. Finally, connected to this is the concept of alliance. Whilst the presence of an alliance can be qualified with regard to the presence of agreements, signed and ratified, treaties and communiques, informal alliances are harder to codify. They exist and are based on the intentions and interests of the parties concerned. Their presence, however, relies on the educated interpretations of the researcher based on the presence or absence of data.

Quantitative Research Methods

Quantitative methodologies have traditionally held greater weight across the social sciences and in international relations theory and …'reflects the philosophy that everything in the social world can be described according to some kind of numerical system' (McQueen and Knussen, 2002:27). The methods of research and data capture utilised in such an approach centre heavily on the observations and measurements of patterns (ideally recurrent) of a given interest, averages, variations and differences, for example. Such an interest could concern either (a) social incident(s) or economic trend(s), such as trade relations between two countries or the creation/dissolution of a bilateral agreement and their effects on national development strategies. The observations of such incidents, over an established period of time, enable the researcher to produce an objective study which is able to not only understand and explain the events in question but also to predict potential outcomes or the likelihood of a similar case occurring within a similar remit elsewhere and so to be able to prescribe possible responses or behaviours in relation to the facts presented. Such a methodological approach necessarily employs set methods for research, such as the accumulation of data which is managed in a rigorous way, being framed within graphs and tables, as well as various charts, diagrams and models which display the information present in a way which it is clear to see the predictive capabilities and casual relationships between variables and non-variables.

There are, however, certain drawbacks to this method of enquiry, or rather limitations with regard to its effectiveness. Quantitative methods centre on the collection and management of data, though this raises issues for the researcher concerning the sources of such data, be they primary or secondary. Secondary sources raise particular issues and criticisms concerning their potential to be

biased or pre-manipulated. Official documents regarding Chinese trade activity with other states, for instance (particularly Iran) may already have been subject to bias with regard to the interests and concerns of the formulators of such statistics. Likewise, the value of the Chinese RMB, despite being governmentally regulated is dubiously accepted as accurate by many, such as Washington (Morrison and Labonte, 2011). The reproduction capabilities of quantitative research are also open to criticism, particularly with regard to comparative state relations, or even political economy issues which cover myriad interests, policies and bodies. In order to explain an incident or condition and its relationship with another variable or referent would necessary require the accumulation and assessment of a huge amount of data to be truly accurate and even then criticisms would still hold regarding the objectivity of such results and analyses.

Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative methodologies and research endeavours, in contrast to their above counterparts, do not hold, as their primary concern numbers, measurements and scales in the pursuit of statistical fastidiousness. Unlike quantitative researchers who see themselves as being detached from their object of enquiry, qualitative researchers view this approach as not only impossible but also isolationist. They must necessarily insert themselves, actively into their research to become part of the research and, importantly, to recognise that this is what they are doing. Qualitative research relies on various texts and transcripts but it also involves the taking of extensive notes, the maintenance of a diary or journal, and recordings of events. Rather than questionnaires, in-depth interviews with either individuals or groups are used which comprise of either guided yes/no questions or open ended questions which allow a lengthier discussion of the topic under scrutiny as well as the inclusion of previously marginalised or rejected interests/facts that may come to light as having a previously unconsidered effect or influence. The group of people being interviewed is generally smaller, though the amount of interviews that take place can be greater as interviewees may be re-visited as required, in light of new events or greater clarifications or even simply time lapses. This approach enables the execution of a more in-depth study than mere statistically evaluation would permit.

As with quantitative approaches to research, this set of methods also has many criticisms levelled against it. The issue of small sample groups for interviews calls into question the representative capabilities of the results formulated. There are also issues of who was interviewed, why they were chosen, or from where and why others were not. During the interview process, or following it, the researcher may also ask the subject if s/he were able to recommend another person that they may feel it would be beneficial to interview. This process if referred to as snow-balling and, despite being useful with regard to the networking of sources, it also raises issues with regard to

sample diversity. Though it must be noted that some of these criticisms can be countered by the use of supporting information from a wider body of sources to substantiate the findings offered.
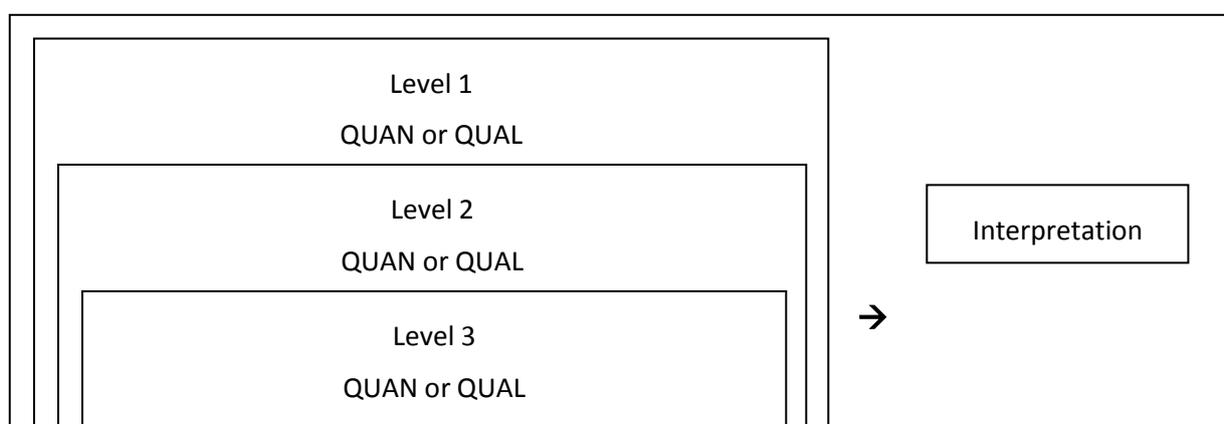
The small sample size of quantitative research also raises issues of legitimacy with regard to an inability to draw expansive, generalizing conclusions or results across similar incidents or events. Rather qualitative research is better suited to case studies or case specific interests as any attempts to apply them at a wider level would produce only weak generalizations or guidelines. Qualitative methodologies are also anti-foundationalist. This underpins a major criticism concerning bias or misrepresentation as the results or findings of the research endeavour have the potential to be dismissed as a result of the researcher's interpretations of the information gathered, and therefore, subjective and of little merit or worth as a form of social enquiry. This, however, can be managed by the overt awareness of such a possibility and explicit defence of such interpretations.

Mixed Method – The Multi-Level Design

Research in the fields of the social sciences generally, and IR specifically, has tended to be constitutive of a quantitative methodology, following the first great debate leading up to World War Two and into the 1950s, which was won by the foundationalists and their interest in historical repetition, predictable patterns of behaviour and the descriptive, and predictive capabilities of phenomena. This view was challenged in the 1960s with the second great debate which took place between the foundationalists and anti-foundationalists. Between objective truth seekers and subjective interpretivists. Between theories that can be proven or disproven to the recognition of theory as a body that can only ever be falsified (only ever a theory of best fit until proven otherwise). Across all of this there has been a tendency to view the two approaches as opposing camps. As highlighted above, however, an alternative approach, and one that is growing in popularity, is to view these two methodological approaches as being at alternate ends of the same spectrum. In this way, rather than being mutually exclusive, they can be regarded, as simply different ways of gathering and representing data. Furthermore, these two different modes, rather than running parallel, can instead be used in varying measures to complement and reinforce one another, known as a mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2011:35).

Mixed methods is not an approach in itself but rather an umbrella term for the amalgamation, in varying degrees, of foundational and interpretivist methodological approaches. There are three dominant strands within this: convergent-parallel, embedded, and explanatory-sequential. Within each of these there are again further deviations. This approach to research mixes qualitative and quantitative methods of enquiry and evaluations inductively or deductively, in what is seen to be the

most pragmatic way possible for the researcher (Edmonds and Kennedy, 2013: 146). This offers greater legitimacy for the research findings in that they are able to stand up, to a greater extent, under scrutiny by scholars of either inclination. It should be noted, however, that despite using a mixed design, the researcher will still sit predominantly within one camp. This is to say that their work will still be classified, generally, as being predominantly foundational with qualitative support, or interpretivist with quantitative support, depending on the particular mix and order of the data gathered and results gained (Edmonds and Kennedy, 2013: 147). Within mixed methods there are two strands: emergent and fixed (Creswell and Plano Clarke, 2011). A fixed design denotes that the researcher begins with a study or design of how and when the alternative approaches will be used, whereas an emergent design denotes the researchers (pragmatic) inclination to consider and include the data, regardless of type, as and when it emerges and is either necessary or relevant to the wider research topic. This then is known as a 'typology-based' approach (Collins and Cathain, 2009), and one that has been developed and supported by researchers such as Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) who created a matrix of the varying models and degrees of the mixed method approach to research. One of which being the 'multi-level design' which falls within the wider convergent-parallel approach (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2002).

Level 1 QUAN or QUAL	
Level 2 QUAN or QUAL	Interpretation
Level 3 QUAN or QUAL →	

(Cited as Figure 15.4: Multilevel design, in Edmonds and Kennedy, 2013:155)

As the flowchart above demonstrates, the multi-level design enables the researcher to use differing methodological tools to gather both qualitative and quantitative data, within their pre-set system. These are then merged together to assist an overall interpretation/result. This is in contrast to the 'Data-Transformation' design for instance which refers to the collection of quantitative and qualitative data concurrently (though, it must be noted, separately), after which one is transformed

into the other (Edmonds and Kennedy, 2013: 150). Overall, or underpinning all of these approaches is the identification of the extent to which the two forms of data captured converge, and so, the extent to which they support one another and so add greater weight and legitimacy to the research endeavour.

Whilst it is highly dubious that a researcher would be able to study trade relations without the inclusion of quantitative data (such as trade figures, imports and exports). A combination of the two methods, however, enables the most pragmatic synthesis between 'hard' facts and 'soft' interpretations in understanding a specific phenomenon. whilst this is true of most research studies it is particularly pertinent which regard to this thesis which is seeking to develop an understanding of the relationship between Iran and China at the economic, political, diplomatic and cultural levels. Both states are wary of outside interest, tightly monitoring and highly censoring the information that is made available to the international community, and indeed their own domestic spheres due to their specific security interests concerning civil unrest and governmental legitimacy. The underlying aim of this research is also, specifically, to assess the extent to which the relationship can be classified as a Tacit Alliance. This in itself is equally challenging as it refers to an informal arrangement or series of agreements between the two powers. Hard data regarding treaties and agreements are only present in an overt alliance whereas a Tacit Alliance is marked, naturally, by the very absence of such evidence.

Methods

An analysis of bilateral trade agreements and investments will necessarily involve an analysis of factual trade and economic data which is often empirical in formulation though the central concern of such analysis is not so much to develop tautological facts and truths resulting in scientific prescriptions. The endeavour rather is to develop an understanding of Iranian-Chinese relations with regard to economic security and diplomatic and political pre-dispositions. The aim is not to simplify the component parts of the research concerned down to their basest simplifications but to adopt a more holistic approach that recognises the limitations of empirical analysis and the need for reflection and an understanding of language as affective as opposed to sterile (Bauer. M.W., and Gaskell. G., 2000:8). Since the regional and international arena in which relations are conducted will be shown to be a social construct, interpretation will also need to be utilised and considered (Jervis, 1970: 20). Quantitative data will be gathered, however, mainly relating goods and knowledge transfers between the two powers, as may be available regarding import and export levels.

Due to the potential limitations regarding access to primary sources and official secrecy, the multi-level design approach enables both quantitative and qualitative sources to be gathered as and

when they are found. The data regarding each can then be combined to enable the most legitimate understandings to be achieved and defended. Having said this, it is important to note that whilst the multi-level design will be implemented and quantitative data gathered and analysed, the overall ambition is not foundationalist, but rather along the spectrum from foundationalist to interpretivist, will fall within the interpretivist camp. Whilst there are certain constants which have been acknowledged above, regarding the presence of the nation-state and the existence of a political economy, it is also acknowledged that these concepts can mean different things to different decision-makers and so cannot be truly codified. The overall ambition then is to produce the most insightful and theoretically and methodologically legitimate interpretation of the nature of the political economy of Iranian-Chinese relations and the extent to which it can be classified as a Tacit Alliance.

Existing literature has been analysed regarding Iranian-Chinese relations, their interests (mutual or exclusive), and foreign policy structures and ambitions. Such literature has been sourced from noted academic journals and books, as well existing theses. The latter of these have been sourced from the collections of Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham and the British Library. Official documents such as government white papers, and media sources will also be analysed to understand the levels and tiers of involvement and cooperation amongst the two powers. Recognition will be given to the fact that these are secondary sources but the combination of data and source variety will assist the development of a legitimate representation of the information gathered. Media analysis is highly important to this thesis, regarding the reported content of the rhetoric used in public address between and about the two powers. The media representation of dialogue between the two powers and positive representations of one another, as detailed in the earlier chapters, sheds new light on how certain decisions can be understood – an example of which being China's decision to support UN sanctions against Iran. Media reports also assist, when scrutinized, an understanding of the perceived similarities of history, culture and civilisational heritage between the two powers which again frame understandings of history, or historical representations and interests – or their identities, political, civil and historic.

What is ultimately under analysis, as previously stated is not primarily the material interactions between the two states with regard to what specifically they trade, how frequently or at what cost/benefit ratio. These aspects are important in that they provide the concrete incentive for the development of positive relations. However, what is of acute interest is the actual development and maintenance of positive relations. That is to say, what normative processes underpin relations between the two powers and are they constructed in such a way, with such consistency that they can be codified as constituting evidence of a Tacit Alliance. Since what is under analysis is a normative

concept of the promotion of values, respect and amenability, statistics and concrete interactions are only able to offer a one-dimensional description of Iranian-Chinese relations, rather than a multifaceted analysis and understanding of it. The focus is not on what they do, or even why, but rather how: How they interact with one another within the realms of trust and risk assessments in ways which promote the former and offset the latter. In order to approach this task, the main methodology that will be applied to the data selected (as discussed below) will be that of critical discourse analysis (CDA).

Discourse Analysis (DA) enables not just an identification of the social and political world, but also provides the methods for assessing that world (what can be referred to as a constructed reality) for research purposes. According to Wodak and Meyer (2009: p2) it is the extension of linguistics beyond sentence grammar towards a study of action and interaction. An analysis of the rhetorical devices and discursive practices utilised in verbal and written interactions offers insights into the relations represented which are lacking in statistical analysis of trade relations or other purely physical practices. This builds on the idea of Der Derian's thought which posits that language, its very presence and use, is significant due to its agency vis-a-vis the constitution of a reality underpinned by the construction of both identity and of difference (Baker-Beall et al., 2015: 73). As in the case of all policy production, in the case of Iranian-Chinese relations, which are tethered to national and historical narratives, identities are not objective, primordial realities. Rather they are in continual, though often limited, flux as they are continually renegotiated, restated and, where required, reshaped on a case by case basis. Just as all knowledge can be said to have been created by somebody for some purpose, so too can it be posited of language, or more specifically, rhetoric and discourse. They represent performative meaning, as such discourse refers to not only the compilation of a set of textual data but to the practices, and of the systems of thought that both create and are created by them. As a result, Wetherall et al. (2002: 339) identify CDA as an intensive, rather than an extensive, interpretation as it offers routes into the study of meaning and social action (p2).

Whilst DA is a useful methodological approach, it is important to note that it is not one specific tool per se, but rather a collection of approaches, and as such it is important to identify the specific strand that will be utilised, and more importantly, how this research will define the specific use of discourse due to the numerus applications available. CDA focuses on the revelation of ideologies and power. It is the systematic and retroductable investigation of semiotic data which posits the context of language, which is deemed social practice, to be crucial (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). This implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation or social structure within which it is framed. CDA emerged in the 1990s and has been identified as most appropriate for

this research project as it views discourse as both socially constitutive and conditioned. That is to say that it constitutes objects of knowledge and the social identities of people as it acts to maintain and develop the desired status quo. Iranian-Chinese relations, and the investigation of an intangible alliance, as analysed in chapter six, utilise the construction of a range of shared norms and values, which are underpinned by commonalties of historical experiences of civilisational heritage and external victimization, combined with similar foreign polices based on anti-hegemony, security, development and the maintenance of domestic stability.

The textual analysis of relations between these two powers refers not just to material economic interests but politico-economic interests and the ways in which these are constructed within a framework of amenability which in turns seeks to construct trust and predictability. An alliance, in theory, in the absence of formality must be maintained, and it must be accepted by the audience. Herein lies the all-important issue of power which is a central aspect of CDA. There always is a power relationship in the interplay between the discourse and the audience in so much as the practice must be acknowledged and accepted – they must be legitimized. Krings (1973 cited in Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 7) identifies the critical aspect as detailing the practical linking of social and political engagement with a sociologically informed construction of society (p7), therefore, 'critique' identifies the interconnectedness of the different facets of the object of analysis. As such an attempt at CDA necessarily begins with a deliberation of the texts that will be utilised. These deliberations are concerned with what exactly should provide the basis of the study – which texts should be selected and upon what justifications. Following on from this, under consideration is also the form of text, on whether the focus should be on official texts only or include non-official texts. Parallel to this is also the issue of opposition to consider. Are competing or challenging narratives also to be included and if not then why not.

In order to assess the representations of Iranian-Chinese relations constructed by the two states, CDA has been applied to a compilation of media sources produced by each. The sources have been selected from embassy white papers and joint communiques as well as items from the national newspapers of each state. The white papers are included, despite not being traditional media sources because they are issued by the government for domestic public consumption and so represent the official policy and decision-making interests and representations. The China sources were selected from Xinhua news agency which supplies the China Daily and the People's Daily. The Iranian sources were selected from the IRNI, Tehran Times and Pars news. Whilst John Richardson (2006) states that journalistic sources have the power to shape issue agendas and public discourse (p13), he also recognises the presence of reporter bias. In this respect the focus is on official and quasi-official

sources only as the underpinning aim is to assess the official, political formulation of the relationship being assessed. In the case of the sources selected for this data analysis, however, it should be noted that the sources used are official, highly censored media outlets for the relevant governing bodies. As such much of this bias is offset as the newspapers are recognised as the mouthpieces of their respective ruling bodies, allowing for little, if any, reporter autonomy and bias. These media sources are utilised to shape the opinions and reinforce the beliefs vis-a-vis the place and role of the recipient audience. As Richardson (2006) sates, they 'shape views of social reality' (p13) with regard to the domestic audience and the political reality with regard to the political audience which is the other state. Here then language use is inherently political.

In selecting the sources, it was necessary to locate this audience, which is identified as twofold. All news items relating to Iranian-Chinese relations were gathered. The sources selected relate to these relations specifically and so the tone and message reflects this. The initial search yielded 1527 sources over the previous 15 years (timeframe identified in the previous chapter), with an increase in recent years due to the nuclear negotiations taking place in the contemporary era. 134 were found to constitute a direct Iranian-Chinese channel of communication. In comparison, of the remaining 1366 items, 27 related to sports results and 821 were rejected as irrelevant on the grounds that the articles included the names of the two powers but nothing more. 545 sources were directly irrelevant but informative by-proxy in that they relate, specifically in the case of China, to external perceptions of their relations and so are generated for an alternative audience identified as the international arena. Whilst these can be seen to represent a different facet of strategic decision-making, they alone do not constitute a direct opposition to the construction of an informal alliance. Indeed, such an oppositional narrative, as queried above, is not to be included in this thesis. The reasons for this are simply due to a lack of relevance. Since there is no formal alliance there is also no formal parallel narrative to challenge it. The lack of positivity's - these are collections of words or phrases directed to one another that construct a positive reflection such as 'welcome' 'pleased to,' 'happy new year' - and codified terms found in the omitted sources do not challenge the relationship but rather endorse its tacit nature.

Third party audience-focused items are those which are interpreted as addressing the foreign policies of either state, but not in relation to one another, or are addressing issues at the international level and so include other state actors. An example of this would be 521 sources that centred on the Iranian nuclear issue and recent attempts to resolve it. These sources addressed the P-5 and China describing developments in the talks. They were void of any and all references to Iranian-Chinese relations beyond stating China's mediatory role in the process. Likewise, items that address UN

sanctions against Iran in terms of reporting on the developments of this alone, were also absent of any discursive practices relating to the construction of Iranian-Chinese narrative. The audience in these cases are more general and so the absence of these practices can be seen to be indicative, within themselves, of a parallel need on the part of China in this case to also cater to this construction of its parallel narrative of China as a responsible member of the international community. It can also be analysed with reference to confirmation of a Tacit Alliance – one not publicly (wider audience) endorsed. Eliminating these items left 134 sources for analysis. These sources either directly addressed one another or specifically referenced maintenance or development of relations between them. These sources all referenced specific interactions such as cultural exchanges, investment opportunities, or cooperative actions between the two powers with reference to their relationship or previous exchanges and so can be deemed to be aimed at one another.

There are two possible approaches to the analysis of this data. One would be to analyse the texts with regard to the ways in which they interact with – or talk to – one another. The second would be to segregate the two as Chinese and Iranian created and analyse the ways in which each party formulates their side of the relationship. This thesis takes the latter approach, which is considered a benchmark of the former which is seen as a secondary activity and so one better suited to future study. In segregating the sources, they become more useful in their ability to reveal the intentions and foci of either party and how the discursive practices relate to their own foreign policies as well as their constructed realities of themselves – their interests, aims and considerations. A focus on how the items converse with one another would put greater emphasis on the political relationship between the two powers, however, this would hinder the domestic pressures and considerations at play. The level one audience is the civil society who must accept the relationship, in the face of international criticism, and so legitimize it. The rhetoric of shared experience and mutual gain is as much a justification to the people of each state as it is a political commitment.

The second step in conducting a CDA of these sources was to identify key semantic notes. Since what is being analysed is the possible construction of a normative, value-laden relationship. The key words relating to this construction are identified as trust, exchange/s and cooperation. These are words that represent the interests at play in forming a narrative of relations. It is the actions represented by the words. Trust is included here as an action in that it fits with cooperation and exchanges in representing confidence building measures and so risk-aversion that can be located in interdependences in the same way as cooperation and exchanges within a positive context. Also codified are words relating to the concrete interest that underpin relations between the two states – and indeed any state. These are: peace and stability, development, region, diplomacy and dialogue,

security, strategy, and trade. Finally, words were located in the texts which related to amity, these are: friend, partner, relate/relation(ship), and history. Also included here are references to what I have termed 'positivity's' (see fig 1). These words, though overlapping on occasion, were grouped into the three separate categories in order to create frameworks that address the three layers of interaction which potentially form a (tacit) alliance – mutual benefit, confidence building, and risk-aversion – the what, how and why that constructs their relations.

The next stage consisted of reading the sources for context and so analysing the functioning of the discourse. This involved three steps, the first of which was to identify how the discourse fixes meanings and truths to the relationship described. With regard to this thesis this includes the recognition of references to history and thus the historical lineage of interactions and amenability. It will also include the cross-over of interests, intentions and illustrations of action and discursive practices in the consolidation of confidence building and cooperative endeavours. Milliken (1999: 227) recognises this as discourses being productive of the world that they construct. It is necessary to contextualize the words identified in relation to the subject matter being reported, be it a trade deal, diplomatic support or cultural engagement. Again the power relationship with the audience is important here. As the application of CDA facilitates the identification of constructed norms, values and commonalities that not only work to maintain and develop state-to-state relations but also highlight the social acceptance base of such activity. This is to say that, as is discussed in chapters three and four, each state needs to maintain governmental legitimacy, their policies and processes must conform to the statements and intensions of their respective constitutions and domestic pressures and interests – CDA enables an analysis of the discursive practices that constitute this endeavour. The second step is to identify the knowledge and practices which are legitimized by the discourse. Again this includes confidence building measures and concrete, underpinning interests that drive the development and maintenance of an alliance. This step yields the productivity, and utility of the discourse and discursive practices under analysis and the ways in which policy implementation operationalises them. In this respect the focus will be on the interplay between the three frameworks identified from the words codified in the search.

The final step of the CDA was to quantify the discourse as data in order to assess the ways in which the discourse constructs a Tacit Alliance between Iran and China. This will involve an assessment of the construction and prevalence of the different frameworks utilised by the respective states. Interpretations of why this is – based on foreign-policy decision-making preferences are identified in chapters three and four. This will enable the identification of the representational practices through which identity is articulated, [re]produced and [re]enforced (Baker-Beale, 2014: 10). This will enable

assessments of interests and inclinations as well as audience legitimacy requirements. For instance, if state A were to place greater importance on the construction of trust this would need to be interpreted with regard to their foreign policy interests and risk assessments. The interpretation of the discourse data within the framework of trust and risk analysis is of particular importance with regard to the endeavour of this thesis since an informal alliance requires the respective increase and reduction of these concerns in the absence of any binding agreements (as discussed in chapter two). Here again is a power relationship present which lies in the construction of this reality of trust and friendship to mitigate enmity and increase predictability of behaviour and support. In this respect power is not seen as the relation of difference identified by Wodak and Meyer (p9) between the two but rather in relation to the wider body of practices relating to the 'third audience'. The power lies in the acceptance and development of the narrative and its underpinning norm and value-production which form and explain the relationship between complex historical processes, and hegemonic narrative. Identity politics on all levels always entails the integration of past and present events and political visions. This final is designed to draw out processes of securitisation and/or politicization (as discussed in chapter two) and constitute identity. Here then the aim is to identify the wider political and societal implications of the operationalization identified in step two which will aid the concluding identification of the different layers of the discourse.

Chapter Four

Cognitive Factors and Chinese Foreign Policy Making

Mao Zedong was the father of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the party/state system that it evolved into in 1949. This period was marked by isolationism until his replacement by Deng Xiaoping in 1974 which saw an evolution in policy centred on a more diplomatic, regionally pro-active and internationally engaged China. In the era following the Death of Mao Zedong there have been many attempts to explain the constantly evolving governance model of Deng Xiaoping (McGregor, 2012: xviii) and his successors. In the contemporary era there are few observers that would describe China's governing regime as purely communist. And there is also great debate with regard to China's current status as a rising power/global power/partial power. Whilst these are important areas of discussion, engaging with debates about the identification of China as a communist or capitalist state as well as its overall real or potential power in the international system, are outside the remit of this thesis. Instead the emphasis of this particular analysis does not concern *what* China is (Mcgregor, 2012, De Burgh, 2006) but rather *how* it is. This is a significantly different and far more insightful issue with regard to its external relations, interests, ambitions and, most importantly, its perceptions of itself and others.

This chapter, which sets the necessary ground work for chapters five and six, introduces the government and governance structures of China, identifying the structure of the Chinese Communist Party and also of the Chinese governmental system and the symbiotic relationship between the two. It examines how the bureaucracy are arranged and ordered, the relationship between the party machine and the state, and the diffusion of power and authority within the two overlapping systems. The central focus of this aspect of the thesis is to identify the decision-making structures as the necessary first step to a greater understanding of the decision-making processes of foreign policy formation in China. The chapter identifies key decision-makers within the two overlapping systems, both in the form of individuals, such as the General Secretary or President, and in the form of bodies such as the ministry of foreign affairs, or propaganda and thought work, and leading groups.

Moving on from this the analysis will shift to the construction of identity and experience and how they feed into perceptions of the self and the other in Chinese foreign policy and for decision-makers, and how these are manifest in Chinese domestic and foreign policies which are shown to be interdependent. Once the key policy decision-makers have been identified their cognitive drivers and

constraints at both the personal and national levels are analysed. Foreign policy formation, contrary to some strands of IR theory (Langteigne. 2013:1), does not take place within a black box, but rather is subject to internally assimilated external and environmental stimuli. It is subject to cognitive factors that not only define what information is received and how, but also how the information is processed and codified and, finally, which reactions and responses to said information are most acceptable and therefore pursued. When adopting a decision-making approach to the analysis of foreign policy making it is necessary to recognise and address the inextricable problem of how decision-makers view and react to their environment. Factors for consideration are perceptions, knowledge structures, and pre-determined bias as well as the behaviour patterns of the individuals involved as ultimately: "the 'facts' of a situation never speak for themselves" (Clarke and White 1989:135).

All knowledge (upon which information is based), as explained in chapter two, must be underpinned by a theoretical framework, with the facts chosen being assigned meaning before they are valid (Neack et al. 1995:50). This is not a unilateral process of being affected by environmental stimuli, rather it is bi-lateral in that the environment is affected through active responses to it. Schema theory views individuals as having rigid knowledge structures in place on which they rely and assimilate new information into to compound existing bias and dispositions (Mintz and De Rouen, 2010:102). These frameworks are shortcuts to processing knowledge deposits and understanding the individual's world. In relation to China, experiences with western powers and its 'century of humiliation' frame perceptions of external behaviors. This process is not just present in relation to reacting to external events, it is also followed in developing and formulating national narratives and foreign policy interests (Thies, 2010:5).

This is often overlooked in relation to China (and also Iran which will be addressed in the following chapter), due to its reactionary foreign policy status – having no formal foreign policy department of power within itself – Chinese foreign and domestic policy are intimately intertwined and the former exists independent of external variables, it is just harder to identify due to the push and pull of its domestic parentage.

Operational code analysis, cognitive mapping and theories such as the inherent bad faith model, mirror image and enemy image, and the fundamental attribution error (Clarke and White, 1989; Hill, 2003; Beach, 2014) (as also discussed in chapter two) will all be applied to understandings of China's foreign policy formulators, in order to provide the most comprehensive understanding of China's interests and objectives, but also its perceptions, which are the drivers of its international behaviour generally and responses and reactions to external events and processes specifically. The foreign policy goals made are a reflections not of rational objective decisions, but rather of the belief systems,

ideologies and biases of the people who set those goals (Callahan, 2012:15). A capitalist society will aim to secure resources such as raw materials and overall economic profit, just as an individual who prefers control and regimented order will run a dictatorship or a fascist regime, being inherently suspicious of all others in the international system (Jensen, 1982:15). Cognitive and psychological factors are inextricably intertwined with foreign policy goals, decisions and procedures. This chapter ends with a set of conclusions on the make-up of the most salient and influential psychological and cognitive factors that influence Chinese foreign policy decision-making. In doing so it clearly identifies China's key interests, ambitions and concerns – domestically, regionally and internationally – which are the very foundation upon which not only its identity but also its external relations are constructed and maintained (Dong et al. 2013:110). Such an identification and analysis of Chinese decision-making processes will highlight the role of constructed norms and values and a specific identity constructed through a narrative of history and sense of self which is vital for the execution of chapter six which will analyse the very nature of Iranian-Chinese relations. Since what is ultimately under investigation is the construction of a Tacit Alliance this chapter will set the groundwork for this analysis by identifying the cognitive processes at play and the ways in which they influence policy-formation. This will then underpin the analysis of chapter six in which the Tacit Alliance is argued to be constructed based upon, and within the framework of, such domestic and foreign policy interest and ambitions relating to international expectations, concepts of regional status and domestic legitimacy concerns.

The State, the Party and the People's Liberation Army

China is governed by a system of governance which, in turn, runs parallel to the omnipresent Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (McGregor, 2012, Callaghan, 2010). The relationship between these two hierarchically structured systems, though symbiotic, is asymmetric in terms of power and authority with the state sitting in subservience to the party machine. In official discourse all power relating to the governance of China is divided between (but in no way evenly) the three main bodies of the Chinese governance structure, the State Council and the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The CCP was founded in 1921 and has been the ruling party of mainland China since the 'new-democratic revolution' of 1949 (Strauss, 2006: 892). The party is founded on ideology and politics, as influenced by Mao Zedong and the motto 'seeking truth from facts', in a form of concentrated, or representative democracy, bringing into law the ideas and polices that are passed by the selectively elected national people's congress as a result of formal legal processes (Strauss, 2006: 893). The PLA was crucial to the independence of new China and gained influence as a result. Mao's experience as a military leader within the PLA ensured and supported the increased and tangible presence of the PLA in domestic and foreign affairs, though the Party Secretary was clear that it was the party that ruled the gun and not

the other way around (Scobell, 2005:229). At this time Chinese policy was very much reactive rather than proactive – influenced by a history of intervention from outside sources and being the sick man of Asia, along with its limited degree of development it did not proactively seek foreign policy goals, preferring to react to issues and interests as they arose, whilst finding its feet and cementing the CCP's rule and stability (Scobell, 2005:232). The party is inclusive in the respect that any and all citizens aged 18 and above who accept the party programme and the constitution are eligible to apply for membership – though there are naturally expectations that such candidates will be actively involved in one of the party's organizations, adhere to the party line, and pay membership dues. The party technically operates within the framework of the state system and the formal constitution with all members being equal before the law, however, the relationship between the two structures is somewhat more complex in reality.

Whilst it would be easy at this juncture to digress into a description of the relationship between the various party, state and military structures, this would be of little use other than to further emphasise the highly complex, symbiotic relationship between these organizations. Yes, they are directly and indirectly involved in policy making, both domestic and foreign, as is the intention of this chapter to assess. However, what is more important in an understanding of the construction of interests and aims, are the underpinning ideological, historical narratives, and identity issues that drive China's view of both itself and others and so frame its motivations.

Power Distribution

Since the state system is run, and also superseded, by the CCP in a condition of implied rather than actual distribution of power across and within its mechanisms, then the new post-1949 China is a Party-State with the difference between the two being a matter of protocol and administration (Shambaugh, 2008:65). Despite the NCP being the highest body and the Central Committee having much decision-making power, the true governing force lies with the Secretariat, the Politburo and the CCP Standing Committee – all of which are headed by the General Secretary, who also heads the NPC (as President of China) and the CMC, which oversees all of the armed forces, including the PLA (Shambaugh, 2008:125). The PLA was initially established in 1927 as the Red Army, forming the military arm of the revolutionary party, and since 1945 has maintained a strong role not only in the defence sector but also in Chinese politics and foreign policy (Elleman, 2009:5). Having said this, it is important to note that the PLA is founded upon the underpinning principle that "the party commands the gun" and its primary mission of keeping the party in power makes its ultimate and overriding concerns very much a domestic issue. The CMC, as stated above, sits apart from the state Ministry of Defence. The latter, unlike its Western counterparts, actually has no command authority as its primary

role is to liaise with foreign military bodies, and in this respect it has no domestic or foreign policy power (Elleman, 2009:158). The former, in comparison, oversees the departments of the general staff, general political, general logistic, and general armament as well as the air, ground, and naval forces and services. In simple terms it decides the budget, personnel and movement of domestic and international military related interests, developments which impact relations and interpretations of external actors and observers (De Burgh, 2006:37). The relationship between the leaders of the CMC and both the party and state organs, underpinned by the overlap of personnel across roles and departments, ensures an almost symbiotic party/military loyalty mechanism (De Burgh, 2006:27). It also ensures a committee empowered with agency to the degree that the leaders and agenda setters within it have a degree of genuine support and of authority within the system through their parallel CCP roles and memberships as well as a common understanding of and respect for the official party line.

In a similar vein, the Ministry of Public Security, which comes under the remit of the state council within the state structure, governs the PAP and some domestic security issues. However, responsibility for these also lies within the preponderant authority of the CMC, along with the second artillery corps, national defence universities, and the academy of military science within a framework of shared command, though the subservience of the latter would point to an asymmetric division of power, or a facade, at best. In each of these cases, in relation to an aspect of military activity or responsibility the main state body is impotent with regards to the actual degree of power as well as agency and autonomy that it realistically possesses. The roles of the President and the Party Secretary are also revealing in relation to the construction of realities of power and influence both within and outside of the state.

These two roles are occupied by the same man, who also holds the position of head of the military. The state-party system is one that was inspired by and constructed upon the coat-tails of the Russian system, specifically Leninist Communism, and for all of its past and present shows of disdain for the Russian model, the Chinese system still very much reflects its origins (Dikotter, 2010:12). The Chinese communist manifesto may well preach inclusion and community but this is executed within a stridently elitist system. The leaders of the CCP are elected, not by the society it runs but by that society's representatives – those responsible for the care, guidance and safety of the society. And this process is democratic – just in an inherently Chinese sense of the term (De Burgh, 2006:19). The political process is an elitist endeavour and as such is not open to the scrutiny of the people it governs. Indeed, of the nine elected party leaders, eight are very much aloof and arguably only visible in times of crisis, with the exception of the day that they are publicly welcomed into office (McGregor. 2012:

22). The ninth, the President, is of course familiar to all due to his media campaign on 'running' for office, which highlights his professional capabilities and experiences as well as his regional 'footprints' across China (Wilkinson, 2015). It should be noted, however, that what the people know is the strapline – the professional image. What is held back is the true personality of the man. This is very much in contrast to western politics (in the USA, the UK and France for instance) where running for office is as much a personality race as it is a policy race (Dikotter, 2010:7). The head of state in China is elected, but from a carefully pre-selected list of appropriate candidates who have the qualifications, experience and maturity to handle the role, as well as having proven loyalty to the Party and being supported by existing Party members of weight and import.

In 2010, Richard McGregor published a book entitled 'The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers'. In this book he identifies an item and process which he calls the 'Red Machine'. This refers to the fact that upon the desk of every CEO of the top industry companies in China, which are state-led, there sits a 'red' telephone which dials only in and is connected directly to the CCP party rulers. It is through this that they maintain a presence in the organizations, being outlined in fear or respect, as well as the power to swap CEOs across companies and direct their visions, plans and investment ambitions (p45). In the west the market is seen as autonomous and capitalist, and big companies are generally multi-national. In the west they follow the liberal model of laissez-faire economics and autonomy with many companies having their own foreign policy departments. They are not bound to the whims of a state per se – other than in relation to internationally applied sanctions to those that wish to trade with pariah states such as North Korea and Iran, for instance. In China the rules of the game reflect a very much more Realist model. The national and international industries are very much an extension of the power of the Party to whom they are ultimately accountable. The Party President, with his parallel roles as Head of State and Head of Military, then is also head of the market in that he controls not just the policies and procedures of the companies concerned. He also has some influence on their growth and success through the ability to transfer and replace key personnel within each company who may be seen to be too inefficient or too comfortable (McGregor, 2010:45).

The Party Secretary is very much in control of all aspects of the state, within his various guises. On international trips he is listed as the President of China, reflecting the habits of the international system that see leaders meet to conduct state business rather that to air ideological interests. At home the protocol is more fluid and Party-centred (McGregor, 2010: 20). It is the Party Secretary that will raise the receiver of the Red Machine and ensure that Party policies are being upheld. It is also the CCP structure that supports and reproduces discourse and documentation on the 'Century of

Humiliation' that China must never forget, and indeed cannot forget through education books, museums, national humiliation days, statues and other symbols (Callaghan, 2010:62). This discourse is empowered by the Party organ and used to empower Chinese history and identity. It is also used to support the state, specifically China since 1949 When the old rulers were evicted from power and China, under the tutelage of the party, would shed its humiliations and rise again to its waiting place as a great power. In times of crisis the head of the military is also useful in squashing any dissent that may arise, the most famous arguably being the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989. Though this is not a good example of China's success with its society it does act as a representation of the power of the party to maintain its position in the face of impunity and also its grip on power. The century of humiliation discourse is very much tied up with Chinese identity but more specifically with the CCP's identity, as the mechanism to wash clean past stains and strengthen the nation of China, to attract back the Chinese diaspora, and tie them also with the similar narrative, a narrative that they do not just empathise but recognise, producing ties that bind, and parallel bank transfers of investments from ex-pats which continue to be a significant source of income for China and its economic rise (Smart and Hsu, 2007:5480).

The omnipresent, invisible hand of the CCP and its overarching agenda of self-preservation and legitimacy maintenance is where the main power resides within China (Shambaugh, 2008:7). This power rests upon what Leninists would recognise as the three pillars of survival which can be identified as control of personnel, control of propaganda and control of the PLA (McGregor, 2010: xix). Due to the nature of the Party-State system, this is not a particularly revolutionary or controversial statement, and indeed it is not framed to be. What is important to note is that the state system is an organ of the party and its interests – complicated by the fact that the key personnel within and across each are one and the same. Likewise, all media is controlled by the CCP propaganda department, included narratives of humiliation and history – or identity – and the PLA are held within a vice grip of control by the party as well as being permitted to partake in profitable capitalist enterprises within the economic field. Therefore, in order to understand foreign policy-making and the cognitive factors of influence within it, it is necessary to identify the key foreign policy actors and agents. This is true in relation to any state, but particularly so in the case of China where a foreign policy department – within either the State or the Party mechanism – is absent and indeed, the majority of its foreign policy actions have traditionally been more constitutive of *reactions* – both to domestic and external pressures.

Foreign Policy Decision-Making

China is unparalleled in history for its transformation from an isolated, and isolationist, command economy into one of the largest market forces in the current globalised system (Langteine. 2013:3). Whilst the structure of the Party State system has been addressed above to identify the power structure of the symbiotic system it is now necessary to turn to the actual foreign (and domestic) policy decision-making bodies and processes, how they have been constructed and how they have evolved in relation to key policy issues. As China has developed in all spheres generally, and the economic sphere specifically, it remains a socialist state, or rather builds upon the blueprint of socialism that it was initially born of. This is not to say, however, that political reform is absent from its development strategies or goals, indeed when analysing foreign policy decision-making it is clear that there have been numerous and significant reforms in the very nature of policy formation, as well as its implementation (Unay, 2013:132).

Whilst the external observation of decision-making processes have traditionally been very difficult, China has increased interaction with the processes of globalisation, and economic liberalization has resulted in significantly greater transparency, as a result arguably of endeavours to meet the criteria to join organizations such as the WTO and the UN but also as part of the older Maoist initiative of peaceful co-existence and Deng's 'Open Door' Policy, though of course increased transparency is not synonymous with complete transparency. Regardless of this, this section will assess the decision-making processes of China in relation to *who* makes policy and, equally important, *what* makes policy. This will of course be conducted within the framework of Holistic Constructivist theory to assess the normative and ideational structures that influence actions and reactions, which influence decisions, alongside the domestic and societal impacts and influences of policy aims, ambitions and agendas. A core approach to cognitive understandings of foreign policy relates to what is known as the 'operational code' (George 1969, cited in Neack et al. 1995:56). This has been highly influential in the cognitive approach as it looks at the belief systems of political figureheads and how they strive for 'cognitive consistency' (Jervis, 1970:23) in those beliefs with regard to the international system and their individual views of political life. Leaders hold two sets of beliefs: philosophical and instrumental. The former is concerned with the basic knowledge framework of politics, conflict and the enemy, as well as assumptions about history and the future. The latter is concerned with the planning procedure, timing, strategy, risks, self-interest and tactics. These two subsections are arranged around ten core questions which produce a blueprint to decision-making, the philosophical beliefs determining the definition of the situation and the instrumental beliefs determining the decisions open for consideration.

During the time of Mao Zedong, there was very much a structure of the cult of personality which influenced power and control. This was important for the attainment and maintenance of state control (Leese. 2014). In the case of Mao, it was also harnessed and cultivated in order to facilitate controversial projects such as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution (Dikotter, 2011:14-16/84 and 336-7 respectively). Mao was the standard bearer of a new China, one that would overcome the humiliations of the past at the hands of imperial powers. China would be great again – at almost any cost (Dikotter, 2011:9). Foreign policy, limited as it was to reactive policies in a hostile world of bipolar order and great power games, was very much the result of the interpretations and intentions of the party leader, with limited assistance from the narrow and elitist Politburo Standing Committee. As the leader of the new state, and of the party, Mao Zedong was granted an inherent authority to act autonomously in the best interests of the state. The cult of personality here was important in maintaining state legitimacy as the usurped former government maintained a presence off shore in Taiwan, and was very much still active in the international arena (Matsuda, 2004:5). This cult of personality can also be traced to the rule of Deng Xiaoping, from 1974, though with a marked difference in relation to the foreign policy decision-making process (Leese, 2014). Deng ushered in a new era in Chinese development with the restructuring of the socialist model with liberal market forces. Deng was a CCP veteran, as well as living through the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution he was a military man, a guerrilla leader in the fight for Chinese independence (against Japanese occupation in the 1930s and 1940s), which sought to throw off the shackles of foreign interference and the stains of the century of humiliation at the hands of imperial powers (Callahan, 2012:37). Within this framework of personal experience, it becomes easier to understand his policy of concealing China's capabilities from external actors.

Both Mao and Deng where members of the PLA as military leaders which resulted in close ties and relations with the latter. The military during their rule held a lot of influence despite being, ultimately, subservient to the party and were always central to any decision-making. The process of foreign-policy making – its very structure, in this instance, can be seen to be related directly to the existing schemas, or psychological frameworks of the men central to their development. Existing schemas relating to experience of imperial control and interference affected Deng's decision to conceal capabilities (Zhao, 2013: 102), just as their military experiences influenced their relations with the PLA, so their ties to it increased the degree of influence the PLA was able to exert in domestic and foreign policy-making (the role of the PLA will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter).

Mintz (1993, 2004), Mintz and Geva (1997), and Dacey and Carlson (2004) are just a few scholars who endorse cognitive and social-psychological theories of decision-making. These scholars

in particular focus on what is termed Poli-heuristic theory which is a blend of the Rational Actor Model (RAM) and cognitive approaches which seeks to build bridges between the two in a two-step process (Beach, 2012: 119). The first step is cognitive – whereby the actor, or decision-maker, seeks options based upon cognitive processes, the second is based on the RAM process of option selection based upon utility maximising choices. This appears to be evident at the individual level of analysis with regard to the inherent styles of the various 'generations' of Chinese leaders. Each leader, and his standing committee bring to the table specific personal and cultural variations, based upon where in China they have lived, and thus their experiences, and learning curve and character building events such as Chinese independence, the Cultural Revolution, options for travel, and perceptions of the international environment. As stated above, each leader wishes to put their own stamp on the Chinese history books – to leave a specific mark, whilst at the same time being constrained not only by firm foreign and domestic policy interests and commitments but also national and historic narratives of both splendour and humiliation which unite and direct a sense of nationalism, society and stability (Zhao, 2013:102).

When adopting a decision-making approach to the analysis of foreign policy making it is necessary to recognise and address the inextricable problem of how decision-makers view and react to their environment. Factors for consideration are perception, knowledge structures and pre-determined biases as well as the behaviour patterns of the individual decision-makers. The cult of personality may be a thing of the past, however, each president aims to leave a specific legacy of their leadership. There has been a clear shift from foreign policy underpinned by ideology (such as exporting the socialist revolution that was endorsed by Mao) to one that is underpinned by pragmatism, as well as a degree of detachment from the military. The third, fourth and fifth generations of leaders, and specifically their supreme leader (the Party Secretary and state President), did not cut their teeth in the military, nor do they draw on personal experiences of events such as the Cultural Revolution in quite the same way (Langteine, 2013: 31). The focus for these leaders is not the augmentation of power and control, as a tool to help bring the stability required to enable the reproduction of domestic reforms in the interest of state and societal development and the continued pre-eminence of the CCP. Rather the emphasis is on the development and diversification of economic links and good relations with the 'near abroad', and later the 'far abroad'. Deng's open door policy required a broadening of the circle of policy makers as greater expertise was called for in policy formation. This pattern has been reproduced in subsequent generations. Jiang, as stated, did not come from a military background but from a scientific one and sought to develop Deng's lead by initiating re-contact with near neighbours in the Pacific Rim, as well as other developing states. Jiang's policy of a 'Peaceful Rise' not only marked a clear separation of ideology and policy it also bolstered China's international status,

which was harmed during the Tiananmen Square disaster of 1989. Jiang believed that foreign policy was about 'making cool observations, dealing with situations calmly, grasping opportunities and making the best use of the situation' (Bijian, 2011:9).

He was an advocate of trade development – and all of the benefits that it provided – with neighbours, setting up a number of bilateral agreements in the Asia Pacific area. For this Jiang needed an even greater base of expertise in order to not just craft policy but also to understand it. This greater expertise was also important within the context of the wider international stage. Jiang's presidency came during a time of significant change – specifically the end of the Cold war, expertise was also required in order to better understand and implement post-Cold-War international relations and structures and to learn from the existing dominant international powers and actors (Xudon and Junxiang, 2009:50). This was not a new idea, however, as China has long been aware of the need to learn from the imperial powers (McGregor, 2010:32). As stated Jiang also bolstered China's international standing as his presidency moved away from capabilities concealment to the initiating of power diplomacy with great powers in what is known as his 'rapprochement' policy. In the 1990s he made a number of partnership agreements (see appendix one), though relations with the USA were hampered by mistrust on both sides (Goh, 2005: 238). This mistrust was exacerbated by the 1995-96 Taiwan Straits crises in which attempts to bring the island closer to the mainland failed, as well as the 2005 anti-secession Law (aimed at Taiwanese calls for independence) which recognised the independence movement as illegal and punishable by force if necessary.

To say that the issue of Taiwan is controversial is something of an understatement, because despite it being characterized as a province of China, there have actually been two 'Chinas' since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949 when the Kuomintang leaders of the Republic of China (ROC) were unseated and withdrew to the province to regroup and prepare to retake the mainland where they had been replaced by the CCP (Roberge and Lee, 2009:3). Whilst it is the former which actually rules the province it is the latter which continues to claim it as greater Chinese territory as part of its 'One China Principle' (ibid:2). Whilst Taiwan as it has since come to be known, underwent constitutional reform in 1991 and no longer made any claims on the mainland it did seek independence and has exacerbated recent disturbances relating to the 21-day anti-China protests on the 10th of July 2016 (Jennings 2014). This changed in 2008, however, when previous claims were re-asserted by the newly elected Ma Ying-Jeou. The ROC was an international actor, with membership of international organizations such as the UN, however, as China rose in power it made a point of insisting that Taiwan should not be recognised internationally as a sovereign entity, calling for its membership

of organizations to be predicated on the expulsion of the province from such entities; China won a seat at the UN in 1971, at which time the ROC was expelled (Trevelyan, 2007).

The Taiwan question is a very real and significant foreign and domestic policy issue for China, and one that no leader would want to be seen to be losing. As such, in 1981 Jiang proposed a 'one country two systems' model for Taiwan that has been implemented in Hong Kong (Jennings 2014). China has 14 direct, border-sharing neighbours and as such territorial integrity has been a policy issue throughout its history. It has been victim to different forms of invasion, interference and subjugation throughout its long history which has led to greater emphasis being placed on protecting its territory. This concept of territorial integrity, however, is not based upon the contemporary map of the world which has been heavily drawn and redrawn as a result of the processes of empire, colonization and decolonization. China identifies its territorial rights as those stated on much older, pre-colonial maps. As such its successful rise and recovery from the wounds of past humiliations is based on it returning to its role as a great power – within the territorial format of this earlier time (Xudong and Junxiang, 2009:56). This directly influences policy formation in relation to disputes such as those in the South China Sea where island ownership is highly contested (See Storey, 1999; Rowan, 2005; Wray, 2015). This issue has gained prominence in recent years with the discovery of valuable minerals and ores on some of the larger islands and therefore mining and resource ownership rights (Poling 2013: V). As a result, the foreign policy aims of all generations of CCP rule have been positive border relations.

A mark of Jiang's leadership (1989-2002) is protection of the status quo, developing trade and cooperation as well as the domestic issues of economic development and enriching peoples' lives. The presence of mineral deposits and their ownership then is a very real, material interest for policy decision-makers in China. However, it is also tied into existing knowledge frameworks, or schemas, relating to its historical narrative of rights and restitution. The Spratley Islands, according to China, were part of an ancient map of China and so belong to China. Within the framework of identity-formation then these islands (just like Taiwan) represent honour, achievement and right. To be perceived domestically as having lost them to a foreign power would be seen as failure to resist another instance of foreign control and domination (Callaghan, 2010:33). The application of images of the enemy and mirror images offers an explanation for sustained international tensions and conflicts such as recurrent foreign interference. For instance a show of concern by the EU regarding Chinese policy, its human rights record or form of democracy for instance, can be identified negatively, as a form of continual harassment and criticism, whilst continued Chinese aggression or stalemate over issues such as the South China Sea islands is seen in a more positive light as being necessary to fulfil Chinese commitments to territorial integrity and domestic stability (Blanchard, 15.07.2014) rather

than an instance of it acting dogmatically. It would also reflect poorly on the CCP and its claims to protection and stability that were made as it took power in 1949.

Whilst Jiang was focused on protection, development, trade and cooperation at the regional level his successor took this to another level. In the ever more globalised world, or global village (McLuhan, 1967), which compresses distance and increases interaction, President Hu's leadership was marked by the greater internationalisation of economic and diplomatic ties with far neighbours (states and actors which would be considered international rather than regional neighbours), instigating partnerships cross-regionally in Africa, Latin America and the Pacific. The key policy of border maintenance remained but was increasingly supported through bilateral agreements and involvement in international regimes such as the ASEAN, SCO and APT as well as engagement with the UN (Lanteigne, 2013:31). This supports the growing shift from ideology to pragmatism and from the direct influence of historical experiences of the Century of Humiliation and schematic mistrust of international organizations framed within the mirror image theory of policy formation (see chapter two). The shift is also a normative one, however, as it points to an alternation in normative understandings of self- and external-identification. The Chinese leadership no longer viewed itself as being at the mercy of the international system in the same way that it did during Deng's era of concealment. Improved diplomatic forays, bolstered by rapid economic development, raised its voice and helped to change its narrative, to one not of victimization but of healing, of returning to the great power game (note that this is not a reference to the great power game of the European powers during the 20th century).

President Xi (2013-present) has been in a position of leadership only a short time, however, he again marks a change of style. Xi comes from an economic background rather than a military or a scientific one, however, he is what the Chinese refer to as a 'princeling': a son of one of the original CCP orchestrators and so in receipt of much ideological support within the CCP (Callahan, 2012). He is also more well-travelled then previous leaders and has had direct knowledge of the international arena and other powers within it – in this respect it has the result of making the far abroad not quite so distant but more tangible and accessible. The identity and history narrative of Chinese power and weakness, and experiences with foreign *devils* must also be reconciled with personal schemas based upon actual experience in such foreign states in a way that avoids cognitive dissonance and supports the greater commitment to party legitimacy and survival. This is known as the "inherent bad faith" model (Neak et al. 1995:55). The mirror image model follows on from this but concerns both parties (for instance China and Britain) who hold mirror opposite beliefs about each other, viewing themselves as peaceful and cooperative but their enemies as war mongering, difficult and uncompromising. This

builds on the basic psychological belief in the fundamental attribution error which posits that the individual will view his own negative actions as subjective but will view the same actions carried out by an enemy as being a reflection of their innately bad character or any good needs that the enemy conducts as being purely situational and in opposition to his basic character (Clarke and White, 1989:145). This leads to gross misperceptions and can result in the escalation of conflict or crisis situations.

As stated above, the Party Secretary plays all major head of state roles in China and this is significant also in relation to foreign policy production, implementation and execution. As shown in Figure one, China has a Foreign Affairs Department (FAD). It does not, however, have a foreign *policy* department. Whilst it is easy to overlook the meaning of this or even to assume that they are one and the same thing they are not. The FAD is an executive agency under the State Council and is responsible to the State Department. It is very much involved with international relations and on the surface appears to be quite powerful. It formulates foreign policies, produces foreign affairs documents, press statements and organizes the travel of representatives to and from other countries. It is also responsible for the negotiation of bi-lateral and multi-lateral trade agreements and treaties as well as being China's representative at the UN. The FAD, therefore, is an arm of the state, representing its interests on the international stage. This is, however, not a state entity but a party organization (see Figure 1.2). Whilst it formulates policies, these polices then have to be put to the Central Committee which decides their outcome. It is also headed by Wang Yi – the Foreign Minister of the Party and one of the nine Politburo members. It is, in practice, very much a bureaucratic office with very little actual autonomy or affective power. It is subordinate not just to the party and the state but also to the military.

Whilst the office of foreign affairs may well arrange treaties it is useful to highlight the power of the PLA whose higher echelons are not only heavily intertwined with the CCP but also with the economy, investing heavily in business and industry. Within their official capacity the PLA are also involved with the development of military contracts with regard to the supply of military hardware (and maintenance thereof) and technology to other states, such as centrifuges to Iran (to be discussed further in chapter five). In a similar vein, though the FAD may well be responsible for the issuing of statements and the international travel of dignitaries, all media acts ultimately come under the control (and so monitoring, guidance and insistence) of the CCP Propaganda Department which channels power and control back to the party machine, rather than the state structure (McGregor, 2010). China can be seen, therefore, to be the formal, visual representational façade of the CCP, set within a system of committees and offices that reflect the national norms of states within the international arena, as

well as the formal blueprint to present to the people it appears to rule. The state would be the mother – the housewife that directs the children and gives them comfort, education and support. The party, in contrast would be the father, not always visible but always present, putting food on the table, clothes on backs and maintaining the household, as well as being the one to bring the punishment if the children are naughty. This similarity also fits with the Chinese view of familial piety that was previously discussed in chapter two.

The Rise of China

The rise of China has arguably been one of the most significant potential agents for change with regard to international relations at the dawn of the 21st century, and continues to be so (Unay 2013:130). As it 'rises' so too does its capacity to exert increasing influence, not just regionally but globally. This can be seen through its growing presence in security, economic, cultural and even environmental issues. More specifically, in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, China has been able to play a significant role in the global economy. China is also in the unique position of rising in circumstances alien to previous rising states. Never before has a state risen to pre-eminence in the international arena in an environment embedded with the degree of organizations, regimes, norms and information flows that mark the current era. Very rarely also, has a state risen without displacing an existing powerhouse. This makes the China question not only a pertinent one but also a contentious one. States in the current liberally interdependent system are now more risk-averse to such conditions and China can be no different if it is to maintain its development. For it is, despite its spectacular growth in all areas, still a medium level power and playing the game of the existing power-houses. Under this condition of globalisation and international scrutiny the variables for action become inherently different and foreign policy design and implementation must, and indeed does, reflect this. This is especially so in the case of China as history has shown that the foreign policy interests of great powers are considerably more populous, and distinct, than they are for medium and lower level powers. In cognitive terms, such a situation, or status, is important and affects the decision-making process. China must measure its actions, re-actions and policies, against international norms structures, and expectations in order to offset fear of the potential threat its rise may cause.

For China the evolution of its foreign policy-making from that of a reactionary state to that of a rising and potentially great power is exacerbated by the parallel challenge that it faces in maintaining the domestic environment it began to form over 70 years ago with the rise of the CCP. These domestic interests are very specific, relating to the continual improvement of standards of living for Chinese, the continuation of processes of economic (and political) reform and the promotion of stability, that were introduced in the 1970s. This environment is based upon stability and development, whereby

economic development will filter to technological progress and societal prosperity and stability; the development of the Chinese entity on the international stage not as the sick man of Asia, or the underachieving Russian comrade but as a reflection of a previous time of its original power and influence within the structure of an anti-hegemonic constitution. As a result, Chinese policy development can be seen as a 'Two Level Game' (Jacobsen and Putman, 1993) where domestic and foreign policy, whilst feeding into one another must at the same time be carefully balanced. If foreign policy can be codified as the interplay between structures formed by social relationships and various political agents (Wendt, 1987) then the most substantial change to affect Chinese foreign policy decision-making is the increase in the sheer number of agents that are involved, either directly or indirectly, in the process. These agents relate to the increase in Chinese interests regionally, with regard to territorial integrity, which is a key national interest (Zhao, 2013:104), and regional stability through the mechanisms of regional economic and security forums such as the ASEAN, APT and the SCO, trade liberalization and regional trade agreements and initiatives (Munro and Orbis, 1994:2).

The interests are also present further afield with corporate investment initiatives and opportunities being sought with western counterparts, along with information and technological flows for product development and efficiency, alongside the strengthening of cultural ties with off-shore diaspora. In pre-colonial times Chinese-ness was restricted to those Chinese who lived on Chinese territory (Jacques, 2012:87). To leave China was to surrender your Chinese identity. During colonial and early post-colonial times, it was seen as betrayal, and very little consideration was given to this ex-pat community. However, with the rise of China at the hands of the CCP a renewed interest was found for these communities abroad who were western-educated and so of technological and scientific use. There was also a very real economic benefit in that they have played a significant role in China's development through investment. National humiliation education, as a result, is now also geared to diaspora communities, instilling a sense of unity – of 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2006: 5), affiliation and ownership amongst those abroad in pro-national terms. This can be seen in analysis of the Chinese protests that took place in various states during the Beijing Olympics where Chinese ex-pats came out in force in the near and far abroad in an expression of solidarity with the mainland. This was arguably a major shift in China's concept of identity and belonging, which was re-structured into a new schema of a Chinese diaspora, to be re-configured within an imagined community of belonging rather than dismissed as 'deserters'. They were targeting as economic tools but also politically as foreign policies of migration and diaspora influence and potential as investors and contributors, had to be re-assessed and revised.

Domestic interests in CCP legitimacy and societal stability have meant that crime is also a significant foreign policy issue; not just in relation to corruption charges and the effect that they can have on how China is perceived abroad but also, more immediately in relation to permeable international crime and terrorism which can cause problems not just for the economy but also for societal stability in a state with over fifty large ethnic minorities (Shambaugh, 2008:7), in particular the large Muslim quarter of Xinjiang which has been a source of tension in the past as well as having the potential to colour relations with Middle Eastern counterparts. Particularly in the current phenomenon of religious extremism and divisive identity politics that has given rise to the prominence of groups such as Hezbollah and Islamic State in recent years. China is highly dependent on oil for its continuing development, being the second largest consumer in the world. In this arena it is coming to the market place late, long after industrialized western powers have already established firm relations (whether positive or negative) with hydrocarbon producers and the accompanying supply contracts which affect its purchasing parity. But this area is not just important for hydrocarbons – though this is an over-riding factor. Western states are technologically advanced with high quality products.

In Eastern Asia, many states export similar low-tech or low quality products (with the exception of the production of high tech products for western firms based on cheap labour), being at similar levels of development they are also limited in terms of their spending power. The MENA, however, is home to some of the poorest states in the world but also some of the richest. This is the perfect place for China to sell its non-hydrocarbon products – providing a testing ground for product viability and, more importantly, development. Shortly after the 1979 revolution, Chinese products were not popular in Iran due to their poor quality. However, in the contemporary era they are much improved and far more popular. Such products include textiles, ceramics and electronics.

The large Muslim minority in China is also used as a foreign policy tool as it assists in bolstering relations with Muslim states in the hydrocarbon rich Middle East on which China is highly dependent (Davidson, 2010:1). There have been many high-level public visits by Middle Eastern diplomats to China's Xinjiang province to showcase education and religious freedoms as well as ethnic minorities' treatment. This is important internationally were China comes under fire for its poor human rights record and in relation to international terrorism as Xinjiang can be seen as fertile ground for fundamentalist recruiters, with disastrous economic effects domestically, regionally and internationally. Therefore, the maintenance of a stable and un-contentious Muslim quarter is of high importance for China, though there have always been levels of difference between the Muslims and the native Han in China, which has resulted in societal inequalities for the latter. What is important is the awareness of this issue and the commitment from China not just to squash any potential

disturbances but to utilise the group for potential advantages based upon commonality and similarity when faced with Muslim states in the MENA. Lowell Dittmer (2003:904) posits that the purpose of foreign economic relations is to make the domestic politics of a state more compatible with the global economy, in the case of China, a socialist state ideology and historical anathema of the west, this is a significant concern, attested to by its alteration of policies against neo-imperial organizations to positive endorsement of organizations such as the WTO and active membership of the UN, along-side the above mentioned security and economy forums of the Asia-Pacific region; China has developed into a team player it would seem, and in doing so is reaping greater Soft Power with which to enjoy the foreign policy benefits of such cooperation.

Though the decision-making process has been more centralized in China than in western states, with its government being dominated by a sole political actor, namely the CCP, this dominance is not traditionally recognised authoritarianism. The party-state requires legitimacy in order to fulfil its overriding (or underpinning) domestic and international policy of party survival (Zhao, 2013:103). In this light there has been a significant shift in the construction of ideas and perceptions that marked the rule of Mao and Deng regarding international relations. Though much state-to-state interaction is underpinned by Maoist peaceful co-existence, outdated ideas such as the exportation of the socialist revolution are being discarded for more pragmatic and linear policy ambitions, formulated by a bureaucracy less directly affected by events such as the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward. There is also less dependence on military thinking as current and recent leaders hail form economic and scientific backgrounds (respectively) rather than being ex-guerrilla leaders of the independence movements of 1949. The role of the military is also an overtly domestic one, with limited projection capabilities abroad and a navy that is predominantly 'green water' and so defensive as opposed to 'blue water' which offers greater range and is more indicative of offensive projection. China is a nuclear power, with all that that may entail, but its military also lags significantly behind that of other dominant powers in the international (and regional) arena. What it has in sheer numbers is relative to its size and also far ahead of its technical expertise. It is a self-defence force.

The presidency, or secretariat, of Jiang Zemin saw the implementation (in the 1990s) of improved relations with great powers well as regional powers – active dialogue over mere co-existence. This was developed by Hu who shifted this initiative to incorporate far neighbours also – or cross-regional diplomacy. Though it should be noted that the majority of this development at the foreign policy level was trade driven, and so economically underpinned. The obvious exception to this is of course those matters which relate to sovereign territorial integrity such as the South China Sea disputes and the less directly related issue of Taiwan and its relationship – and political proximity to

the mainland. These domestic and political issues are also key foreign policy issues as they again not only colour international perceptions, to which, as we have seen above, China is sensitive, but also have diplomatic and economic impacts. China now has an 'open door' policy with Taiwan despite passing anti-secessionist laws, and is now enjoying greater economic relations with the former within a less hostile environment, though international recognition of Taiwan, or rather the ROC, can and does still result in Chinese outrage and can seriously threaten diplomatic relations. Chinese successful and impressive economic rise is highly attractive to investors and fortune seekers however which limits the number of cases to arise where Taiwan would be considered the preferred partner. There is also the near-constant stalemate with Japan and other neighbours over Island ownership, which has been exacerbated by the potential hydrocarbon resources that they may wield. Again, however, their policy has not been overly aggressive, outside of the arena of discourse. Indeed, China has attempted to build diplomatic bridges and come to 'agreements' with contesters – though of course on China's terms and in ways that support China's historical territorial map.

Conclusions

Zemin and Hu both expanded the degree of education and professionalism within foreign policy decision-making, which resulted in the greater empowerment of governmental ministries and commissions, as well as non-governmental organizations such as think tanks and academic centres that were required for information gathering and analysis. Many of the professionals affiliated with these also have a far greater knowledge and personal experience of the international arena having grown up in a China that was less isolated, and so with greater capabilities to travel and study abroad. This has a clear impact on decision-making as all of this has coloured their views and their understandings and acceptance of norms and information flows at the regional and international levels. Included in these information flows is the role of the media. Despite state censorship, this has introduced and aided the development, not just of additional links with diaspora communities but also with other media and internet users and sources. The protests that erupted during the Beijing Olympics did so in numerous Asian and western countries and were assisted by the lightning speed flow of information permitted by the internet. Globalisation and China's rise within its framework, has also demanded greater transparency from a state traditionally and predictably hard to read from the outside.

During the era of Mao, foreign policy decision-making was the responsibility of a narrow and closed elite, the expansion of this circle by Zemin and Hu was first initiated by Deng as a result of the need for greater trade expertise. This has resulted in a more diverse circle of decision-making which also allows for dissent, or criticism, though of course only within the framework of party protocol. The

era of domination through the cult of personality and a single leader is well and truly over, with decision-making being the result of consultation between ministerial groups, the bureaucracy and non-governmental agents. The number and diversity of decision-makers is significantly larger in the contemporary era, however, therefore the party is, and will remain, the paramount political actor in all areas, particularly those that have the ability to affect its survival and/or legitimacy such as foreign policy (Zhao. 2013:103). The cult of personality has made way for collective leadership, a trend that it is impossible to reverse, with the upper tiers of the CCP being more decentralised and law creation and foreign policy making being dependant on support and information from ministries and other sources, and consensus building being crucial to day-to-day politics. The NPC is the highest body of power in China, however, the reality of the situation is that it is far too large to be truly effective. More power is actually held by the smaller CMC. This power is, however, more of a veneer than a reality as actual power in truth sits with the Secretariat, the Politburo and the PSC. China is still a party-state symbiosis, with emphasis on the party, and ultimate power still sits within the echelons of the Politburo Standing Committee and its concept of democratic centralism and dichotomy between actual and implied power. The relationship between these forms of power and decision-makers is a hermeneutic circle of types. The party developed its structure in symbiosis with the state structure, constructing norms and values which are self-re-enforcing and self-perpetuating. The role of a single ruler facilitated cooperative decision-making at the higher levels and the structure of the party now maintains its members and their ideologies through membership inductions, histories and education just as the members maintain the party structure and its constructed core values and ambitions – namely survival and prestige.

This chapter has introduced and analysed the decision-making process of China and the CCP, and the cognitive factors that influence or drive them. The application of cognitive FPA, in concert with a Holistic Constructivist lens which gives weight to identity and domestic-international influences is pertinent. It reveals the role that norm, value and again, identity structures, and constructs play in decision-making and so foreign policy formation. Leading on from this, chapter five will repeat this process with regard to the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to highlight similarities in their decision-making processes. Once this has been done such similarities will underpin the analysis in chapter six, of Iranian-Chinese relations and the role that cognition plays in the construction of their relations with one another.

Chapter Five:

Cognitive Factors and Iranian Foreign Policy Making

Introduction

When thinking of Iranian foreign policy, we are dealing with multiple and diverse sources and histories. This results in myriad diverse meanings and interpretations which cannot be reduced down to one single narrative. Conventional approaches to FPA suffer from a range of problems which limit their ability to provide coherent or convincing accounts, although the questions which they ask may have some value as the starting point for a more carefully grounded research agenda. This chapter explores some alternatives with a view to finding more nuanced understandings of Iranian foreign policy, in relation to the cognitive factors that influence the decision-making processes. Conventional approaches tend to focus on rationality, be western-centric, ignore distinctive cultural variations, and (even when they are explicitly considered) to under-estimate the importance of specific value systems, identities and histories. These points are made in summary since there is a substantial literature to support them in general which has been used, for example, to re-assess Indian, Chinese and Indonesian foreign policies. But relatively little attention has been given to a more critical account of the foreign policies of Iran since the 1979 revolution. Equally, relatively little attention has been given to the distinctive character of Iranian political and social processes in foreign policy debates, not least because so much of the academic literature on foreign policy has its origins in the United States and the evolution of US-Iranian relations since 1979 has discouraged the kinds of critical thinking which might open out new possibilities of explanation rather than closing down explanations.

The external, predominantly Western, perceptions of Iran today are that it is a state held within the vice-like grip of tyrannical Islamist hardliners, where dissent of any and all forms is crushed, perpetrators 'disappear', women are hidden behind the black veil of the chador and provocative books and media sources are banned (Farndon, 2006:15). The USA is the greatest enemy – the 'Great Satan' – and Israel is an illegitimate state and needs to be wiped off the map (MacAskill and McGreal, 2005). This is only one way of looking at Iran. In reality the governmental and leadership structure is a complex power play between different factions with specific push and pull factors in the wake of the 1979 revolution, with both elected and non-elected institutions as well as those that are appointed by the elected and unelected officials. Currently the state consists of a Supreme Leader, the Ayatollah, who oversees, monitors and directs the lower system of government, based on Sharia Law. Below the supreme leader are the unelected institutions of the Judiciary, the armed forces and the expediency council. Parallel to these bodies are the elected Parliament, President and Assembly of Experts. The

personnel from these latter bodies are directly elected by the general populace, nevertheless, they in turn share responsibility with the supreme leader to elect members to the quasi-elected institutions of the Guardian Council and the Parliamentary Cabinet. The Assembly of Experts, in an almost cyclical fashion is also responsible for the appointment of the Supreme Leader, just as the Guardian Council vet's candidates for the directly elected institutions. The Supreme Leader and all members of the Guardian council and assembly of experts are Shia clerics, as required by the positions. Many members of the other institutions are also clerics but this is not a stated requirement. What this amounts to is a complex political system which combines religion and democracy as there is a balance between the institutions of the Supreme Leader and the directly elected President and Parliament.

In the post-1979 era the lines of authority are both clearer and more blurred, as will be shown. Sitting atop of the structure is the Supreme Leader, presently Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who replaced Ayatollah Khomeini following his death in 1989, and is only the second supreme leader to rule the state in this unique capacity as both the highest religious and political leader. The supreme leader, as authorized in the constitution, is responsible for the supervision of all of the general policies of Iran. In this capacity it is he who ultimately sets the tone and direction of all domestic and foreign policy aims, ambitions and actions (Coughlin, 2009:166). The supreme leader is also the de-facto commander-in-chief of the armed forces and intelligence and security operations, having the sole power to declare a state of either war or peace. He also has the authority to elect and dismiss leaders of the judiciary, state-owned media networks and the commander of the military guard corps as well as appointing six theologians to form part of the twelve-strong guardian council. He also has a number of representatives, in excess of 2,000 throughout the government who extend his power and reach (Coughlin, 2009:166). This role as both political and religious superior is specifically unique to Iran (and the older state of Persia) but also to the teachings of Islam generally: until the rise of Khomeini, and indeed after, many clerics such as his mentor Ayatollah Borujerdi, believed that religion had no place in politics (Farndon, 2006:116). The Ayatollah disagreed, though, stating that 'all Islam is politics' and it was this drive and belief that fuelled his criticism of Reza Shah Pahlavi in state and in exile, and his support during and following the 1979 Islamic Revolution as he was able to relate to and connect with the humble and the poor, the pious and the under-represented in the days of the Shah's elitist opulence as a perceived puppet of western imperialist ambitions (Rostami-Povey, 2010:31). There is no denying that the supreme leader is the ultimate ruler of Iran and source of power. It is he who, as the position insists and requires, directs all foreign policy actions, reactions and decisions. Yet there are other sources and forms of power to be attained that can result in the gaining of influence that can also affect, though less directly, foreign policy decision-making in Iran.

Once such position that provides this is that of the President (Monshipouri and Dorraj, 2013:2). An assessment of social issues since 1979 would also show that, contrary to popular belief, the Ayatollah's power is not absolute, but rather as Monshiopouri and Dorraj (2013:1) point out, he can be "subverted by the forces of civil society and the social Dynamics that his policies unleash". Though this position is concerned predominantly with domestic policy issues, the president does act as a figurehead for the state and so affects external perceptions of it. In this respect the President has perceived power, but the power is also affective. President Khatami, elected in 1997, altered the approach to foreign policy in that he used it to address domestic issues rather than as a tool to highlight crisis as a diversion away from such issues (Rakel, 2007:178). The approach to policy, as a careful execution of power, saw very real results as diplomacy was exercised, resulting in closer relations with neighbouring Arab states such as Saudi Arabia and improved relations with the EU, as well as taking steps to create room for dialogue between Iran and the USA (Rakel, 2007:178). Whilst Khatami was a protagonist of the reformists his successor, Ahmadinejad, elected in 2005, was very much a supporter of them and used his presidency to move away from Khatami's dialogue approach in favour of a more hard-line approach of the ultra-conservative factions in power and had a resultant negative impact on external perceptions of the regime as a result of insightful and revolutionary language which confirmed Iran's role as a pariah state. The newly elected Rouhani (2013-present), in contrast, sits between the two, again leaning heavily on pragmatic necessity and preaching greater dialogue and cooperation. Ultimate foreign policy decisions lie with the supreme leader yet the motivations and political influence of the elected presidents also have some sway, and have significant power with regard to perceptions of Iran by external actors, and of the outside world by Iranian actors, particularly in a state whose population now holds a youth majority that were not witness to the excesses of the Shah and are too young to appreciate or remember, first-hand, the 1979 revolution.

In relation to Iran it is important to address the unique make-up of its political structure but also its history and identity which will show the intricate relationship it has developed between domestic and international relations, so much so that to understand one is necessarily to understand the other (Axworthy, 2011:110). In this respect there are echoes of similarities with China, as discussed in the previous chapter, in that external perceptions, and perceptions of the external at the domestic level, affect foreign policy decision-making. The push and pull factors of power relations between the different government factions will also be addressed as these highlight contrasting and conflicting political and societal interests that form decisions. Within this there is also the issue of the cult of personality highlighted in the previous chapter which is significant in relation to identity politics in Iran and the constant power plays between the different political factions, as well as in terms of maintaining domestic legitimacy. As such this chapter will follow the format of chapter four in

identifying and analysing the cognitive processes of, and influences on, Iranian decision-making at both the national and foreign policy levels.

Contrary to popular, or media-framed belief, Iran does have a long history of democratic practices and interests that directly impact on the legitimacy of its governments – past and present (Gheissari and Nasr, 2009:vi). A discussion and analysis of key foreign policy interests of Iran and the cognitive processes that influence their development and/or implementation, as well as their relationship with key domestic and societal interests follows below. Again (as with chapter four) precedent will be given to over-arching foreign policy drivers over specific decisions where applicable. As such the chapter focuses on identity and the way that Iran is identified and how it identifies itself and the affect that this has on foreign policy interests such as territorial integrity with neighbours such as Saudi Arabia, nuclear ambitions and historical residue in relation to perceptions of humiliations and previous glories, this will also include the application of status theory also introduced in the previous chapter. The growth in soft power will also be analysed in relation to the implementation of foreign policy interests relating to neighbouring MENA states generally and conflict zones such as Iraq and Syria specifically.

The Long Shadow of History

Iran has been an international Pariah, of sorts, since 1979 when it sought to remould its international relations with both regional and extra-regional powers on its own terms. The state, under Ayatollah Khomeini abandoned the secularizing and modernising ambitions of the Shah in favour of a theocracy under Sharia law (Hashim, 1995). Relations with the dominant Western powers of Europe deteriorated rapidly or, as with the USA, were severed all together (Sabet-Saeidi, 2011:69). The constitution was redrafted and included, specifically, a commitment to the regional export of the Islamic revolution. Just two presidents in, under Rafsanjani (1989-1997), and following the death of Khomeini in the June of 1989, and the appointment of Khamenei, such an ambition was superseded by the national awareness of the need to execute a more pragmatic foreign policy approach (Hashim, 1995). The reasons for this were many, based on an economy and morale crumbling under eight years of war (with Iraq from 1980-1988), a lack of regional trust, a lack of allies, and a need to recover and move away from unprofitable isolationism. This pragmatism was maintained and developed during the Khatami presidency but faltered somewhat under Ahmadinejad (Ehteshami and Zweiri, 2001:151).

Iran has a long and rich history of culture, civilisation, internationalisation and diplomacy (Fischel, 1951). It also has a long history of having been at the mercy of invasion, interference and domination. As a nation it has been at the mercy of the Greeks, Arabs, Mongols and Turks (7th-13th

Centuries) , and exploited and subjugated by the Russian and European empires and invaded yet again during World Wars One and Two (Ramazani, 2009). In the modern era their natural inclination to home-grown democracy was perverted by the 1953 coup that ousted Musaddeq in favour of the return of the autocratic Shah – a leader best suited to maintaining allegiance to the neo-colonial powers that had a vested interest in the country and its rich energy reserves (Ramazani, 2009). These events are ingrained in the Iranian collective psyche and directly affect their interpretations of events and behaviours. This is not to say that Iran is naturally, or psychologically, anti-west however. Indeed, it is a state with many positive memories of western relations also (Parikarakos, 2013: 8). This results in a unique Iranian self-identification.

Yet Iranian foreign policy, like that of its Chinese contemporary, is heavily influenced by its colonial past, its constitution demanding that it not give additional weight to any hegemonic power (Nia, 2011:280). The post-colonial mind-set is a psychological one and dependant on an increased sense of self-worth and of status – something that Iran has as it develops its diplomatic ties regionally. One key problem, as a result of the colonial era, however, is the creation of the notion of the enemy. The revolution was the cutting of the colonial apron strings – reaction and resistance to external domination and interference (Coughlin, 2009:11). The post-1979 era saw the state actively reorganize its identity in opposition to that of its oppressors – the shatans (devils) of Russia and the West. Chants of 'death to America' are as much habitual as they are representations of intent (Chopra, 2007). Indeed 9/11 was marked in Iran as a day that such chants could not be heard, as the people instead opted for pro-western street demonstrations in a show of solidarity against terrorism (Pipe, 2013:15).

In contrast to China, Iran in the contemporary arena, is very much at the mercy of the processes of globalisation. A growing population must be supported, economically, politically and socially. Iran has difficulties due to inherent mismanagement, both as a result of the 1981-88 war with Iraq which put longer-term structural developments on hold and as a result of stalemates amongst the ruling elites (Aminmansour, 2007). Economic sanctions and limited trading and investment opportunities with the external world have also led to the retardation of economic growth. A direct result of this is the rapid urbanization of the Iranian population in a climate of economic stagnation internationally which has a direct domestic domino effect (Axworthy, 2011:109). The state can be separated into two camps, those that urbanize with development and those that urbanize without it. The result is the lack of a clear middle level urban centre to bridge the gap between underdeveloped cities such as Hormozgan and Kerman, with major cities such as Tabriz and Tehran (Aminmansour, 2007). Iranian advancement and development, however, is an area of concern both regionally with regard to the MENA and internationally, especially with its development of nuclear technology. This

FDI is concentrated in a few sectors of the economy, namely the hydrocarbon industry, vehicle manufacture, copper mining, petro-chemicals, foods and pharmaceuticals. In 1993-2007 Iran absorbed $24.3 billion in FDI and $34.6 billion for 485 projects from 1992-2009, rising to $4488 in 2013 as shown in table one (Central Bank of Iran).

Table 1:

Iran has made development of non-hydrocarbon exports a priority, which is advantaged by its broad industrial domestic base, educated and motivated workforce, cheap labour and energy resources and geographical location, which makes accessible a population of over 300 million people in the Caspian markets, Persian Gulf states and countries further east (Maloney, 2015: 2). In this respect Iran, like China, has also been looking to Africa, seeking (though with limited results) to build a coalition of allies there (Rosen, 2013:1). Iran's record in Africa has been a poor one, with little success, the last firm ally being Sudan, until it chose to align itself with Saud Arabia (Rosen, 2013:1). Ahmadinejad's 2005-2013 'South-South' policy of developing relations with African nations yielded no positive results. Though it can be argued that this is, in large part, due to Iran's affiliation with terrorist or opposition groups in the continent when are seeks to disrupt stability – such as the Yarmouk explosion which is suspected to be an Iranian front to smuggle arms to Hamas. And the smuggling of weapons to southern Senegal (Rosen, 2013:2). Despite this however, the current Iranian deputy foreign minister for Arab and African affairs has declared that Iran will be updating its Africa strategy and seeking to develop greater strategic ties with actors in the region (Vatanka, 2016:1). FDI in Iran has been hindered by unfavourable and complex operating requirements and by international sanctions (Freeman, 2012). In the early 2000s the Iranian government attempted to overcome the former of these issues by liberalizing investment regulations which has had positive effects: Iran ranks

69th out of 139 in the global competitiveness report and ranked 6th globally in 2010 in attracting FDI in the same report.

Iran is characterized as an enemy of the USA and Israel, and it is the latter two who are responsible for much of the interpretations with regard to Iranian foreign policy. The most common of which at the time of writing being the nuclear issue which has received considerable media coverage (Patrikarakos, 2012: xv). Iran is portrayed as hostile to western attempts at dialogue and discussion – bent on its own path of regional hegemony and the acquisition of nuclear arms – with former President Ahmadinejad as the hostile representative of foreign policy implementation (Lindsay and Takeyh, 201:33). To what extent this is based on pure truths, however, above the *interpretations* of the USA, still smarting from the 1980 hostage crisis and Iranian refusal to toe the hegemonic line is an area for analysis within itself (Drenou, 2011:74). The ultra-traditionalist President Ahmadinejad came to power in Iran in 2005, and received much criticism. The nuclear programme[1] which was being pursued at this time produced much fervour and exacerbating international concerns that Iran is intent on developing nuclear weapons (Ehteshami and Zweiri, 2011:151). As a result, it has, until recently, been the recipient of numerous and extensive economic and trade sanctions, instigated by the USA, through the United Nations (Drenou, 2011:76, 79).

The nuclear issue was seen as a mark of Ahmadinejad's 2005-2013 presidency and a point on which Iran had refused to negotiate (Khozanov, 2011: 3). Here there is a fundamental fallacy, however: the recommencement of the nuclear programme was instigated and signed off by the moderate Khatami in 2004 before Ahmadinejad's election to office. It is also a policy that shows no signs of weakening under President Rouhani, who advocates centrist-pragmatism and even wished Jewish communities 'Rosh Hashanah' greetings via Twitter (Monshipouri and Dorraj, 2014:1). Iran had also not refused to negotiate – rather it refused to abandon enrichment. Iran watchers such as Benari and Ross (2013) and Davenport (2014) note that Iran had in fact offered a variety of compromise gestures, all of which were either ignored or refused by Washington. The original suspension, outlined in the Paris Agreement of 2004 (Sabet-Saeidi, 2011:69) was an act of good faith by the Iranians as part of a negotiation process with the EU3 over their concerns about Iran's intentions. The six-month suspension was, as previously highlighted, dragged out by the EU3 for three years with no compromise offer (Santini, 2010:473, 475). Assessed with the existing Iranian knowledge schemas of European behaviour, this is seen as part of a western pattern of attempting to restrict Iranian developmental

---

[1] The nuclear programme is actually not 'his' policy but rather a long running national interest. Media representations, however, aligned it with his ultra-conservative stand and its re-implementation as he came to office in 2005.

capabilities and so keep it subverted. Iran is a state that learns its lessons well, reluctant to repeat past mistakes, which should be understood when attempting to deal with an old problem through the implementation of an old ruse.

It is essentially a matter of interpretation. Sanctions against Iran did not have the immediate, desired effect (Early, 2011:400; Early, 2014:1). Such threats and indirect attacks are merely counter-productive to a state whose foreign policy is predominantly reactionary, based on its historical perception of subversion. Iran is an ancient civilisation and has a history of prudent statecraft, despite momentary mistakes – relatively speaking – and in light of its 1979 throwing off of the shackles of domination and subversion, it expects to receive a level of respect from the international community in keeping with its historical successes and self-proclaimed due status (Ramazani, 2009). When the USA calls Iran to negotiate but follows through with an announcement that all options are on the table – this is seen as a threat of military action or further sanctions if compliance is not granted. More importantly it is interpreted as disrespectful. Indeed, improvements in EU-Iranian relations have been addressed by Khamenei as a result of the increased level of respect that Iran has received from the former (Cebeci, 2011:2015).

Underlying the actions and foreign policy goals of Iran is a belief, be it a colonial legacy or a truth, that the only outcome of satisfaction to the present global superpower is one of regime change in the Islamic Republic and that the demonization of Iran and fear mongering concerning its nuclear ambitions are simply tools for manufacturing the consent of the international and civil community to support such a desire, or in turn, as Ramazani (2013) states, that the aim of the sanctions was to stifle the domestic society to a degree that they would themselves welcome, or instigate such a regime change (p55). This latter view gained credence in the wake of the 2005 presidential elections following allegations of corruption at the ballot box. Public demonstrations and protests were reported and heavily circulated in the media, increasing the presence and recognition of what has come to be known as the green movement, after the 'Green Wave' campaign by Mousavi which triggered the initial protests over anger at electoral fraud (Dagres, 2012; Anderson and Anderson, 2010:108).

In relation to FPA, Holistic Constructivism offers important considerations with regard to the nature and importance of identity politics and the historical experiences influential in the foreign policy-making process (Chopra, 2007). This critical discourse consists of reactions to the post-colonial legacy, at times, as with the case of Iran, lending to anti-conquest narratives (Patrikarakos, 2013: xxv). The national narratives of a state are significantly shaped by their past experiences, such as that of colonial domination, uniquely so in the MENA, and indeed Asia, where the nation state system was implanted, altering the very landscape of the region at the whim of distant powers. In this respect the

nuclear issue, for Iran, represents (and is perhaps founded on) its perceptions of previous injustices (Patrikarakos, 2013: xxvi). Here the concept of the 'Other' is of high importance. Colonies were created in opposition to the European powers – uncivilised, underdeveloped peoples in contrast to European advancement and glory. All that the West was not, nor wanted to be, yet crucial for their ideological unity. The reactions to the experience of interference and intervention can be many, from states still seeking imperial patronage and to emulate the Western model, to states such as Iran and China, to name just two, whose reaction is to seek greater identification with their pre-colonial heritage (Garver, 2006:4). These two states, however, are relatively unique in that they have a clear sense of past identity and culture, unlike present day Indonesia, for example, which when seeking independence did so within the borders set by the colonial rulers, rather than the natural, pre-existing borders of trade and culture.

Western hegemony is still evident in academia and sets the tone with regard to setting the agenda of topics of interest and importance. Iran, post-1979, has a reactionary foreign policy, born of a history of external intervention. It seeks to distance itself from hegemonic powers, focusing instead on the security of its own independence and respectability within its own narrative. This is to say that a foreign policy goal is not to gain the trust and respect of the USA but of its regional neighbours and civilisational equals. Iran has committed its foreign policy actions to fostering greater trust and respect amongst regional neighbours and international peers such as the EU and states of Latin America (Cebeci, 2011:215).

In this respect Iran is a greater supporter of democracy amongst nations, rather than democracy within nations, seeking to foster regional diplomatic and security ties that bind (Nia, 2007:283-4). Identity plays an important role in this endeavour, indeed it could be suggested that not only is Iran's foreign policy reactionary but so its national identity, in a sense, is also dependent on external forces. The demonization of the USA and the West generally serves a specific, unifying purpose, in a similar way to that of China which uses narratives of unity amongst the domestic society and diaspora communities to cement alliance and loyalty across a large and disparate state against external, colonial aggression and criticisms of, and rivalry with, Japan. Iran is defined by what it stands against. It identifies itself in opposition to its 'Other' – the big and small Satan's of the world. Death to America is not so much a declaration of intent but the continual enforcement of a national narrative (post-1979) born in opposition to the old puppet master and keeping alive memories of humiliation and subversion, to create unity and maintain an alternate model of rule (Nia, 2007:285). Unity is a domestic concern for Iran which is home to multiple faiths and ethnicities. The populace was united in its condemnation of the Shah, with the communist Tudeh party, the clerics and marginalised groups

all uniting to oust him. In the aftermath pre-existing political differences resurfaced but were initially quashed by the growing power of the Ayatollah who was best able to represent the majority of the people, having garnered the support of the countryside and peasants who were larger in number. The Tudeh Party failed to garner as much support in part due to the wider failures of the Regional Communist movement and the domination in the Soviet Union of a wealthy and corrupt state elite (Rosatami-Povey, 2010: 35). Unity in Iran was formed in the face of the Shah, in his absence, and to garner and maintain power, the new Islamic government found a new enemy, and so a new unifying force in the form of Iraq in the First Gulf War (Rakel, 2007:160). Since the end of this war, the unifying enemy has been the USA – though this is not so much a new enemy as a refocusing on what has become the traditional enemy that underpinned the corruption of the Shah and the continuation of the Iran-Iraq War (Rakel, 2007: 162).

As with China, Iran is suspicious of external interest in its affairs, specifically by Western states or regional powers deemed to be their puppets – such as Israel or Saudi Arabia. Criticism and interference are assimilated into, and compared against, existing knowledge frameworks that recall previous similar shows of interest. In this case, such experiences include the 1953 coup to install a puppet leader in Iran as well as similar acts in regional states such as Libya (pre-Ghaddafi), and the Iraqi Monarchy in the 1950s, insultingly low concessions on hydrocarbon production under the Shah, with European and American Powers and support of Iraq during the First Gulf war, to name just a few, and some of the more well-known. Comparisons to such previous events, combined with negative rhetoric, as mentioned above, whether for domestic unity against an 'Other' or genuine criticism of actions, draw negative results that arouse suspicion and mistrust. Western presence in the MENA militarily, politically, and diplomatically also acts constant reminders of their power and influence – gained in part from colonial conquest and imperialism – affecting foreign policy implementation as well as decision-making. This in part explains Iran's reactionary nature and unwillingness to engage with hegemonic powers who, in the past have been seen to abuse acts of trust and alliance – such as in the case of the Shah post-1953, and in neighbouring states such as Iraq during the 1990 Kuwait Crisis and Second Gulf War in which case Iraq was not prevented from attacking but then penalised for it, or US support of the Taliban in the interests of its own bi-polar war with the USSR rather than genuine assistance to the state during the 1980s.

Religion, Territory and Identity

Iran has long believed itself to have an important regional security role to tackle issues such as drug trafficking and to maintain stability generally, insisting that if they 'wanted to cause problems then they would have done' (Sabet-Saeidi, 2011:65), highlighting that there have been no claims that Iran

has been inappropriate (from military personnel) in Iran or Afghanistan (Khazzaee interview: Bloomberg). The events of 9/11 and the more recent uprisings in the MENA, termed by the media as the Arab Spring, however, have had a significant effect on both the political environment and power structures of the region (Freeman, 2013:1).

The growing democratic movements, coupled with the on-going conflicts in Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Libya (2011 onwards) have, arguably, opened up the space and need for a more comprehensive and consolidated form of leadership in the Persian Gulf (Jahner, 2012:38). This is also underwritten by the decline of Iraq, previously a significant regional power. These issues have had a direct effect on Iran and its regional relations. This also involves China which has developed a growing presence in the region with developing relations with Libya, involving valuable Libyan oil supplies ending as a result of the Arab Spring uprisings which saw China evacuate a staggering 35,860 Chinese citizens from the state (Ronen, 2014:17), as well as influence in Afghanistan, Israel, and Egypt to name just a few – which will be discussed in more detail later. As well as the development in 2010 of CCTV Arabic International Channel to promote Chinese diplomacy as well as culture and its commitment to a peaceful rise (Wai-Yip, 2014:21), as discussed in the previous chapter.

An assessment of Saudi-Iranian relations for instance, reveals that rivalries and cooperation are hindered by the conditions of mistrust and suspicion which have been rhetorically constructed and politically fostered (Amiri, et al. 2010:50). This is not to say that the rhetoric is entirely fabricated but that it reproduces, as well as being reproduced by, images and memories of negative relations, of suspicion, ill intent and interference. Yes, there is conflict in the histories of the two states and tensions in the contemporary era but they are reinforced by the language and representations of the two powers and their fears and suspicions of one another.

Saudi-Iranian ties were at their closest in the run up to the 1979 revolution when the Saud and Pahlavi dynasties, both monarchical, came together in support of regional security, citing shared commonalities of governance and mutual interest (ibid:50). There was, however, an on-going bone of contention with regard to ownership of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb, three small islands of the upper Persian Gulf that were under Iranian control until British intervention in the late 19th century after which they were transferred to the UAE (Young, 1970:152). This was a continual source of contention between the two powers and the efforts to resolve it centred on equitable solutions, cooperation and discourse – on soft power and diplomacy. Though an agreement was eventually reached in 1965 it was never ratified by Tehran due to the discovery of important mineral deposits on

what was to become the Saudi side and the agreement was finally abandoned in 1968[2] (ibid: 153). This was, arguably, due to a lack of trust and transparency between the two states with regard to existing knowledge of these deposits. The upper Gulf Islands, though overshadowed in the contemporary era by more pressing foreign policy issues relating to the economy and nuclear plans, is a very real issue to Iran, within the framework of historical experience of foreign invasion and control, to lose the islands – and more importantly, their potential resource revenue, would be seen as a further humiliation at the hands of rival, hegemonic powers and their perceived puppets (Rakel, 2007: 160).

In the recent past, leading up to the 1979 revolution, Iran and Saudi Arabia experienced warm relations based on shared identification as monarchical, major regional powers with a common interest in regional security and geo-political interest as hydrocarbon exporters. In the contemporary era, both states are committed to bilateral agreements with China in order to fulfil the latter's growing energy requirements (Jaffe and Lewis, 2002:115). The Islamic revolution and Iran's resultant anti-western/anti-hegemonic policy, raised tensions with Saudi Arabia, a close ally of the USA (Mahruqi, 214). This was further hindered by the Islamic Republic's insistence on the illegitimacy of monarchical rule – aimed at its Arab neighbours but also a justification of its own disavowal and overthrow of the Shah and commitment to the exportation of the Islamic revolution (Rakel, 2007:167).

Tensions have also been exacerbated by the Sunni attempts to destroy the Imam Hussain Mosque in Iraq – an important sight for Shia communities and Iranian pilgrims. Another case in point was the Hajj clash in Mecca On July 31, 1987, when over 400 people, most of them Iranian pilgrims but also many Saudi policemen, were killed and many more injured at a demonstration that led to a stampede outside the Great Mosque in Mecca during the Hajj (Wallace, 1987). Iran and Saudi Arabia blamed each other for the clashes, leading to a severe worsening of Saudi-Iranian relations. Although the incident mainly involved Iranians, some had alleged links to Saudi Shi'a organizations. As a result, both countries sought to influence Muslim public opinion abroad and discredit the other party. The weak relations of the Movement of Vanguard Missionaries (MVM) and the Islamic revolutionary organization (IRO) to the new centres of power in the Iranian regime, their refusal to carry out military operations in Saudi Arabia, and the Hajj incident in 1987 were the main reasons for the formation and the strengthening of Hezbollah al-Hijaz. Iran wanted to have small, controllable organizations that

---

[2] Though a new, final agreement of a zig-zag equitable division was reached on 24.10.68.

could be used as pressure tools on the Saudi regime but would not endanger Iran's foreign policy objectives.

There are also elements of influence on their relations deriving from the division in their worldviews and they have both used their Sunni-Shia division to support their policies and steer public opinion and foreign policy decisions. Their political and religious differences seem to play the prime role in the political domain and the international community alongside the argument between Sunni and Shia, as well as the debate about the domination of the region are often exaggerated (Rakel, 2007:168). These are elements that influence their relations, but there are also many facets about their relationship which are down-played, such as their previous cooperation for security and peace in the region after colonial withdrawal and their trade relations (Amiri and Samsu, 2011:247). It appears true that they both have aspirations for Islamic rule and leadership, aspirations which drew them closer together under King Faisal and Shah Reza Pahlavi (Amiri and Samsu, 2011:249). Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran has been pursuing an anti-hegemonic (and specifically anti-USA) foreign policy and condemns Saudi Arabia for being a close ally of the USA. Saudi Arabia in contrast is concerned about Iran's dominance and interference in neighbouring countries especially in Iraq after Saddam Hussein and in Syria and Yemen currently (Ghorbani, 2012). There is also regional concern regarding the continuing development of Iran's nuclear programme.

While most literature points to competition over regional hegemony, their differences are underpinned by religion/sectarian identity differences. Within the remit of dominant foreign policy interests relating to the maintenance and consolidation of regional power in soft and hard measure, there are several domestic issues which play a significant role in shaping the underlying security concerns, such as the presence of a sizeable Shia minority in eastern Saudi Arabia, this region has seen far less investment than the rest of the country (Beranek, 2009: 4). Their sectarian differences alone do not justify and explain their relationship and the tensions between them. Iran constructs a narrative of opposition to Saudi Arabia and its monarchical rule, as against the tenets of Islamic rule (De luca, 2016:1). Likewise, Saudi Arabia uses rhetorical devices such as 'suspicion', 'lack of transparency', and 'rival' to describe Iran (Vatanka, 2015:1). The use of such rhetoric to frame these differences in opposition to one another, however, are important in shaping public and international perceptions and narratives of legitimacy to justify relevant actions. Since the Arab Spring the struggle and rivalry between the two parties have intensified, however, for some years both states have placed actors across the region in order to realise their interests which is evidenced in their military and financial backing of several groups such as Hezbollah (Berti, and Guzansky, 202014:30). Saudi Arabia and Iran

also play out their rivalry by-proxy, using developing crises to support opposing factions in the same country, by means of finance and/or arms.

It is also worth noting here the parallel Chinese-Saudi relations that are in play, and how this specifically does not affect Iranian-Chinese relations to the degree that would be expected on conventional readings of Iranian foreign policy. Prior to 1990 the Saudi regime did not recognised the legitimacy of the PCR and so bilateral relations were non-existent – indeed Saudi Arabia was the last Arab state to establish diplomatic ties with China. Relations improved after the 1989 Tiananmen Crisis however, as Saudi Arabia markedly offered no criticism of the event. Since this time relations have steadily improved, accelerating from 2000 onwards. This, of course, is no surprise as Saudi Arabia is the world's energy exporter and China in turn, is the world's biggest importer of such energy (Nazer, 2015:1). Such relations extend beyond crude oil trade however, expanding into the wider hydrocarbons sector with Chinese investment in Saudi refineries and energy fields, coupled with Saudi Investment in Chinese refineries as Sinopec Partnered with Aramco in January 2015 (Nazer, 2015:3). Chinese companies are also involved in the development of railway lines, cement plants and port (Alterman, 2015). Despite having a sustained, seven-decade relationship with Saudi Arabia, the growing instability and turmoil in the MENA region is arguably influencing Saudi Arabia's identification and recognition of the need to keep its options open and strengthen relations with a wider array of actors (Nazer, 2015:2) and to hedge against overreliance on the USA ((Altman, 2015) - just as China is seeking to develop closer MENA ties through increased trade as well as cultural presence (CCTV discussed previously). This is also influenced by China's 'One Belt, One Road' initiative (see chapter six), which seeks to developed a trade and investment structure in line with the traditional Silk Road (Jin, 2016: 1)

China, alongside this developing relationship however, is also increasing relations with Iran – Saudi Arabia's bitter enemy – or so the rhetoric goes (Jin, 2016:1). What is interesting to see is that China appears to successfully balance these relationships with neither state offer protest against China's relations with the other. In a formal alliance between the Iran and China there would certainly be space to raise such issues, even objections. To give a more contentious example, China and Israel also enjoy numerous positive trade, commercial and diplomatic relations, however this is not raised as an issue for Iran. The fluidity and ambiguity or Iranian-Chinese relations effectively safeguards against having to make such demands or criticisms – or even to defend them. Again this come to a point of identity and pragmatism. China is following its own policies within the wider world and simply justifies them as such which Iran can raise no issues with because it is not a breach of a treaty or

The civil war in Syria, which began in 2011 is a prime example of the proxy competition mentioned above. As the rebellion continued Saudi Arabia chose to align with the rebel forces, providing financial and military aid. Iran in turn, came out in support of the Assad regime, a long-standing ally, in opposition to Egyptian, Israeli and US challenges in the region (Goodarzi, 2006:2). Concern is, of course, warranted with regard to the potential regional fallout of the crisis. Certainly Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan have already experienced the pressure that an influx of refugees can lead to (Hale, 1992:679; O'Donnell and Newland, 2008:5). The conflict in Syria has become a sectarian issue, Sunni rebels versus the Shia government and its Shia allies. This has intensified with the further involvement of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah. Saudi Arabia, along with its western allies, has denounced this organization as a terrorist group and condemned the arrival of some 400 Iranian revolutionary guards to Syria (Berti, and Guzansky, 2014:26) though it is openly debated whether these are in fact military personnel or 'experts'.

The condemnation of Iranian involvement, and that of Hezbollah, is also set within the continuing rhetoric regarding Iran's inclination to interfere in the domestic issues of its neighbours and its intent to spread the Shia Islamic revolution and regional instability. The perception may be that Iran is not transparent, cannot be trusted, always tries to meddle in support of Shia development and growth in the interests of regional hegemony which is expansionist in nature and a threat to all (Rakel, 2007:168). The past activities and opposing ideology of Iran is offered within a framework of mistrust which views the support it offers to its Syrian ally, as a regional security issue which must be countered.

This also has implications for Chinese-Iranian relations with regard to the fact that the former also reacted to the developing crisis in Syria in support of Assad, denouncing the rebels (Morin, 2014). As such the state did not become an issue of contention for either state but rather support each ones' commitment to anti-hegemonic policies in light of Western ambitions to intervene on October 4th 2014 (Morin, 2014), as well as a convergence of their "suspicion of western proposals at the international level" (Morin, 2014). The Iranian reaction to the Syrian crisis also has specific psychological roots, it should be noted, for both Iran and China, who both have significant separatist issues – China with Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang; and Iran with the Kurds, Azeris and Arabs in some areas – and identity conflict generally between Shia and non-Shia, Iranian and Persian identities; as well as pressures from refugees from Afghanistan. Suppression of domestic uprisings are seen as a sovereign right and important for the integrity of the state. Therefore, George Abu Ahmad argues that the reaction of China, and concurrently Iran, represents the way in which each has internalized the

roots of the Syrian conflict and reacted in a way which supports their own separatist concerns and reactions to any connected potential uprisings (Morin, 2014). In the contemporary era, with the rise of the hard-line fundamentalist entity known as the Islamic State, Iranian-Saudi relations are again converging to assess and respond to the potential threat that is, in part, a response to long running sectarian tensions and regional conflicts (Dakroub, 2014).

It is interesting to see, in the case of Iranian-Saudi relations, that regardless of the convergence or divergence of interests or similarities/differences in histories, cultures or experiences, the rhetoric used to frame relations between the two – particularly in this instance, regarding that developed by Iran, does not fit the same framework as that utilised towards China (discussed in chapter six). There is less talk of friendship or shared history, just as there are less attempts at confidence building measures such as the high level delegate visits between Iran and China, and greater transparency of intentions that have resulted in China displaying less suspicion over Iran's nuclear policy, just as there is less tension with regard to China's large Muslim minority in Xinjiang than with Saudi's Shia minorities (Rogan, 2014). The steps required for Saudi Arabia and Iran to develop closer, less suspicious, more confident ties with one another, for instance would be considerably steeper and unstable than those required between Iran and China. This is based not only on the physical proximity of Saudi Arabia being in direct competition with Iran – and on the opposite side of its border, whilst China is geographically farther away, with its own development and regional interest closer to home. It is also based upon significant psychological dispositions, underpinned by historical experiences and feelings of betrayal.

This also echoes the reception received by Iranian actions in Iraq post-Saddam, where it seeks to support the Shia faction and exercise soft power in the form of diplomacy and guidance (Rezaei, 2011:40). This is not simply about regional hegemony and a power hungry state, however. Iraq and Afghanistan are both direct, border sharing neighbours of Iran and so the potential for crisis to spill across this border is a very real concern. Therefore, there is the desire to have stable and friendly neighbours (Rezaei, 2011:38). This is, in part a basic security interest, however, it is also framed by the pre-existing knowledge frameworks that are able assimilate the potential threat within the existing framework of previous relations with Iraq – specifically the debilitating 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war which ravaged the country.

The commitment to the export of the Islamic revolution largely died with Ayatollah Khomeini (Rakel, 2007:160). Presidents such as Rafsanjani were, and continue to be, faced with domestic concerns relating to a population boom in the post-revolution decade, high unemployment, and severed ties with dominant economic players, traders and investors (Rakel, 2007:160). As a result,

they saw the importance of a more pragmatic foreign policy, one that would seek to foster positive relations in reaction to external perceptions of the state as a pariah seeking regional domination in the form of a Pan-Islamic regional revolution that would oust the existing governing structures of neighbouring states (Ramazani, 2011:11).

In the wake of 9/11 the government in Tehran publicly condemned the attacks and allied itself with the West in the war against terror (Kozhanov, 2011:2). Tehran also supported strikes against terrorist groups in Afghanistan and played a significant role in the Bonn peace conference (Middle East/Gulf:171). In the build-up to the 1991 Gulf War, Iran again exercised diplomatic power – encouraging cooperation and mediating between factions and external powers (Bowker, 2013:116).

Another reading or interpretation could be that the ultimate ideal for the current superpower (the USA) is regime change in the Islamic Republic and nothing less (Rezaei, 2011:40). In this respect the 2003 invasion of Iraq has been viewed as a threat to Iran, in that it may be next, despite containing the silver lining of removing the biggest threat to Iranian survival (Rezaei, 2011:40). Therefore, actions and policies are forced into existing frameworks of bias which silence alternative interpretations or readings that would enable us to view any actions by Iran in a positive light. Such deep suspicion and mistrust has a significant impact on Iranian foreign economic and security policy, for it would appear imprudent to offer any degree of faith to states incapable of returning the compliment.

Sanctions against Iran, as stated previously, have largely been ineffective (Early, 2011:400; Early, 2014:1). Such threats and indirect attacks are merely counter-productive to a state whose foreign policy is generally reactionary, based on its historical perception of subversion. Iran is an ancient civilisation and has a history, predominantly, of prudent statecraft, and in light of its 1979 throwing off of the shackles of domination and subversion, it expects to receive recognition for its historical successes (Ramazani, 2009). USA statements that all options are on the table when dealing with Iran (Bush 2005) is seen as a threat of military action or further sanctions if compliance is not granted. More importantly it is interpreted as disrespectful. In this respect it is clear that when dealing with the USA Iran utilises the mirror image/image of the enemy tool of cognitive decision-making in which it sees the hegemon and inherently bad with negative ulterior motives, therefore even when a positive act is executed it is assumed, or believed, that there is an underlying negative, or sinister motive.

Competition and Cooperation

Another key challenge to Iranian dominance in the MENA is Turkey, though as much as it is a challenge it is also a key security partner. Relations between Iran and Turkey since the latter's independence in 1926 have been predominantly peaceful, if at times strained (Anon, 1998). Iran is considerably rich in energy resources, specifically hydrocarbon reserves, but has lacked freedom due to international trade and economic sanctions as well as technological under-advancement (Aras, 2008). Indeed, recent years have resulted in major European firms such as BP and Krupp-Thyssen, pulling out of Iran. This, however, is changing: The Iranian foreign policy direction is shifting ever further towards integration through bilateral trade agreements with states such as China, India, and specifically, Turkey (Aras, 2008). With the recent lifting of sanctions multi-national corporations are also expected to flock to Iran. In April 2010, technical delegates from Ankara and Tehran initiated talks in Igdir to explore the development of a free industrial zone between the two states and the trade volume between them was reported to have increased by more than 70% in the first two months of 2011 alone. Turkey is also a significant beneficiary of Iranian tourism (Aras, 2008).

In relation to economic security, the two states appear to be becoming ever more intimately intertwined, both states have significantly independent reasons for the progression of their relations, affected by a variety of conditions and concerns. The factors at play are very much determined by reconstructing foreign policy concerns and the ever greater securitisation of the economy which underpins the order (Cable, 1995:305). Both states are members of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) and enjoy two-way trade which is estimated at $10 billion annually (Kurtaran, 2011). Iran also expresses plans to privatize national assets which is being capitalized on by Turkish businesses. Turkey is also a strong supporter of diplomatic solutions to contention and promoted the opening of dialogue over the use of sanctions (Colachal, 2008). By August 2010 Turkey was listed, alongside China as one of the main suppliers of petrol to Iran. China currently supplies approximately one third of all of Iran's energy demands (Iran has the raw energy but relies on China for refined petrol) (Kozhanov, 2011:1). As sanctions increased and tightened (prior to the recent resolution), China utilised more third party or intermediary states to trade on its behalf, these states are known as sanctions busters, or 'Black Knights' (Kozhanov, 2011:1). The promotion of direct flights to Iran by Turkish Airlines have also affected positive relations between the two states as has the shared business language of Azeri (Kurtaran, 2011). Domestically Turkey has used an assertive foreign policy to enhance its international status so as to enable the consolidation of domestic power at home. This domestic power has also been developed through a display of affinity to Muslim causes and mercantilism (Migdalovitz, 2011). In this respect the foreign policy benefits of bilateral trade with Iran

are very much affected by domestic concerns and interests. In relation to Iran, positive relations with Turkey involves increased diplomatic ties as part of a wider movement on Iran's behalf to engage with the international community.

The nature of Turkish-Iranian relations developed and deepened in light of the reconstruction of economic security concerns. This is not to say, however, that the two states became at all friendly as they still viewed one another with suspicion and doubt, operating approaches of caution and pragmatism. Turkey and Iran, both being significant regional powers, are necessarily in competition for regional hegemony. Diplomatic and economic power was garnered through bilateral relations and economic agreements. Turkey aligning itself with the EU and the west and Iran increasing its relations with states such as Syria. This atmosphere of competition was most overtly displayed with regard to the newly independent states (NIS) of the Caucasus and central Asia in the 1990s (Pomfret, 1997). A variety of the NIS states were Turkic and as such were nations with whom Turkey could claim kinship. Iranian endeavors also mirrored this as, though only Tajikistan speaks a dialect of Persian, there were others with strong cultural affinities. Both states were keen to develop these ties, offering diplomatic and economic assistance and agreements with the Caucasus states, many of which were rich in mobile, hard-working labour forces (Bower, 2007). The psychological effects of greater relations with perceived kin countries also strengthened national esteem as well as being, especially for Iran, another route into the world economy. Though the two states do not compete explicitly and directly for influence in Central Asia, they both followed significant foreign policy goals with regard to the establishment of bilateral agreements and the endorsement of their attraction to the states (Bower, 2007).

In the contemporary era the reactions towards the significant international implications of the three major conflicts regarding 9/11, Afghanistan and Iraq varied between Turkey and Iran. Both publicly condemned the 9/11 terrorist attacks and joined the rhetoric of the war against terror on the western side (Bower, 2007). This support, however, did not carry over into US intervention in Iraq. Indeed, Turkey expressed concern over US judgments regarding weapons of mass destruction, even attempting to obstruct the invasion (Bower, 2007). It was feared that the invasion would mirror the destabilising effects of the previous foray into Afghanistan. Increased US presence in the region and de facto control of Iraqi energy fields were of economic concern as were the implications of ever greater conflict, driving away investment and hindering existing bilateral agreements (Chomsky and Achcar, 2007:83). Turkey and the USA were erstwhile allies – the latter's distance being a comfort. The quagmires, first in Afghanistan and then in Iraq brought the USA much closer to Turkey, however, resulting in a need to re-evaluate foreign policy focus with regard to US diplomacy.

The content and context of Turkish-Iranian relations have changed considerably in general terms in the last 20 years due to the changing international order and the growing supremacy of economic security concerns. The fall of the USSR and a shift away from the importance of military might and ideological confrontation have altered the playing field to an unrecognisable degree. These issues are still of importance but are now on the periphery almost as otherwise sensitive issues, such as nuclear development or relations with Israel, are overlooked in the interests of fostering and maintaining advantageous trade and development relations with neighbours. It would seem that, in the contemporary era, a state's economic capabilities are the most important markers of its success and competence, a lesson that Turkey and Iran appear to have learned quickly and which has resulted in a transformation of their relationship with one another.

Iran in turn, following the 1979 revolution and the 1980–88 Gulf War, was left with a crippled economy and feelings of resentment for (and also from) the United States and Europe (Coughlin, 2009:2370). Afrasiabi and Maleki (2003) recognise Iran's foreign policy as deriving from two sources: its turbulent regional environment and its faction-ridden polity, in the run-up to 9/11. The attack on the World Trade Centre changed the security landscape globally, redefining the concept of terrorism as a threat over and above its traditional role as a tool of the state to a more permeating and evasive presence. It also highlighted the increased role that Iran had been playing since 1990 as a mediator and crisis manager (Afrasiabi and Maleki, 2003:257). Reflecting its soft power ambitions, Iran has worked to develop diplomatic ties with regional powers and to actively engage with the promotion of regional security initiatives such as the general agreement on the establishment of peace and national accord and protocol on mutual understanding in 1997, the OIC, and the ECO (Afrasiabi and Maleki, 2003:258). There are also growing pressures and security concerns for Iran regarding the freshwater resources which it shares with Afghanistan (Khorami, 2014). This could certainly explain Iran's interest in mediating the peaceful settlement of governance issues between the United States and Afghanistan following the US invasion after 9/11. In this respect Iran's focus is very much east-facing. However, there has recently been a significant shift in Iranian foreign policy towards a balancing of East and West (Vakil, 2006:52). Iran cultivated relations with China, Russia and India for economic and political coverage that could not be found in the West and to counterbalance the threat of Western sanctions as a result of fears over its nuclear energy policy (Kozhanov, 2011:3).

The Nuclear Issue

Iranian society can be separated into two camps, those that urbanize with development and those that urbanize without it. The result is significant economic and developmental inequalities between communities in underdeveloped cities such as Hormozgan, and major cities such as Isfahan and Tehran

(Aminmansour, 2007:1). Continued and/or improved interactions with other states have the potential to mediate the risks that globalisation presents to Iran, inviting firms, information and investment to aid trade, knowledge production and development (Axworthy, 2011:109). Iranian advancement and development is an area of concern not just regionally with regard to the MENA but also internationally, in terms of its diplomatic development with Arab neighbours as well as the newly independent states of Central Asia which brings it more closely into China's sphere of interest, just as China is present in the MENA via bilateral relations with numerous states and the development of its Arabic news and culture satellite channel, but especially with its development of nuclear technology.

If Saudi Arabia is concerned about its neighbour's nuclear ambitions, then Israel is concerned even more so. Such fears being a manifestation of angry rhetoric coming out of Iran towards Israel. Relations between the two powers have not always been so contentions, however. At its inception in 1948, Iran was the first state to recognise the legitimacy of Israel, following this they became strong, strategic allies up to the 1970s (Rezaei and Cohen 2014:443). They were two non-Arab, non-Sunni states in a region dominated by Sunni Arabs. Under the Shah, Iran also sought to align more closely with the USA and relations with Israel were seen as a tool to garner greater support from Washington (Rezaei and Cohen, 2014:443). The alliance and its political benefits was such that they preceded concern or interest in the Palestinian question and resulted in Iran being Israel's only energy supplier during the energy crisis and in the post-Suez Crisis era of the 1950s (Rezaei and Cohen, 2014:445). This relationship came to an end following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, though all ties were not in fact severed until almost a decade later.

Israel, during this time was not so keen to end the relationship, nor did it take the rhetoric delivered against its legitimacy seriously, being keen to maintain the geo-political alliance and its benefits, encircled as it was by a sea of hostile Arab neighbours. Indeed, Israel instigated several secret meetings with Iran, or rather many of its more moderate players, supplying weapons during the Gulf War and encouraging the USA to take a softer stance against Iran. With the end of this war, however, Israel ceased to be useful to Iran and ties were finally and officially severed. As Iran has increased its commitment to developing positive relations with its Muslim neighbours its negative stance towards Israel has increased exponentially, fuelled by increased training and funding of pro-Palestinian entities such as Islamic Jihad and Palestinian attacks on Israel from the West Bank (Rezaei and Cohen, 2014:447).

Following the collapse of the USSR and the emergence of the USA as the only remaining superpower the rivalry between the two old friends increased in line with Israeli-US relations and Iran's anti-hegemonic constitution. This was also exacerbated by the 2003 fall of Iraq, a key enemy of

Israel. The two were propelled to direct and blatant rivalry for regional supremacy. Iran's recent assistance with diplomacy and peace-keeping post-9/11 has caused concern in Tel-Aviv vis-a-vis a growing accommodation at least between Iran and the superpower which is seen as a threat to Israel's strategic importance and special relationship with the latter. As a result, it has upped its rhetoric and pressure on the USA directly via the powerful Jewish Lobby in Washington, as well as attempting to foster closer and more proficient ties with more moderate and pragmatic Muslim neighbours.

The influence that Iran has exerted on religio-political groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas (Mahurqi, 2014) has also had a direct negative impact on Israel via physical attacks and as such Israel no longer follows the stance that it did in the 1980s of ignoring Iran's anti-Israel rhetoric. The threat of Iran has been securitised and is now a very real one: exacerbated by the belief in the latter's commitment to the development of nuclear capabilities apparently. A nuclear Iran, not only hostile to Israel but intent on challenging its very right to exist is a very real and existential threat to Israel which is already the outsider in the region. Though there is of course the growing debate that a nuclear Israel, faced with a nuclear Iran would result in deterrence through the understanding of the potential for mutual assured destruction (MAD) and so a more stable regional order (Edelman et al. 2011: 67), the issue in foreign policy terms is a normative one. MAD as a deterrent only works if both parties can trust the others pragmatism and will to survive. Iran's foreign policy, as previously stated, is reactionary. It is also opaque and complex. As an elusive, slippery enemy, Iran cannot be trusted, or rather its previous actions show that it can be trusted to dig its heels in and to cut its nose off to spite its face, as can be seen in light of economic and trade sanctions and its refusal to halt its nuclear programme or even to provide adequate transparency or confidence building measures regarding its ultimate intentions (Edelman et al, 2011:67), until the recent resolution negotiated by China.

The revolution caused Iran to redirect its foreign policy, resulting in an anti-Israel stance as the Ayatollah sought to realign with religious kin in line with ambitions to export the Islamic Revolution, supporting growing entities such as Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad whilst refuting Israel's very right to exist (Lindsay and Takeyh, 2010:35). This about-face was not just inspired by religious doctrine and unification, however. The new constitution of the Islamic revolution was a specifically anti-hegemonic one and the state of Israel with its close links to Washington and having been seen as created by European powers, was now rebranded as a usurper and the driving force of western neo-imperialism in the region (Rezaei and Cohen, 2014:444).

Iran has been, until January 2016, the target of numerous UN sanctions (see appendix a), led by the United States, as a result of suspicions regarding its nuclear programme (Global Policy Forum, 2006). This programme is justified by Iran as being for domestic power capabilities only (Chubin and

Litwak, 2003: 111). Despite being a signatory of the non-proliferation treaty, numerous members of the international community, such as the United States and EU member states, were dubious of this claim, fearing the worst and reacting appropriately (Diamond 2012: 3). Iran and many (but not all) Western powers were, it appeared, at a stalemate. The United States had been convinced that Iranian intentions are expansionist and power-hungry and Iran is incapable, in the face of such confidence in its irrationality, of acting in a way deemed transparent enough. Conservative actors, rooted in realist theories of balances of power and regional hegemony, understood this nuclear programme in the only way that their reading of actions and intentions allow (Drenou, 2011:74). They viewed it as a negative, as a precursor for nuclear weaponization and therefore a security threat to the MENA generally and Israel specifically (Bergman 2009: 329). The issue was securitised to represent an existential threat. It should be noted, however, that recent developments, spurred by China's mediating capabilities (discussed in chapter six) have resulted in a compromise, following negotiations Iran, the USA and the UN over the former's programme (Scott, 2015:5). Though to what extent this is a result of Iran's desire to placate the West rather than part of its greater desire to be an active member of China's new 'One Belt, One Road' initiative is an interesting question, which will be considered further in chapter six.

Conclusion

The inherent problem with any analysis of Iran and its foreign policies is not the policies themselves but rather the interpretations that they produce, and going hand in hand with this, the interpretations which produce them. Foreign policy making and implementation does not occur in a vacuum. In order to analyse it is necessary to first recognise and address the inextricable problem of how decision-makers view and react to their environment. Problems framed by perception, knowledge structures, pre-determined bias and existing behaviour patterns.

FPA has traditionally centered on a structure-oriented study of state-to-state interactions at the regional or global level. The popular view here is of a macro-political system in which the actions of states are ruled by a system of constraints and/or incentives (Walker et al., 2011:3). There is much missing from such an approach though, that must be considered in the interests of a more comprehensive, multi-layered approach to understanding, such as the ideologies involved, domestic pressures, international standing, and goals and requirements of any given state. For too long the study of international relations has been western in focus. This misses important developments in other regions which can have profound effects on the international. For a point in turn see the fall of the USSR and the end of the Cold War. In the contemporary era FPA is ever more hindered by the dichotomy between a world of neighbours, every closer and more interactive due to technological advances, and a world of strangers who are unwilling, or unable, to understand one-another (ibid,

2011:2). This gives rise to difficulties in understanding which are retarded by conceptual and historical prejudices (Ciuta, 1991:1).

An abstract model of actor rationality does not consider such psychological dispositions, nor does it consider behavioral motivations. Rather the focus tends to be on the policy process and the organizational context surrounding decisions to explain behaviour (Garrison, 2003:158); yet it is impossible to assess a state without considering its representation of the world. This is especially so with regard to Iran, with its unique history and civilisation, it is also a theocracy with specific, socially constructed rules and operations, born out of a reaction to US and European control and manipulation. It does not see itself as the evil arch villain intent on taking over the world but rather a power looking to return to its rightful, historical place as a regional superpower. Iran wants respect, it wants to develop and progress, but at the same time it will not allow itself to fall once again prey to the whims of a greater power (Rundle, 2011:95).

In order to assess and analyze the foreign policy-making practices of any state and the intentions behind them it is necessary, in the interests of a comprehensive account of agents and processes, to adopt a Constructivist approach which addresses issues of norms and values, identity and history, language and self-representation (Kaarbo, 2003:158). Interestingly, certain of these factors are also present in a post-colonial discourse with addresses the relationship also, between a state and its other, though arguably, giving more importance to the power of the narrative of an 'Other'. A hermeneutic approach which enables the study of the theory and practice of interpretation is of invaluable importance. It allows the consideration of all aspects of interpretation – tangible and intangible – tacit and overt, with regard to presupposition, pre-understandings, language and semiotics.

To go further is to suggest that to address and assess Iran's recent foreign policy is to necessarily utilise Gadamer's hermeneutic circle (Outhwaite, 1987:64) for to understand the whole (Iranian foreign policy) is only possible in reference to its individual parts (colonial legacy, historical situ, civilisational achievements, regional position) which again need to be understood in turn by reference to the whole (i.e. reactionary politics and regional and ideological ambitions and existing relations, or lack of, with other states). This is significant in relation to the analysis of Iranian-Chinese relations which will be the focus of the following chapter. Both this section of the thesis and the previous chapter highlight a commonality between the two states, not so much in their specific policies but in the driving forces that underpin the decision-making practices that give them agency. Each state places emphasis on, and constructs its national narratives around, past experiences of external intervention and present drives to modernise and develop through the execution of

pragmatic foreign policies, often reactionary but always underpinned by the need to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of a potentially fractious society. These similarities will underpin the analysis in the following chapter of the specific Iranian-Chinese relationship itself and the rhetorical articulation of its material motivations and concrete interests within a constructed narrative of amenability which will be assessed to determine the extent to which it can be classified as constituting a Tacit Alliance.

Chapter Six

An Evaluation of Iranian-Chinese Relations as Representative of a Tacit Alliance

Introduction

The nature of the relationship between the China and Iran has been the source of much debate within the academic and security arena, specifically in relation to potential regional and international impacts (Shariatinia, 2010:1). Whilst some of the debates taking place are influenced by the residual concerns spawned from the China Threat theory, much is more greatly influenced by the status of Iran as a pariah, or rogue state. A considerable amount of this discourse is framed by external perceptions, and considerations of the impact, expectations and concerns of third parties, rather than pursuing a greater understanding of the Chinese-Iranian relationship itself. Once such example of this preoccupation with the impact of the relationship rather than its construction, is the idea of there being the pursuit of a strategic relationship. In traditional security terms, a strategic relationship is the alliance, or coalition, of powers against a common enemy or threat (Kay, 2015:185). In the contemporary era the foreign policies of these two states, whilst underpinned by common driving factors, as highlighted in the previous two chapters, are actually quite different. They have specific (if not divergent, then, mutually dis-effectual) international and foreign policy interests. Iran has been developing its nuclear programme, much to the discomfort and protestation of the dominant powers that are the USA and leading European states (Patrikarakos, 2012:). China's response to this has been to call for the creation of dialogue over sanctions, and of peaceful resolution. Despite seeking to veto sanctions when possible, China has also voted in favour of them under international pressure (UNSC/9948). This again does not fit with a traditional strategic alliance understanding of the Chinese-Iranian relationship.

A more robust and comprehensive analysis and explanation of the specific nuances of the Iranian-Chinese relationship is needed, and this is the focus of this chapter. The material base of interaction will first be addressed. This relates to interactions between the two based on trade, energy and mutual interest in strategy. Whilst, as stated above, in traditional security terms the two powers have not formed a strategic coalition, there relationship has been strategically constructed to fulfil specific interests and compliment general aims, as will be discussed below. These concrete interactions will be referred to as the 'tangible' base of their relationship and will be discussed within the framework of international processes and developments, or international pressures, which will be

shown to define and dictate its presentation and representation. Moving on from this, the tacit nature of this relationship will then be analysed to understand the rhetorical, or hyperbole creation and maintenance of Iranian-Chinese relations in the absence of a formal alliance. Critical discourse analysis of official Iranian and Chinese government statements and news reports, as outlined fully in the methodology chapter, will be used to show the construction of concepts of a narrative of friendship, historical shared experiences and co-operation between the two powers which in turn constructs a condition of trust in the absence of formal, internationally binding agreements. This will set the ground work for chapter six which will summarize the finding of the research endeavour with regard to the extent to which the relationship and be classified as a Tacit Alliance, a concept introduced by Cynthia Crosbie and Coral Bell (1973 & 1977 respectively).

The material base

According to the latest statistics from Iran, China is officially the biggest market for Iranian exports, receiving 23.37% of total exports. Imports from China account for 19.57% of total Iranian imports (ISNA, 2010). In the first 10 months of the current Iranian year (2015), bilateral trade in non-hydrocarbon products reached a record $13.2 billion, of which $7.3 billion was imports from China and $5.9 billion exports to China (see table one below for a list of these products). This makes Iranian-Chinese trade a valuable and strategic concern for the former who is still suffering, and needing to recover from extensive and crippling UN authorised sanctions due to suspicions regarding its nuclear technology programme (discussed below), though negotiations have now resulted in the lifting of sanction (Naji, 2016:1). The injection of capital gained from bilateral trade agreements is vital also for the continued domestic legitimacy of Iran, which is struggling to maintain its growing urban population and skilled workforce (Amuzegar, 2014:20). This is also important for its regional power projection as an influential power, which can offset the pressure of challenger states such as Saudi Arabia and Israel as well as competitor states such as Turkey. China is also able to corner a market not already dominated by western firms: developing a testing ground for low-end manufactured goods and medium-technology machinery previously identified as low quality compared to western alternatives. Of all the non-hydrocarbon goods the greatest market is that of automobiles with China being Iran's biggest net supplier of cars and car parts. Alongside this, Iran is also reliant on China for infrastructure development and maintenance – relying on imports for its rail and subway services as well as household goods such as TVs, computers and phones.

Table one shows the goods traded between the two states. It is clear that there is a trade disparity here with China importing low cost goods and exporting high value items, putting Iran at a disadvantage and in a somewhat dependant relationship with China as a source of infrastructure

development, and vital consumer goods (Shariatinia, 2015). The development of non-hydrocarbon trade between the two has been a keen interest of Iran since 2011 when international sanctions began to shrink the latter's economy and trade options. The diversification of trade goods, connected to this, is part of a wider societal legitimacy programme of job creation and development in Iran, which suffers from a growing urban, educated and/or skilled youth workforce with few employment opportunities. China in contrast boasts both existing and developing ties with numerous countries in the Middle East (Davidson, 2010:2) and Asia as well as economic blocs such as the European Union (EU Trade, 2015). The need for such diversification in this respect then is a far less crucial, or political issue. However, China needs hydrocarbons and hydrocarbon-products, for which it is willing to adapt its trade preferences (Garver, 2006:279).

Table 1: Iranian imports to, and exports, from China

Iranian exports to China	Iranian imports from China
Iron ore	railroad and subway locomotive parts
Methanol	oil and gas pipelines
Propane	LCD and LED modules
Polyethylene	car parts
Styrene	Polystyrene
Butane	Bananas
ethylene-glycol	Cars
Para xylene	
Chrome	
Stone	

Marble	
oil and mineral seeds	
purified copper	

Hydrocarbons: Energy and oil fields

In the energy sector, the intricacies of Iranian-Chinese trade and the political economy dimensions of their relationship are possibly most obvious. China is, as stated above, a developing nation and one by-product of this is its insatiable need for energy as the world's second largest consumer of hydrocarbons. With a growing GDP, which has grown an average of 8-10% per year for much of the past 25 years, its hydrocarbon demands in the long-term are forecast to continue to increase (Chinability, 2015). The lion's share of its needs come from Iran. That China is in need of such energy is well-documented, and as it develops so too do the expectations of its populace with regard to living standards, welfare, private transportation, consumer goods and leisure activities. The increased demand for cars alone in China has increased as bicycles and motorcycles are replaced – due in part to the greater affordability of cars as a result of China's membership in the WTO and increased domestic manufacturing (Luft, 2009). Iran in turn, less developed, has a rapidly growing population and poor infrastructure that has yet to recover from the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88. Iran is also seeking to reduce its own reliance on its key natural resources, which requires industrial development. Iran is also, importantly, the owner of the second biggest hydrocarbon reserves in the MENA; due to UN and US sanctions, however, customers have been in short supply (Burman, 2009:120). As such, there exists an oil-for-goods exchange between the two with China paying for its energy through, goods, and knowledge and technology transfers (Harold and Nader, 2012:22). Whilst there are an array of small, private Chinese businesses in Iran, a significant amount of the Chinese companies present are connected to joint projects such as building and maintaining hydrocarbon refineries, transport systems, paper mills and telecommunications installations. Here we can see that energy commodities are tied, in the case of Iran, to societal needs and welfare.

China and Iran also co-operate on the development of Iran's numerous hydrocarbon fields and so the capacity to access greater resources – for which the latter lacks the important know-how. Chinese national companies such as Sinopec, CNCP (Chinese National Petroleum Corporation) and CNOOC (Chinese National Off-shore Oil Corp) are some of the top firms with Iranian counterparts.

Nigec is involved in the development of Iranian fields at Yadarvar, Masjid-e Suleiman and Kashan oil fields, which produce a key income for Iran and key energy needs for China in a mutually beneficial trade relationship as China seeks to secure its access to these resources. In 2004, 2009 and 2011 Chinese state-run enterprises signed billion dollar deals with Iran LNG for the exclusive right to extract and import hydrocarbons from the Yadavaran, north Azadegan and south Pars energy fields. This interest in energy accumulation and access is also prevalent in, and key to, wider regional interests of the development of pipelines to compete with western and Russian sourced energy transportation lines across the region. One key proposal is for a line to connect China and Iran via Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan – cultural kin countries of the latter, which Iran has used, in competition with Turkey, to develop ideological affiliations in the interests of boosting trade options in the post-Cold-War period (Paul, 2012). It should be noted, however, that such pipeline proposals are all too often 'proposals only' due to wider international pressures from extra-regional powers, such as Russia, who currently hold a monopoly on energy transportation, and regional politics relating to co-operative agreements required from all parties to the pipeline and their own foreign and diplomatic political interests. Such endeavours have the emphasis of non-disrupted transportation of Iranian hydrocarbons to Chinese markets rather than a regional initiative for greater interdependence and so peace and stability. However, the latter narrative is used to sell the co-operative efforts of the two powers. For China, it is also important to consider the fact that all of its hydrocarbon imports, regardless of seller, have to pass through potential maritime choke points such as the Straits of Hormuz. As such, the issue of energy is not just a trade or development concern for China and its trade partners but also one of regional security and, contingent to this, stability.

Military and technological transfer

A less publicised facet of Iranian-Chinese trade relations, but one that is highly speculated over at the international level, concerns military co-operation and technological transfer. Connected to security and stability, the above identified energy agreements between Iran and China for the latter's exclusive rights to the energy fields was, in part, agreed to by the former in exchange for China's commitment to ensure their security. Whilst a formal alliance was not created, under the latter deal in 2011, China committed to the security of these fields as part of its national interest (Dorraj & Currier, 2008). This can be seen as a strategic move by Iran, which has already been the victim of a cyber-attack on one of its nuclear facilities that is believed to have been supported by the USA (Langer, 2013:5) and is sensitive to Israeli rhetoric of cold war and calls for international military strikes on Iran. A significant degree of military interaction, therefore, does overlap with the energy sector relations discussed above, in relation to the acquisition of nuclear technology and so will not be repeated here. However,

this also comes into the domestic and regional arenas with the development of oil fields as well as propositions of energy pipelines involving third party states such as Tukey and Pakistan. Military co-operation and exchange is also of key concern as well a safe passage through the Straits of Hormuz. In the technological transfer arena. China has provided assistance to Iran in the form of training and technical support. It has shared technology and maintenance information on missile construction and development that includes the building of a missile factory.

There has also been collaboration on the development of surface to air missiles, fast track missiles, radar systems and combat aircraft. In the 1980s and 1990s China used a black knight, in the form of North Korea (Hinckley, 1990), to assist in this technology transfer in an attempt to ward of US and European scrutiny of its military trade. Iran used such weapons to ensure its control of the Straits of Hormuz though cooperation can be traced further back to the First Gulf War (the Iran-Iraq War) in which China supplied weapons to both parties to the conflict. Though this military cooperation did decline significantly from the late 1990s onwards, it did not disappear altogether and China does still assist in the development and maintenance of military hardware. In the contemporary era the biggest bone of contention for external powers is whether China, or Chinese companies, are selling nuclear weapons technology to Iran. Whist it is no secret that Iran is developing nuclear energy capabilities, as part of a long running domestic policy that can be traced back to the pre-theocratic governance of the Shah, there is much speculation as to whether this is simply nuclear energy or weapons grade technology. Nuclear co-operation between the two powers began, formally, in the 1980's with China's agreement to provide 4 nuclear reactors and to help build a 4th research reactor at Bushehr. Cooperation in weapons grade technology ceased officially in the early 1990s when a covert agreement was discovered and so international pressure applied to China to withdraw (Delpech, 2006). However, suspicions of continued covert assistance abound. Iran, an original signatory of the NPT, is adamant that its nuclear development is for peaceful, domestic purposes only, to reduce its dependence on its hydrocarbon revenues and for which it has to export crude oil and import refined oil. It is also, the government states, a factor in its development programme, if Iran is to become a developed country it must curb its reliance on its primary energy source and harness 'developed' technologies. China is also a developing state, and as a growing and significant power, has normative commitments to fulfil the role of a responsible power. This is tied to its regional policies in Asia to avoid neighbourhood fears and mistrust vis-a-vis its rise and influence but also internationally in-line with its relations with the USA and Europe. China is adamant that it is not assisting in Iranian development of nuclear weapons capabilities. It is also vocal in its support of the right of Iran, and any other state for that matter, to develop nuclear energy. This support is expressed due to its anti-

hegemonic constitution, which sets multi-polar regionalism above hegemonic dominance and external actor influence on domestic policies and interests.

Official discourse states confidence in Iranian transparency and statements of peace that has seen China veto, when possible, UN recommendations for further and more progressive sanctions on Iran. China instead, in-line with its 'harmonious rise' policy and growing power has called for the 'nuclear' issue with Iran to be addressed through the development of diplomacy and dialogue, which have ended successfully with the 2016 resolution of P5+1 talks (Naji, 2016:1). This appears to have been a coup de grace for the rising power as it has been instrumental in bringing the concerned parties to the table and mediating between them during international negotiations which at the time of writing have resulted in a resolution to Iran's nuclear question (Scott, 2015). This role has provided kudos to China's diplomatic skills and has helped to increase the potential for significant economic benefit as an unsanctioned Iran creates greater trade and exchange opportunities between the two. It also provides a greater sense of regional peace and stability with regard to the commitment of officially binding international agreements between Iran and the dominant western world. Furthermore, it eases pressure on China to explain its bilateral relations with Iran.

Regional Cooperation

Additional regional interests centre around physical and ideological security (in particular in relation to the threat of terrorism) but also, and arguably predominantly, economic security. The Shanghai Cooperation organization (SCO) is a Eurasian regional organisation, created in 1996 by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It is based on a treaty of deepening military trust and thus reducing the influence of liberal democracies in the member states (Summers, 2015). The SCO is underpinned by the commitment to non-intervention in domestic affairs and thus the safeguarding of sovereignty, territory and domestic stability, while promoting good neighbourliness and friendly co-operation (Summers, 2015). Over time, this organisation has grown in aim and scope, with the construction and promotion of regional programmes relating to key infrastructure systems such as transportation, telecoms, energy, security and banking. This is an Asian regional organisation, which is set up not so much to resolve disputes but rather to promote co-operation between members and promote their development. It also was established to promote regional trade relations and, above all, to safeguard security. The main security concerns identified are as follows: separatism, extremism and terrorism, and drug trafficking. Considering its proximity to the MENA and the predominance of Muslim communities this has gained much weight in the post-9/11 era, though the organisation is careful not to transform into a military bloc, instead largely concentrating on energy projects.

In 2007, Iran was invited as a dialogue partner to the SCO and in 2016 may be set to achieve full member status, following the resolution of the recent negotiations (Almeidi, 2015). This has given Iran a greater pro-active presence in the central Asian region, which provides opportunities with regard to energy projects and wider non-hydrocarbon trade potentials. This fits with Iran's foreign policy commitments of increasing regional alliances and collective security. It is also attractive to Iran with regard to its potential ability to sway political power and exert influence internationally, an important factor for Iran and its pariah status vis-a-vis western powers and organisations (Saremi, 2015). In pursuit of greater economic co-operation, the SCO has also launched an initiative for a new banking system to offset the dominance of the current international banking system and thus create new areas of economic growth and political influence. The Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), currently being established with its base in Beijing, has both China and Iran as two of its 35 founding members (Shaoxian, 2015).
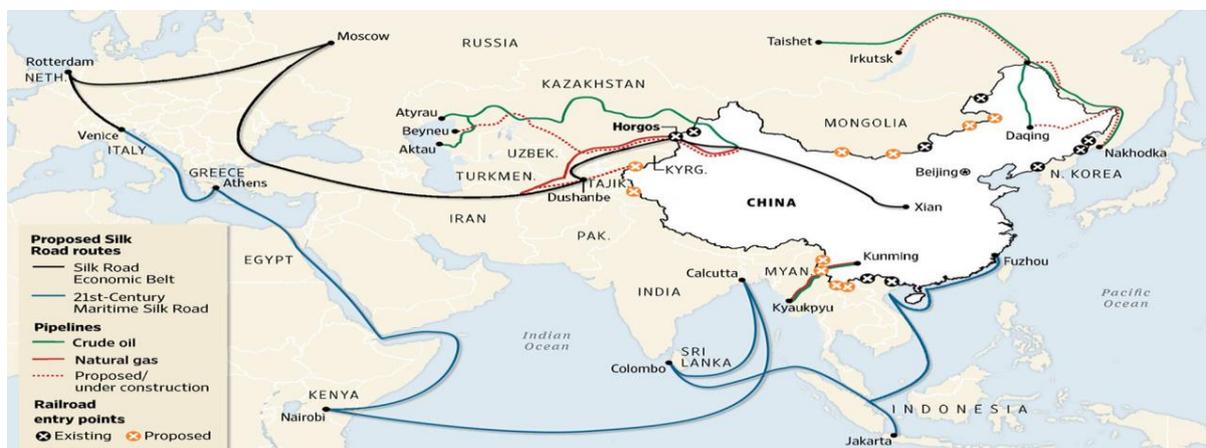
The involvement of Iran is both geo-strategic and political. It is true that Iran's main security concerns lay within its immediate vicinity, however, due to the impacts and pervasiveness of globalisation and international trade, economic progress and security are highly interdependent. Iran's role in the AIIB forms part of its wider commitment to improving its international image – assisted also by the recently concluded nuclear negotiations. This also has an influence domestically with regard to a populace that has been suffering from sanctions. The growth in relative size of the younger generations which do not remember first-hand the Iranian revolution or previous external interventions (Ortega, 2015). Assisted by greater technological and telecommunications access, this upcoming generation are ever more conscious of disparities between themselves and other, more modern and developed societies. The AIIB will be a forum for the pooling of funds to invest in infrastructure projects for poorer countries. In this way, it is similar to the World Bank and IMF, though without the structural adjustment stipulations that are often seen as unfair and progress-stifling (Young, 2015).

Another key enterprise that is of mutual interest to both Iran and China is the New Silk Road initiative, launched by Xi Jinping as the 'one belt, one road' initiative launched in 2013 to create a tree-trade corridor (Summers, 2015). This New Silk Road aims to restore China's old maritime and overland trade routes. China and Russia have been co-operating on the integration of Asia by way of multifarious networks of high-speed railways, pipelines, superhighways and ports, with Chinese corporations seeking and closing infrastructure deals across the Eurasia landmass. Investing close to a trillion dollars with an intended yield of over $2.5 trillion across 40 plus countries (Shaoxian, 2015). SOEs and financial institutions are being urged to invest in external construction and infrastructure

projects. Traditional craftsmanship is also being revived in an attempt to develop authentic brands in line with China's 'going global' interests (Xiansi, 2014:1). China is the main contributor of investment in this plan and there are some concerns about the flow of goods and China's tendency to have stronger exports than its trading partners. However, there is genuine interest in ironing out such differences as the road is a key potential source of economic and developmental progress as well as greater diplomatic ties amongst members (Wong, 2015: 5). In this respect the initiative also promotes, or predicates, interlocking security guarantees in liberal terms as a result of the increased integration and interdependence of countries along the belt. There have already been discussions between China and India regarding the security of borders that are of particular concern to the latter, and have, on occasion, resulted in war (Stanzel, 2015). This initiative is important in particular with regard to Iranian-Chinese relations and the convergence of their interests – with China seeking to create a Eurasia economic bloc, and Iran seeking to access key markets and diplomatic opportunities, especially in light of the history of economic sanctions on Iran.

Geo-strategically Iran is a key node of the Silk Road project, which runs through the north of the country, as it has key access to open seas, bettered only by Russia (Ortega, 2015). This is of significant interest to Iran on several levels that have been boosted by its distancing from Hamas and its promotion of soft power and diplomacy (while at the same time exploiting Western errors and failures in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen and Syria) (Ortega, 2015). China has invested in the belt road plan, and the AIIB and SCO security structures as they provide a reprieve from its immediate, suspicious, and often hostile, neighbours. The Silk Road can also be seen as the re-articulation of Persian and Chinese progress and success. It builds on the previous, ancient, model of internationalisation to compete in a globalised world. The belt does not just provide much needed access to markets, trade opportunities and investment and development.

Figure one: The proposed new silk road

en.shisu.edu.cn

It provides security through interdependence, and recognition of Iran as a regional super-power. This has the possibility to be increased as western firms clamber to offer investment with the 2016 lifting of sanctions which has the potential to transform Iran into meeting point of the West and the Eurasian East (Korybko, 2015). Central Asia is also home to the 'stan' states which share cultural and historical 'kinship' commonalties with Iran. This can be used to develop soft power and so help to raise Iran's profile. The Silk Road also seeks to develop pipeline opportunities and routes that represent a key market for Iranian energy exports, again providing the opportunity to reap much needed economic rewards that can be invested at home to promote governmental legitimacy and ease societal tensions caused by insecure and threadbare living standards.

Pragmatic Drivers of Iranian-Chinese Relations

For both China and Iran, development is crucial for their respective ambitions to return to the international stage on a level playing field with the dominant international actors. China first tried, under Mao Zedong (1949-1976), to develop at an accelerated rate within the framework of a Communist manifesto, highly influenced by Stalinist Russia (Kemenade 2009: 8). The death of Mao and the rise of Deng Xiaoping (1978-89), coupled with the failure of initiatives such as the Cultural Revolution and the numerous five- year plans surrounding it, led to the development of a new system. The Chinese state was restructured into a '"Harmonious" combination of capitalist development and sustained Communist-State apparatus' (Wu and Lansdowne 2009: 1). This merging between East and West, between Cold War era first- and second-world ideologies, represents 'the interaction between emulation of the west and resistance to its intrusion in modernising endeavours' (Xudong and Junxiang 2009: 1). The liberalisation of the market did not run parallel to the liberalisation of the government. The latter maintained its socialist order and ideals in separation from capitalist and economic reforms but regardless of this, the twin-peaked system resulted in China rising to a position of recognition, a significant member of the global economy and a member of the World Trade Organization in 1999. This drive to develop is not new, but rather one of the few lasting themes throughout China's history (ibid, p. 48).

The capitalist development and market economy has been the push and pull of China and its commitments to trade relations with a staggering array of actors in Asia, North and South America, the MENA and Europe. Increased trade has brought with it significantly improved diplomatic relations. China thus promoted its 'five principles of coexistence' (Garver 2006): a commitment to the fostering of trust, respect, cooperation and equality with its Asian neighbours in the interests of a harmonious order. Regional initiatives, such as ASEAN, have been established and supported by China, which has sought to operate on a basis of consensus between nations to address security and developmental

needs and concerns (Beeson 2004: 33). China, as a rising power, committed to an accelerated rate of development is naturally a significant consumer of resources, specifically hydrocarbons. It is also a late arrival to the international scene where existing powers already have the market monopoly in and between many states. China needs hydrocarbons, resources and fresh, un-monopolised markets.

Iran in turn, following the 1979 revolution and the 1980–88 Gulf War, was left with a crippled economy and feelings of resentment for the United States and Europe. Afrasiabi and Maleki (2003) recognise Iran's foreign policy as deriving from two sources, its turbulent regional environment and its faction-ridden polity, in the run-up to 9/11. The attack on the World Trade Centre changed the global security landscape. It also highlighted the increased role that Iran had been playing since 1990 as a mediator and crisis manager (ibid, p. 257). Reflecting China's harmonious world policy, but in no apparent way influenced by it, Iran has sought to develop diplomatic ties with regional powers and to actively promote regional security initiatives. These have included several ceasefire agreements between Armenia and Azerbaijan since 1994; the general agreement on the establishment of peace and national accord and protocol on mutual understanding in 1997; the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), of which Mohammad Khatami was a chairman in the late 1990s (ibid, p. 258); and the Economic Co-operation Organization (ECO). There are also growing pressures and security concerns for Iran regarding the freshwater resources that it shares with Afghanistan. This could certainly explain Iran's interest in mediating the peaceful settlement of governance issues between the United States and Afghanistan following the US invasion after 9/11. In this respect Iran's focus is very much East-facing. However, there has recently been a significant shift in Iranian foreign policy towards a balancing of East and West. Iran has cultivated relations with China (as well as Russia and India) for economic and political coverage that cannot be found in the West and to counterbalance the threat of Western sanctions (ibid, p. 51) as a result of fears over its nuclear energy policy.

In order to maintain and sustain domestic growth in the 21st century, energy security has become a priority for Beijing, due to its unavoidable dependence on the Middle East for hydrocarbons (as the region holds over 50 per cent of the world's proven reserves, with Iran possessing 10 per cent of the global share) (2009 figures from the US Energy Information Association - EIA). The Iran and Libya Sanctions Act in 1996 also created an economic vacuum as Western companies were prohibited from sizeable investments in the Iranian hydrocarbons industry. This provided an opportunity for Chinese firms to secure hydrocarbon imports and assist in the development of its hydrocarbons infrastructure through investments, as they faced less competition within Iran in comparison with other nations. In developing relations with Iran, China achieves influence and presence in what is arguably one of the most important geo-strategic and economic regions in the world. It also supports China's commitment

to peaceful and productive (as well as profitable) ties with all major powers and regions. Both Chinese and Iranian policies are anti-hegemonic in character. Rather than seeking to align with the dominant superpower, both states prefer the maintenance of a non-threatening international system of regions and regional powers concerned with their own interest areas**.** China specifically sees this as the most conducive system for its economic growth (Swaine. 2010: 2).

In line with mutual foreign policy interests and developmental directions, China and Iran have engaged in significant hydrocarbon trade deals. Iran has also received investment in the infrastructure, energy and technology sectors. It is also a vibrant and thirsty market for imported machinery and crafts. The high level of traffic in goods and knowhow between the two states is conducted by public and private sector firms alike and though China appears to be giving more than it is receiving, there are positive impacts of these corporate activities on the home economy. This includes the maintenance and development of Chinese economic prowess and economic security, as it has the stable monopoly of Iranian markets as well as a testing ground for the development of new products and the improvement of existing ones (Downs & Maloney, 2011). Iran in turn receives much needed foreign direct investment, technological knowhow and an injection of life into its stagnating economy. Factors within these frameworks form the pragmatic basis of Iranian-Chinese relations and so drive the need for a normative understanding and risk reduction in the absence of a formal alliance. As they are to a degree economically intertwined and interdependent there is the pragmatic and strategic need to construct a condition of trust, benefit, and expectation vis-a vis co-operative projects, transfers and exchanges. This forms the material base – the tangible economic reality of Iranian-Chinese relations, upon which a normatively constructed Tacit Alliance can be developed.

The development of this Tacit Alliance is reliant on the saleability of these material interests on the marketing of compatibilities to legitimize and promote exchanges and co-operation and overall relations. This is achieved in a particular way across two levels – the physical and the rhetorical. At the physical level all of the above material, or concrete interests produce a cyclical structure of self-fulfilling prophecy. The two states engage with one another because they are already engaged with one another– they have clear common interest's vis-a-vis security and constitutional imperatives as well as each having markets/sectors/resources that the other needs. At the rhetorical level, an alliance is created de facto: the material interests are wrapped with a discursive narrative of amenability and confidence, which is both constructed by and constructs the positivity of the interactions that they defend. In this respect, they are building trust and reducing risk (as discussed in Chapter 2) with the creation of normative influences on expectations and responses which in turn impacts the

predictability of the actions of the other. This creation is evident in official discourse practices supported and enacted by the governing parties of both states, as discussed below.

Critical Discourse Analysis and the Construction of Narrative

Whilst it is clear to see that there are material interests which underpin co-operative efforts and interest between Iran and China, the nature of this thesis is not an assessment of these interests specifically but rather the extent to which they are discursively embedded with a set framework which seeks to construct trust and confidence which inversely reduces risk analyses. This has a connotation of securitisation theory as the assessment of the extent to which relations themselves (rather than their aims and interests such as terrorism and drug trafficking which are still security issues) between the two powers are politicised and so not deemed an area of fear, threat or conflict. This necessitates an assessment of the discursive practices selected for analysis and the extent to which articulations of identity and the ways in which they construct objects within the rhetoric. As such, the focus is on '[how] does the discourse construct a Tacit Alliance?' The 'how' here is bracketed as understanding the presence or absence of a Tacit Alliance necessarily involves the ways in which this is done.

The audience for the sources selected are identified as China, Chinese civil society, Iran, and Iranian civil society. Evidence is taken from official government sources such as white papers and news reports from official state newspapers. While Fowler (1991) highlights the lack of neutrality and presence of ideological manipulation in all newspapers generically, these are classified as more overtly biased and specifically 'official' as both governing systems heavily monitor and censor their media outlets, with reporters and editors having negligible, if any, autonomy. Consequently, these newspaper sources, as explained in chapter three (p75) can be seen as mouthpieces of government. This is significant as there is no reporter autonomy to detract from the information and the way that it is being presented.

The sources selected relate to Iranian-Chinese relations specifically and so the tone and message reflects this. The initial search yielded over 1527sources, with an increase in recent years due to the nuclear negotiations taking place in the contemporary era. 134 were found to constitute a direct Iranian-Chinese channel of communication. In comparison, of the remaining 1366 items, 27 related to sports results and 821 were rejected as irrelevant on the grounds that the articles included the names of the two powers but nothing more. 545 sources were directly irrelevant but informative by-proxy in that they relate, specifically in the case of China, to external perceptions of their relations and so are generated for an alternative audience identified as the international arena. It is noteworthy that whilst

these sources do not positively reinforce Iranian-Chinese relations, neither do they repudiate them. Rather they are heavy on facts and description but light on, or absent of, hyperbole.

Articles reporting on developments in the recent nuclear negotiations between Iran, European powers and the USA for instance, where the audience could be the wider international community and peer states, lack any references to the themes identified in the discursive analysis. In a similar vein, items which propose the construction of the AIIB or the role and actions of the SCO are also absent of such relationship reinforcing content. This is significant in that emphasis can be placed on what is not stated, on what is absent from these particular discourses. In this context then the silence can be held parallel to the discursive practices employed at the bilateral level and the disparity be seen to intangibly support the theory that there is a tacit alliance between the two powers. Their trust and confidence building efforts are conducted for their own pragmatic interests and are not formalised even in discourse in wider foreign policy, regional or international narratives or hyperbole. The normative construction and espousal of friendship, trust and commonalities are not even exercised to defend China's veto of UN sanctions. The actions can be seen to be there – ambiguous as the silence may make them – such as in the case of Iran's rescue of Chinese Fishermen which reads as a situation report only (Xinhuanet.com: 2012) - but the narrative – the discourse and so empowerment of the narrative is absent. Visible in this comparison is the CDA belief in the depiction of different phenomena based on political and social perspectives (Nasab and Dowlatadabi, p. 94). This confirms the utility of the official media texts as tools and social practices, with political implications about issues of status and solidarity (Gee, 2004:32).

Analysis of the texts and transcripts that refer directly to the Iranian-Chinese relationship, in contrast, highlight specific strands that can be seen to mark the construction and maintenance, and so the empowerment of a narrative of amenability, trust and attachment – of a tacit, informal, alliance based on shared norms, values and historical experience. They represent the ideological manifestations of the phenomena of tacit alliance construction (Nasab and Dowlatadabi, p. 94). These strands are identified as three themes that both build upon and underpin one another.

Discourse, as detailed in chapter two, can be categorized as systems of truth, which, as a result have the potential to 'fix' meaning, if only temporarily, allowing us to make sense of the world at any given time. Within the context of this thesis it allows for the comprehension of truths articulated in the construction of Iranian-Chinese relations specifically. Of the 134 items identified as representations of the two states 'talking to each other', key words, terms and labels were identified as creating a rhetoric within and between them. As these have been discussed in Chapter two they will not be repeated in detail here, however, it is necessary to summarise. Such key terms were

centred around expressions of friendship, trust, cooperation, relations, respect, shared history, regional interests, peace and stability, development, strategy and security. This represents what Doty refers to as a 'first reading' (1996: 308). The second reading of the discourse assesses the ability to identify common themes in the accumulation of the language identified that can be understood to contribute to the creation of strands, or themes, that underpin the constitution of the meta-discourse. These themes have been identified as the modality, intention and expression – as the what, why and how – which have been segregated into frameworks of interaction for this thesis. Whilst it is natural that some themes may overlap – such as expressions of friendly co-operation or historical trade relations – they have necessarily been segregated into the three frameworks in order to articulate the different layers present in the construction and legitimation of the narrative.

References to cooperation, exchanges and relations (relations/relationship) are identified within the strand of 'interest' (what). These terms represent what Iran and China are doing within the framework of one another and their relationship. As noted above, there are an array of trade, technological and cultural exchanges that take place between the two states. This strand can be identified as underpinning and reinforcing this material base. This is articulated within domestic interests as the tools with which the 'what' are justified and pursued. In terms of the discursive practice of hyperbole-building within the articles selected this 'Interest' is represented by the utility of references to cooperation, mutual or bilateral exchanges, visits between, and by, high ranking officials, relations, ties, mutual benefit, partnerships and consultations. Of the sources selected for analysis, all but ten can be codified as positive for the presence and utilisation of hyperbole parallel to the descriptions of cooperation and engagement. These references are articulations of interactions within the material sectors of business, economics, culture and politics as well as the recognition of interactions between high ranking officials. It is the identification of what the states are doing and the way in which they interact which can also be termed the pragmatic/strategic basis for all interactions and so the causes of the potential development of an incorporeal association.

The second Framework is the Modality (why). These terms are identified as the structural framework within which the 'interest' occurs. The prime foreign and domestic concerns of each state, though diverging, as discussed previously, in terms of specific interests, have sufficient similarities to aid the construction of this theme of the discourse. The core of these interests and aims, as identified in chapters three and four, are centred around security, within which is the connected, though not mutually exclusive, issue of peace and stability. Diplomacy is also included here as the 'soft power' tool with which these are sought. Both states are rising powers, albeit within different environments

and under different international expectations. This involves the need to develop in numerous sectors and so to have a development agenda.

Within the context of chapters three and four, Iran and China can be seen to share particular commonalities not so much within their specific foreign policies but in relation the overarching patterns of their expression and execution, in the cognitive drivers of their foreign policy formulation and execution. Both states are anti-hegemonic and heavily rely on the hyperbole of identity and historical experience to drive their interests and ambitions. In the dialogue that has been constructed between them these interests relate to expressions and representations of peace and stability, diplomacy as a utility of soft power promotion and maintenance, and strategic interests and so create the 'modality' framework. This is significant in that the rhetoric being used is multidimensional which in part may account for its resilience. The first strand clearly identifies what the discourse does – the truth of the text – but of equal importance is why this is done – the pragmatic drivers of the behaviour which reflects the tangible, material base discussed above.

The third framework is concerned with the 'illustration' (how). The discourse develops a narrative of what is being pursued between the two powers, and why. Fundamental to this, particularity within the remit of this thesis, is this 'how'. As stated above, Iran and China pursue relations external to the framework of a formal, binding alliance. In order to offset the lack of formal alliance commitments, they must create and maintain a relationship of security in which they can, with a significant degree of accuracy, predict the potential actions of one another. They must construct trust, therefore the discourse that is relevant to this strand relates to trust, friendship, respect and what have been termed 'positives'. The latter of these are not specific words but rather a collection of words and phrases directed to one another that construct a positive reflection, including congratulations and positive connectors such as 'pleased to' and 'we welcome'. This includes support for the nuclear programme, references to China as a respectable and responsible power and humanitarian endeavours of each (see appendix D).

This strand is arguably the most significant in the analysis of the existence of a tacit alliance as it denotes the creation of trust that h is vital for the development of intra-state relations in the absence of a formal alliance. Trust is of limited concern in explicit alliances or treaties because the level of risk concerned is also limited by the binding agreements (Abbott, 1993). A better understanding of trust and the ways in which it is constructed are considerably more informative when applied to relations between states that lack the formal articulations of cooperation. China and Iran are not kin countries, in Huntingdon's use of the term (2002), nor have they committed to a formal alliance with one another. But, as previously stated, there is recorded evidence of continual rhetoric

of confidence building. China may have voted in favour of the latest round of UN sanctions against Iran, but this is not a set pattern and the government is also consistently on record as advocating the opening of discursive relations, of diplomacy and so discourse, between the NATO powers and Iran (Farrar-Wellman and Frasco 2010).

While chapter two defended the selection of white papers and national newspapers as sources where the actors were in effect addressing one another it is important to revisit this here also. The audience in discourse analysis is an important factor due to its central role in revealing the context and aims of the narrative – of the truth – that is being constructed and identified. The audience for these texts are present at two levels. At the strategic level the audience is the recipient state – it is an informal re-iteration to the commitment to sustain relations and interactions between one another. There is also a parallel political level. The narrative is also constructed and developed for the domestic audiences of each state. As identified in the previous two chapters, government legitimacy and societal support is a key policy issue of concern for both the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Chinese Communist Party. Here it is possible to identify the power relationship that is present in all CDA. Traditional CDA analysis tends to identify power in a hierarchy with the text revealing the power of one rhetoric over another and so identifying an asymmetric relationship. This is not found to be the case in this exercise however. There is no overt or hidden, systemic, competition for, or expression of, power by one over the other. Rather the power relationship identified is more embedded than this. The power is found in the narrative – in the recognition and acceptance of the narratives being presented to, and so accepted by, the two-level audience. In this case then the power itself is in the formation of rhetoric, its delivery and reception rather than in the specific truth that is being offered by the completed text.

This expression of power as narrative and not effect can itself be seen as a reflection of the nature of Iranian-Chinese relations themselves and the suspicious, anti-hegemonic nature of the foreign and domestic policies of the two governance structures being articulated. An expression of power or superiority of one over the other would in fact hinder relations and so constructions of the concept of trust and confidence in one another as each state is sensitive to the interference of, and subjugation by, external powers based on cognitive understandings of history and victimisation (Leverette & Leverette, 2014:3). The location of power within the narrative rather than emitting from it, is in itself a tacit appeal to legitimacy and indeed a form of confidence building within itself. Each state can expect not to receive harsh criticism from the other or indeed to be shown to be at a disadvantage to the other in a negative context within which resentment can be fostered.

China is aware of its rising power status and its need to be seen to be acting as a 'responsible' member of the international community. These run parallel to its energy and market access needs that drive its relations with Iran. While it is obvious that China is in a stronger position than Iran which has been all but crippled by economic and trade sanctions as a result of its nuclear programme (though having roots that can be traced further back to the US Embassy Hostage Crisis of 1981), this is not reflected vis-a-vis power within the analysis. The recent nuclear negotiations which have taken place, and resulted in a successful compromise, have been driven significantly by Chinese calls for diplomacy and detent. The upshot is the opening of discursive relations between the West and the pariah state with what initially appear to be some very positive results as a resolution to the Iranian nuclear issue has been agreed. Many Western firms have commented on the potential for access to the Iranian market (Dehghan, 2015). The lack of rhetorical subversion of Iran by China in the discourse analysed, ensures that the positive relations between the two powers has a foundation on which to develop further. In four separate sources Iran is referenced as praising China's role in the negotiation process and in two states officially the Iranian people will not forget the support provided by China during sanctions and through the negotiation process.
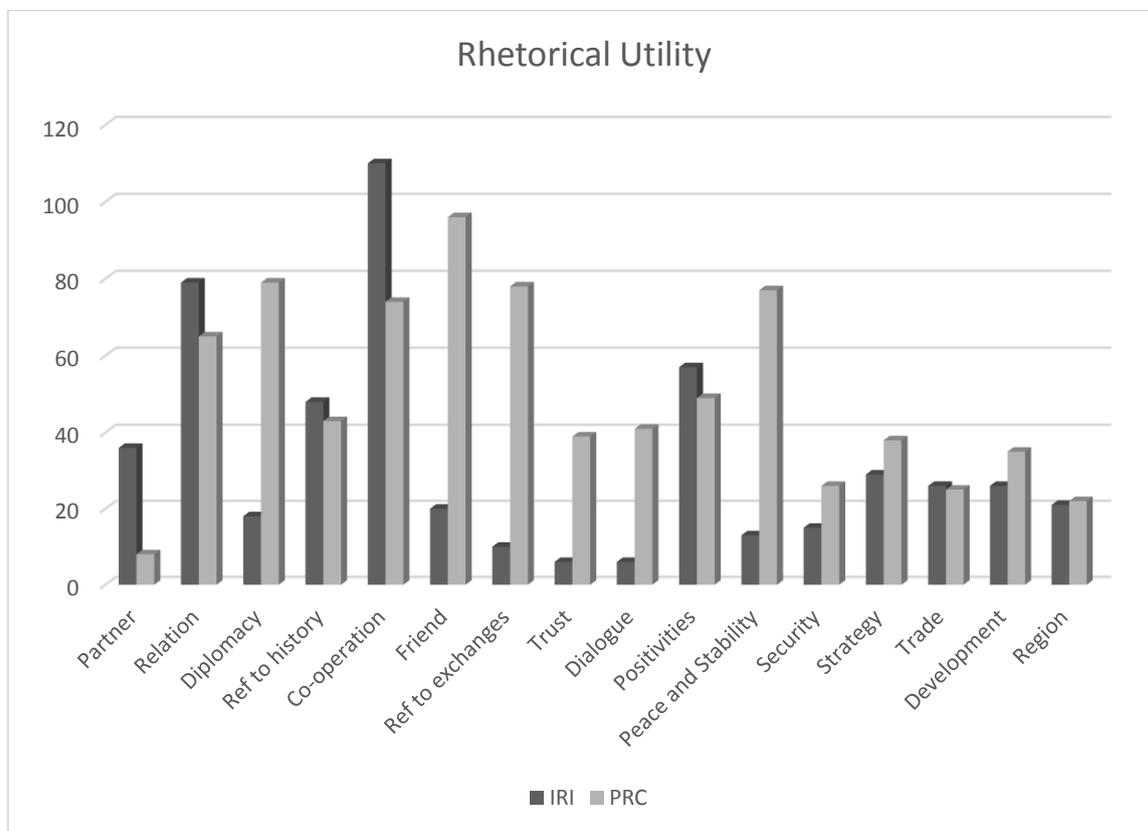
The three strands, or frameworks, identified identify the relationship and construct domestic support and recognition of relations between the two powers based on material interests, through the pursuit of co-operation and mutual exchange and underpinned by historical experience and friendship over the longue duree. China is not a neo-imperial power intent of intervening in the domestic affairs of other states and Iran is not an untrustworthy pariah state intent on nuclear domination. Rather they are two states with no history of conflict with one another who share common experiences of imperial exploitation and economic associations – they are friends, a friendship upon which, importantly, trust can be fostered and risked. An example of this is Iran's nuclear programme, which has been securitised by some states (such as the USA, Britain, Saudi Arabia and Israel) and politicised by China (and accepted by the audience) as a domestic social and economic endeavour requiring a diplomatic solution and compromise rather than strong-arm tactics born of fear and distrust.

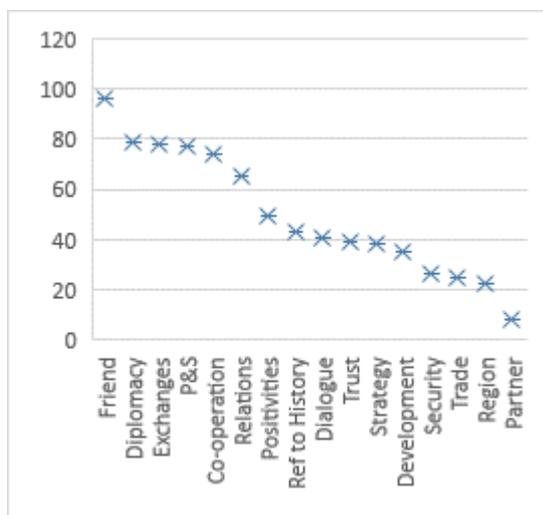**Hyperbole Representations: Existential, Propositional and Value**

The sources selected were segregated and initially read state-centrically. This has, in the first instance produced some interesting comparative results. The data recovered from the sources show a difference in the tools used. China shows a predisposition for the use of rhetoric relating to friendship, diplomacy and exchanges with references to partnership and regional initiatives and security being

the least utilised expressions of association. In comparison Iran prefers to highlight expressions of cooperation, relations and positives, with dialogue and trust being the least utilised rhetorical tools.
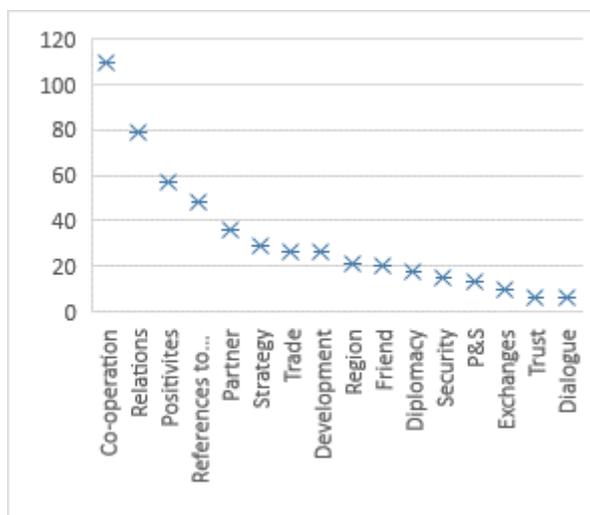
Graph 1: Comparison of the utility of the rhetoric utilised by Iran and China

Graph 2: Frequency of words utilised in Chinese media

Graph 3: Frequency of words utilised in Iranian media

On first inspection this has the potential to undermine the assumption that there is a tacit alliance built on the creation of trust in order to offset the risks involved in the absence of formal, binding agreements and treaties. This is particularly the case with regard to Iran, which seems to put so little emphasis on this term specifically – only mentioning trust eight times across six sources. As highlighted in Chapter two, the construction of trust forms a confidence building exercise, and as such though the word trust is only used eight times, being part of the modality framework it is also expressed through the implementation of cooperative endeavours and exchanges. These include joint ventures, economic agreements and cultural exchanges as well as high-level meetings between presidents and foreign policy personnel. These activities build and re-inforce the confidence that is needed in order to fulfil the material interest highlighted in section one of this chapter. In this respect then they are the construction of trust by alternative but no less influential means. This information is also reflective of the general foreign policy representative mode of each state, and so can be seen, alternatively, as part of a wider pattern of discursive behaviour of each state, and how they legitimise their practices to their domestic audience.

The closest degree of commonality between the two exists with regard to the utility of references to trade (China:5%, Iran:3.47%), region (China:4.3%, Iran:3.05%), strategy (China:5.57%, Iran:5.27%) and security (China:2.88%, Iran:3.61%), the difference between the degree of utility registering at less than 1%. This is interesting, though not overly surprising, as they represent specific foreign policy interests and ambitions previously identified with regard to the need to develop economically and structurally within a stable environment. They form the majority of the 'interest' framework of 'why' the two states are pursuing positive relations. In this context then they underpin the material interests introduced above and empower the discursive practice of legitimising the actions and accompanying rhetoric of the relevant policy makers and governing body. In contrast the least degree of commonality is found to exist within the utility of references to cooperation, friend, exchanges and peace and stability which all register a divergence greater than 8%. Peace and stability forms part of the 'interest' framework, though it is possible to account for this disparity vis-a-vis concepts and articulations of peace and stability. China, for instance, tends to talk of peace and stability within the rubric of economic cooperation and as such accompanies it with references to the SCO, AIIB and trade relations – within bilateral and regional cooperative projects. Iran in comparison accompanies peace and stability concerns with a rhetoric of increased positive relations and the development of greater diplomacy and soft power. Friend in turn sits within the expression framework, and whilst China uses the term friend to identify Iran and traditional relations, in line with its 'good neighbourhood' policies and to offset tributary system fears, Iran within a similar context refers to shared commonalities and histories, utilising concepts of respect and partnership. Here the

articulation of partner, with similar normative connotations to friend vis-a-vis trust and commitment are favoured. Exchanges and co-operation form the bulk of the modality framework and are normative articulations of the material base identified. Exchanges and cooperation frame trade and joint development projects within a positive discursive framework of shred interest and commitment. For Iran, the use of exchange and co-operation also creates assumptions of equality and level-footing which support its national narrative of respect and non-exploitation which are significant for the legitimacy and empowerment of the narrative being constructed.

At the level of framework creation disparities in the form of rhetoric utilised, and so importance assigned, is also evident. Graphs 4 and 5 below show that there appears to be a similarity in the degree to which framework A is expressed – registering at 23.84% (China) and 25.39%. (IranI). This shows mutual recognition of the strength and importance of the material base that underpins their relationship as need driven rather than altruistic. This reflects the finding so Sylvia Crosbie's (1974) application of Tacit Alliance theory to French-Israeli relations in which the relationship and rhetorical expressions of sympathy and support lasted only as long as the economic benefits that it yielded. Though the two powers may differ with regard to their commitments to why and how they relate to one another they appear to agree on what interests those relations are based upon – on the modality.

Frameworks B and C conversely reflect a greater disparity with Iran focusing on the development of C and China of B. This raises the questions of how can these trends be accounted for? and what do they represent? Where does the power relation lie for each state? Whilst it would be virtuous to find that the results mirror each other across all three frameworks, this is not expected, nor indeed a negative result. The importance attributed to a framework, as to a specific word or expression as mentioned above, is rooted in state-centric necessity of legitimacy and so the power relationship of the overarching narrative. The Chinese sources emphasise the interest framework – the why – which reflects its position as a rising international power and a developing nation. In order to justify to its civic audience, the trust it expresses in the pariah state, cultural, economic and political exchanges and co-operative endeavours it must emphasis the benefits at best and necessity at worst of such activity. Much of this is framed within the development drive and China's insatiable need for energy. Modernity is also utilised with regard to access to Iranian markets and so the benefits for the business and private sectors. Reports of China's exchanges and co-operative endeavours with Iran vis-a-vis the creation of the AIIB are also framed within China's domestic policy of encouraging peaceful development and its responsibility to pursue a peaceful environment in which to continue to develop. Chinese foreign policy in this regard is a kind of strategy – from straplines of a harmonious world, to
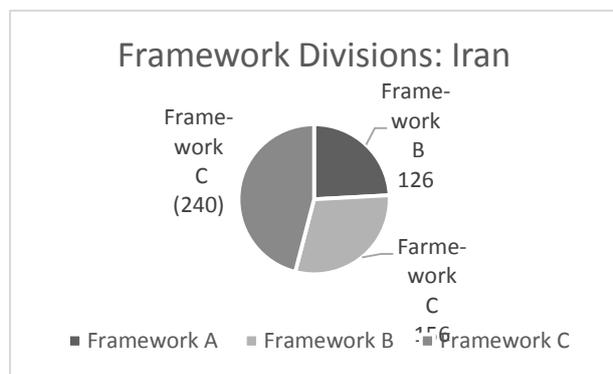
peaceful rise, regional peace, stability and security is key. This also is influenced by the domestic securitisation of Xinjiang Province which, conflated or otherwise, constitutes a significant influence on China's anti-terrorism policy.

Iran on the other hand is the weaker partner in the respect that it is predominantly seen, externally, as a pariah state and as a regional non-Arab, non-Sunni outcast. Like China, it wishes to regain its standing as a significant and influential regional power. Unlike China it has yet to make any meaningful progress at this level – due to regional tensions with Arab neighbours and general international concerns over its Israeli rhetoric and nuclear programme. In keeping with these issues as well as the importance of its anti-hegemonic national and foreign policies (discussed in chapter four) and its theocratic governance structure, the expression of the relationship can be seen to be of greater utility. In order to maintain and legitimise the power of the narrative being enforced to construct an environment of trust and confidence – a tacit alliance – the Iranian government must do several things. First, as a theocracy it must defend its collusion with a secular, communist state. Second it must defend its cooperation with the same state which is rising and which, according to much Asian regional and western discourse, has delusions of hegemony through the recreation of a tributary system. It must also offset concerns of China's highly complex interdependence with the USA and, to a lesser degree, western European states – the big and little Satan's of the international system. From this it is possible to identify that these factors correlate positively with the emphasis placed on the enforcement of the expression framework.
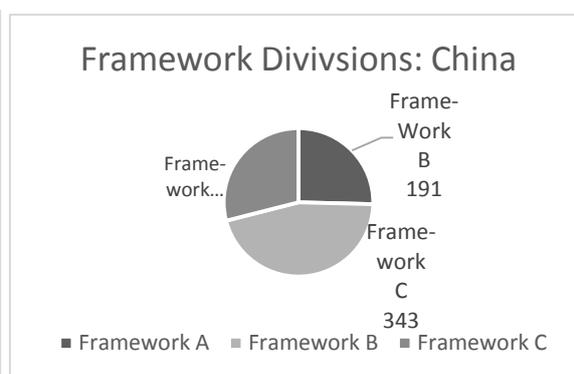
What Iran, through its media sector, does is construct a narrative which highlights above all else, the normative facet of Iranian-Chinese relations. Within the sources there are 240 references dedicated to the construction of amenability. Rhetoric highlighting partnership, friendship, various different forms of relations and references to history – historical relations and shared historical experiences all collude to legitimise a relationship on the grounds of affiliation, commonality and tradition. Media attention and government recognition is given to the anniversary of relations – most commonly in the sources gathered to the 40th anniversary of relations, alongside their ancient partnership as guardians of the silk road – a representation of the continent as the centre of modernity and internationalisation prior to the onset of imperialism and globalisation. Iran recognised China's national humiliation day with references to the same history and within its own anti-hegemonic rhetoric, thus creating a non-cultural kinship, which highlights the lack of past conflict or significant tension between the two powers. Each state has the same driving force of discursively justifying their relations to their civic audience and promoting their commitment to the same with regard to their political audience (each other). The difference is the ways in which they pursue these aims, where

they lay emphasis, which is rooted not in their pragmatic development or maintenance of the relationship but in their own constructions of their wider national and foreign policy formations.

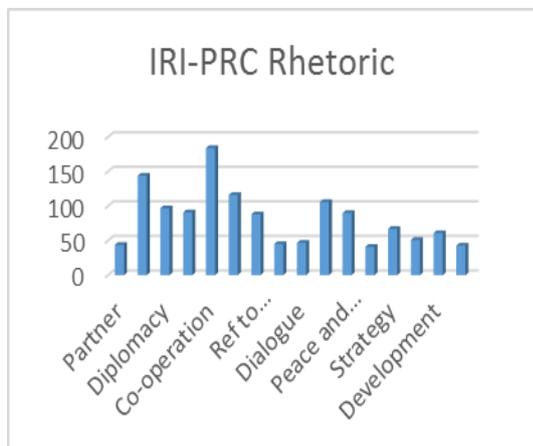Graph 4: Division of Frameworks for the Iran   Graph 5: Division of Frameworks for China
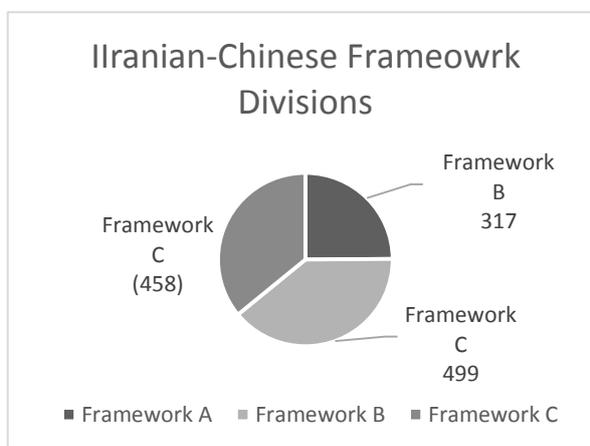

The data of the two states combined provide a more generalised trend in the construction of a specific narrative. Here we can see that the formal representation of the relationship which is espoused by government White Papers and national newspapers more or less equality weights the construction of the relationship predominantly through the utility of the interest and expression frameworks. Significantly, less attention is given to what, officially, they are doing, than to why and how they are doing it. If the underpinning goal of such an approach is the creation of a tacit alliance, then these finding are certainly able to support this in the respect that the modality framework relates to the material base of their relations – to the pragmatic interactions. In the absence of a formal, binding agreement or alliance the interest and expression frameworks – the why and the how – are constructions of trust and confidence. They represent the discursive creation of, and commitment to, a positive environment/relationship based on shared norms and values. These norms and values are underpinned by the verbal articulations of support, understanding and sympathy. These point to the creation of a confidence in the ability to predict and prescribe the behaviour and actions of each towards the other, in a way which offsets the risks perceived to exist in relations between actors who have no formal alliance or shared norms and values. To invert this point, it could be argued that if there is no tacit commitment or alliance between them, then surely there is no need for the presence of this rhetoric, just as there is no need for the lack of this hyperbole and discursive practice in the separate non-relevant sources gathered. It is also relevant to raise the question, though it is beyond the remit of this thesis, to ask why such positive re-enforcement is not so prevalent in media accounts of Chinese-US relations where the states are heavily interdependent economically, or even in Iranian-

Turkish relations in which cooperation takes place along-side a dominant rhetoric of suspicion, mistrust and competition.

Graph 6: combined use of rhetoric   Graph 7:combined Chinese framework divisions

IRI-PRC Rhetoric

IIranian-Chinese Frameowrk Divisions

Framework B 317

Framework C (458)

Framework C 499

■ Framework A   ■ Framework B   ■ Framework C

Conclusions

Iran and China interact on multiple levels relating to trade, development and security – both domestically and regionally. Taken together they form a political economy backdrop for cooperation. All of their interactions have a significant economic dimension: be it investment or hydrocarbons for trade practices. In the contemporary era of UN sanctions and the predominance of the liberal world order both are at the mercy of globalisation and dominant international norms such as human rights expectations and freedoms evaluations. Both are outsiders, to varying degrees of the dominant international 'club'. This, combined with their historical experiences and identifications victimhood with regard to treatments received at the hands of external powers, has resulted in the predominance of both of reactionary foreign policies. China's AIIB and Silk Road initiatives for instance are reactions to Obama's 'pivot east' initiative, just as the SCO was created in part to offset the potential regional influence of liberal democracies in the post-cold-war era. Each state also conversely has similar foreign and domestic policy interests, as highlighted in chapters two and three, with regard to the meta-narratives that they construct to articulate programmes not of development, but of re-development; revitalisation of a state that was previously amongst the most developed. Each does not want to succeed to the point that they are able to sit at the big boys table but rather to *return* to their seat there. The nuance is subtle but significant as they empower historical narratives of glory and success to create the identity that they should have, that they are seeking to reclaim. This commonality between the two powers, in articulation rather than process highlights points of convergence and similarity that are manipulated in the construction of a specific relationship.

As has been identified, Iranian-Chinese relations are significant in all economic sectors relating to trade, military co-operations, technological transfers, investment and infrastructure projects and issues of peace and stability in which these can take place. China is heavily reliant on Iran for its crude oil imports and refined oil exports – but not exclusively so as it does have other, significant suppliers – it also sees in Iran an accessible market free of dominant western giants which is a source of trade but also a testing ground for their brands. Iran in turn sees in China a back door into the international economy and a vital source of trade but also of development and so modernity in terms of infrastructure development and technological transfer. These are hard, material interests that form the basis of their relations. There is also a parallel benefit for the development and maintenance of Iranian-Chinese relations, which is tied to domestic policy interest of stability, security and legitimacy. Relations between the two powers supports their respect, constitutionalized, anti-hegemonic commitments and articulations of pride and strength that they will not bow down to external subjugating powers as pseudo-puppets. Each has an interest in greater regional co-operation and engagement, which will reap economic and diplomatic rewards, as well as boosting regional stability and offsetting western dominance and so interference, which is also a key foreign policy motivation and so co-operation between the two within wider frameworks such as the SCO, AIIB and ASEAN. In this respect, they certainly have the basis for a formal alliance, especially as China is heavily involved in the development of Iranian hydrocarbon fields and Iran potentially has an interest in the Muslim dominant Xinjiang province of China, which forms a specific domestic and regional security concern with the rise of radical Islamist organizations post-9/11.

The central question of this thesis relates to the presence of just such an alliance and, more specifically, its configuration. There is no formal, binding and enforceable alliance, which raises issues of security – particularly for two states so suspicious of the motives of external powers. As discussed in chapter three, the absence of a formal alliance creates a vacuum with regard to the behaviour predictability of interacting states. This informs risk and trust assessments that can retard dependencies and efforts to cooperate bilaterally. In the absence of alliance safeguards then trust and risk must be increased and decreased respectively, via alternative means, a key tool of which is confidence building. The second part of this chapter details the extent to which this confidence is normatively constructed through dominant government discourse via official, censored, media outlets. The sources that have been selected and analysed point to the construction of a narrative of amenability – of cooperation, friendship, reliability, shared and exchanged culture and historical dependability, respect and support. The articles represent discursive practices through which each state supports the other, with official trade and development cooperation being supported

rhetorically through the inclusion of a recognition of shared history, common purpose, respect and support of each for the other.

This rhetoric empowers the narrative through the accepting audience and so enables the politicization of the Iranian nuclear programme by China, or the Chinese vote in favour of UN Sanctions against Iran for instance, the securitisation of which would have resulted in a negative effect on their relations and domestic interpretations of it. The discourse created allows for the pragmatic development of their own interest without detracting from wider bilateral relations. Shared norms are powerful tools, as can be seen from the briefest of glances at the current liberal international order and concepts of freedom, human rights, and democracy. In the case of Iran and China, these norms of amenability construct a shared experience of victimhood and return to greatness as well as shared interest in a stable and economically interdependent region. Such rhetoric, along with confidence building measures of congratulations; commiserations; cultural exchange programmes; and the recent Iranian rescue of Chinese fishermen from Somali pirates; or Chinese commitments to defend the Iranian South Pars energy field against external attacks, all work to reduce the degree of risk involved in collaborating with one another – i.e. the lack of predictability in expected actions and intensions. Concomitantly, they also increase the degree of trust that is constructed, which related to the degree to which either can be predicted to act in a set way, and the extent to which that behaviour will support rather than betray, shared interest and collaborations. The creation and maintenance of shared norms relating to similarities in experience and civilisational kin ship as well as anti-hegemonic and non-interference policies are also significant and powerful. Shared norms and beliefs created a status quo of behaviour, responsibility and expectations (as ever-evolving as any status quo is), to construct and institutionalise behaviour in a way that constrains in both positive and negative terms, the behaviours of the actors concerned. Iran and China promoted shared ideals, interests and ambitions within domestic legitimacy and regional security frameworks, they also rhetorically construct support and investment in one another and shared pride and prestige over the longue duree, as well as sympathy and empathy in relation to each other's fall from grace at the hands of imperial powers. These frameworks construct a normative reality politically and societally which, as much as it is constructed, in turn constructs and constrains behaviour and actions.

The material base and the discursive practices highlighted then mirror a formal alliance vis-a-vis shared interests, economic dependence or independency and security interests. However, the security concerns expressed are set within the political economy field rather than traditional, hard power military interests and as such affect the viability of a traditional alliance. International pressures are also a key component of the lack of a formal alliance as each state has its own, pragmatic agenda

and, for China. Especially, a formal alliance with a pariah state would significantly affect its 'responsible power' commitments and agenda. What is evident, however, is the construction of an informal commitment of each towards the other, in the absence of a formal agreement. Support, cooperation and promotion of ties are endorsed and accepted within the discursive, rhetorical, and hermeneutic domain of norms and value-creation and maintenance. The institutionalised of the narrative into national discourse also legitimises and cements such constructions and commitments to confidence building through trust creation activities such as tourism, cultural and student exchanges and mutual high-level visits between government and private sectors. Such activities are indicative of the existence of a commitment towards one another – of a tacit alliance.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions

The Iranian-Chinese relationship is an interesting one, not least because of the lack of significant research dedicated to it, despite the two parties playing key roles in the current global political economy. China is a rising power with an insatiable need for energy, new markets and investment, whilst Iran, in turn, is a state as rich in hydrocarbon reserves as it is in 'bad will'. This is to say that, though its foreign policy goals are similar to those of China, as summarized below, it is considered a pariah state, mistrusted by regional neighbours such as Saudi Arabia and Israel, and viewed with suspicion and as a potential threat by Israel and the USA due to divergent, and arguably incompatible ideologies. It will be interesting in the coming months and years to see how such dynamics may evolve now that Iran has finally reached a compromise over its nuclear programme and sanctions have been lifted.

The central aims of this research endeavour are threefold, as identified in the introduction, the first of which is to explore the nature of Iranian and Chinese foreign policy decision-making and the impact of identity and cognitive factors in this process. Chapters three and four looked at Chinese and Iranian (respectively) cognitive foreign policy decision-making. Here the emphasis was not on the policies themselves, but rather, in support of this aim, was on the cognitive processes that create the framework within which such interests and policies are formulated and executed. This analysis of foreign policy decision-making highlighted a rhetorical framework within which decision-making is formulated and executed which places an emphasis on the roles of identity, history and legitimacy. Chinese foreign policy is significantly influenced by China's identification with its pre-colonial past and century of humiliation at the hands of imperial powers. As such its key interests relate to territorial integrity as seen by its commitment to the one China policy and previous 'ownership' of the islands of the South China Sea. As a previous 'great civilisation' China seeks to regain this standing and so emphasises the need to develop and modernise, which results in a dependence on hydrocarbons that it must import to fulfil its insatiable energy demands.

The CCP also came to power in 1949 on the back of claims to denounce hegemonic affiliation which was seen as a crime of the previous government. As such, and combined with the humiliation discourse, the government must maintain domestic legitimacy, and a commitment to this constitution. Relations with external powers such as the EU and the USA, as well as relations with Asian neighbours are predicated on the utility of knowledge schemas which codify the actions of

others based on past experiences. As such relations with Japan over the Spratly Islands involve previous comparisons to the latter's role in subverting China during the colonial expansion of the 19th century. The various policies of successive presidents such as Mao's 'seek truths from facts', Deng's 'hiding light', Enlai's 'peaceful co-existence' and so on all can be framed within this cognitive process of maintaining a low profile in order to fulfil development and modernity ambitions.

Iran, in turn, follows a similar path of aligning interest to previous identity perceptions as a great regional power prior to external colonial intervention. Iran also identifies itself, as it is identified by neighbours, as the non-Arab, non-Sunni interloper in the region. This identity also affects its perceptions of aims and interests as it heightens suspicions over the actions of others, again based on the assimilation of new information into existing schemas. Saudi Arabia and Iran for instance have long running rivalries which directly influences Iran's perceptions of its actions and so motivates its decision-making practices. The nuclear programme, as discussed in chapter four again can be seen as being driven by Iran's identification of itself as a developing state, wishing to return to past prominence as an important and advanced regional power. International concerns over this programme are assimilated into knowledge frameworks of past experience of external interference resulting in subjugation and fit the mirror image, image of the enemy cognitive model as Iran's own interests are seen as being for necessity and so political issues, whilst western reactions are seen as part of a wider pattern of control and domination.

The second aim of this thesis was to assess the political and economic dimensions of Iranian-Chinese relations and the impact they have upon domestic and international economic security interests and concerns and how are they impacted upon by them in turn. This aim was addressed, to varying degrees, across all sections of the thesis. Iranian-Chinse relations and indeed their tacit alliance are driven by the politico-economic situation. Commitments to trust, cooperation, investment and support are not about friendship, they are about economic and political gains. China needs to modernise, it also needs to maintain legitimacy and so to provide its urban population with the fruits of consumerism which greater integration in the global economy permits. For this it needs energy. It needs hydrocarbons. And so it looks to various states in the MENA, Iran being just one partner, but a very significant one. Iran in turn, also needs to modernise, in the sanctions era it also needed a back door into the global economy in order to offset as much as it could, the socio-economic impacts of sanctions on its urban and rural populations which were still recovering from the First Gulf War. These political-economy considerations then drive the tacit alliance which is centred on development as well as sovereignty and legitimacy which, for both China and Iran, are inherently domestic as well as international issues. Iran, in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution, extolled the exportation of the

Islamic Revolution and though this was replaced by a more pragmatic policy in the Rafsanjani period and after, it still informs support of Hamas and Hezbollah, and relations with Israel. This has no such effect with regard to Chinese relations, however, where subjugation and repression of the Uyghur Muslims is politicised into a domestic issue and so not one of concern for Iran which also endorses non-interference in sovereign issues.

The relationship between the two also acts to cultivate domestic legitimacy with regard to constitutional commitments to anti-hegemony and so the relationship is used to portray the continuation of this commitment on which both parties came to power during their respective revolutions. Similarly, it has been shown that the Iranian nuclear programme which has raised many issues at the international level with regard to Iranian intentions and transparency has been politicised by China and so deemed to constitute no existential threat. This is constructed, as discussed in chapter six, as being based on a relationship of trust, yet it is equally, if not more so, influenced by China's interest in the Iranian hydrocarbon market as well as an opportunity to showcase China's growing diplomatic, and thus soft power, capabilities.

The relationship also impacts at the regional level as Iran is a key node of the new, or revived Silk Road initiative and a founding member of the AIIB. These initiatives are aimed at strengthening FDI and developing the infrastructure and development of member states. They are opportunities for greater integration into the global economy as well as, in the case of the AIIB, an attempt to offset the influence of dominant liberal institutions which have the ability, due to their emphasis on liberalization and democratization, to compromise state stability. These initiatives also seek to develop and strengthen regional security with regard to development, of course, and purchasing parity, but also as it relates to issues such as terrorism, crime and corruption. As such it can be noted that the political economy of Iranian-Chinese relations also has a very real international dimension. These issues influence, and are influenced by the political economy of the two states and their overarching foreign and domestic policy goals and concerns as discussed in chapters four and five.

The overriding aim of this thesis is assess whether or not there exists a tacit alliance in Iranian-Chinese relations. Chapters four and five identified the extent to which each states' foreign policy decision-making was influenced by identity and cognition. In doing so it established specific similarities between the two powers with regard to their identity constructions and they ways in which these inform policy. As stated previously, the similarities lie predominantly not in their specific policies but in the driving forces behind them. Both states construct a national and international narrative of legitimacy framed within concepts of their respective heritages of ancient civilisations and major powers, tracing their lineage back to their guardianship of the ancient Silk Road and so the centre of

internationalisation. Each also has a reactive foreign policy, born of their respective colonial experiences which is manifest in the inclusion in their constitutions of their anti-hegemonic commitments. Each state also is keenly aware of the domestic-international symbiosis of their policies and the need to maintain domestic legitimacy along the lines that each took power – again tied to a denouncement of external intervention but also a commitment to development and prosperity for a fractious domestic society of multiple, and at times contentious, identities. For China this involves the stability of relations between native Han Chinese and minorities such as the Muslim Uyghurs which has the capacity to escalate into a security issue due to asymmetric rights and representations. For Iran the domestic arena is a potential source of conflict between the wealth urban and the undeveloped rural areas which constitute significant disparities in wealth and opportunities and so in human security terms.

Chapter Six then expands this analysis to consider the specific interactions between the two parties. Firstly, the concrete interests that underpin pragmatic relations between Iran and China were introduced in order to establish the material base for a possible alliance. CDA was conducted to analyse the interactions between, and representations of, each party. This data analysis identified three specific frameworks for interaction which are represented by the rhetoric constructed by each party about the other or relating to their relations. Here it is found that despite the lack of a formal binding agreement between Iran and China the rhetoric used reinforces cooperation, increasing concepts of trust and reducing perceptions of risk in their dealings with one another. This occurs at all levels, through cultural affiliation or exchange, trade and investment, and knowledge and technological transfers. This risk reduction/trust increase suggests the presence of a tacit alliance which must be maintained with the normative setting of identity, diplomacy and amenability which frames the pragmatic material interests at play and so offset the need, to an extent, for a formal agreement. It also offers flexibility and space with regards to negative policies. The lack of a formal agreement of support between them for instance enabled China to vote in favour of economic sanctions at the UN (UNSC/9948), whilst still being able to follow this up with confidence building measures which resulted in very little impact on, or deterioration of, their relationship.

This tacit alliance and the implications of increased Iranian-Chinese shared interests and increased cooperation were also analysed in relation to the recent lifting of UN economic sanctions against the former. This is significant not only because it increases access to Iranian markets. The lifting of sanctions also enables Iran to play a more active role in the south-central Asian and Asia Pacific regions. The nuclear issue and economic sanction no longer have the same potential ability to hinder Iran's access to Asian markets first of all but secondly, and possibly more significantly in terms of

development and modernisation goals, Iran is able to develop its role with the SCO and as a founding member of the AIIB which offers an alternative economic structure to the liberal institutions of the World Bank and IMF. This also fits with China's One Belt, One Road initiative which puts both states back in guardianship of centres of internationalisation – revised as they may be. Stable relations with Iran also supports China's security concerns vis-a-vis domestic terrorism and Iran is unlikely to fund or offer support for any revolts in the Xinjiang region. There is also the security of hydrocarbon supplies which will be increased with the development of pipelines from Iran through central Asia. Two powerful, non-democratic powers, which are not in competition with one another has a significant impact on south-central Asian and on how China is perceived by neighbours, and whether it is securitised or not. Calling for greater interaction, interdependence and cooperation whilst lacking the demand for greater political liberalization and democracy has a huge potential for influence on a region which is generally undemocratic in the liberal sense of the word and so can offset external influence in the region from western powers such as the USA.

This research finds that a Tacit Alliance does indeed exist between China and Iran, as stated above. This alliance is underpinned by concrete interests. More importantly, as a feature of originality for this thesis, it exists as a result of the constructions of a normative framework of commonality and affiliation. The international environment which is dominated by liberal western powers and in which neither Iran nor China are major powers, is not conducive to a formal alliance between the two, though even if it were there would be very little benefit from formalizing the relations that they have. The informal alliance allows greater lee-way with regard to the pursuit of individual interest, parallel to the execution of confidence building measures, as highlighted in chapter six. This is significant in two ways. The first relates to alliances theories generally, as introduced in chapter two. Whilst there has been much talk of the end of alliance theories following the end of the Cold-War (Oest, 2007:1), alliances are still important in the contemporary, globalized world of complex liberal economic trade practice. These range from the policies and influence of the IMF and World bank and their practices regarding structural adjustment policies, to the interactions of multi-lateral, or regional, trading blocs such as the EU. They are also important with regard to the impact of conflicting ideologies and world views that did not end with the Cold War but rather evolved into more complex, less territorially based tensions, such as the rise of Islamist rejections of perceived forms of neo-imperialist meddling in the form of the rise of entities such ISIS. Whilst alliances have not ceased they have altered in appearance and motivation to represent more politico-economic entities. This is not to say that traditional alliances are defunct, but rather that they exist alongside more fluid forms of state-to-state cooperation's and commitments. A Tacit Alliance is one form of a more fluid collusion, though a significant one. It entails, or necessitates, the construction of an identity framework which permeates

the domestic-international divide favoured by more traditional IR theories such as Realism. This is significant in the contemporary era, where greater account is given to the importance of the role of identities in relation to stability and security. A Tact Alliance *does* exist between Iran and China and it has significant implications with regard to international relations as a set of practice and an area of study.

This brings into play the second significant of the existence of a Tacit Alliance, as stated above, with regard to Iranian-Chinese relations specifically. The existence of a Tacit Alliance between the two powers adds new dimensions of understanding to their relationship and to situations such as China's reluctance to support UN sanctions against Iran and willingness to play a mediating role in the recent sanctions negotiations with regard to the P5+1. It also assists the understanding of Iran's refusal to criticise China when it did support such sanctions, as discussed in chapter six. For too long international relations, in practice and theory, have been pre-occupied with understanding the foreign policies of China and Iran, and the rise of the former and reactions of the latter, in relation to the west, in terms of how they relate to US foreign policy for instance, or what impact it may have on Europe. This western-centric view offers only a one dimensional understanding of the international arena, being myopic at best. China is a rising, developing power, with growing international influence and Iran is a developing power which plays an important role in the dynamics of the Middle East and North Africa. These roles and their foreign policy interests and activities must be understood from their own perspectives, rather than what they mean for the dominant western powers. Iranian-Chinese relations need also to be understood within this framework as they offer important implications for the ever evolving world order.

The creation of the AIIB which draws the Asian region closer to the Middle East in economic and developmental terms can offer significant challenges to the dominance of the current liberal system which puts these two regions at the mercy of globalization rather than as active participants within it. The new silk road venture also brings them closer together economically as well as culturally and technologically as trade routes historically have transported so much more than mere goods and services. With the removal of sanctions and Iran's key position with this trade route will it become, once again, a western outpost as European and American firms rush to its unfettered market, or will it retain its anti-hegemonic constitution? These are questions that need to be asked but they need to be asked within an understanding of the dynamics of Iranian-Chinese relations rather than within the dynamics of western assumptions of it. This much more comprehensive analysis of the growing role of both Iran and China in the coming years must necessarily include an awareness and understanding of the nature of the Tacit Alliance within which they relate to and interact with one another and the

ways in which it influences their joint and individual policies at the national and regional levels, as well as their responses to western discourse at the international level. This study posits that a Tact Alliance has been found to exist between Iran and China, and it is an alliance of significance to international relations both academically and politically.

Limitations and Further Research

There were various limitations during the course of this research project which must be acknowledged. First and foremost, there was the issue of the lack of accessibility to primary data from each state. Sourcing data, statistics and information was very difficult, especially up to date information as it is generally released two or three years later, and after censorship. This issue was, overall, offset by the decision to use CDA over a statistical analysis which also was more appropriate to the research aims. The issue of Iranian-Chinese relations is rather a broad one, with numerous facets and dimensions ripe for researching. For instance, the decision was taken in this thesis to analyse the construction of a tacit alliance through the utility of rhetorical devices. As such the decision was taken to analyse how the sources from each state represent the other, or relations with or between the other. As such the sources were segregated. This was a valid approach in that it enables, at the first juncture, an understanding of the construction of the relations between the two powers, and how these mirror their general foreign policy decision-making practices, habits and behaviours – as discussed in chapters three and four. There is arguably a potential limitation here in that the analysis does not cover how the sources – and so the discourses – interact with one another, how they converse if you like. This, however, is not so much of a criticism in that it is something the thesis should have done. Rather it is better suited to being recognised as an area for further research. The first step is in identifying the rhetoric and discourse and the ways in which it is used to frame a positive, tacit relationship between the two states. Further research then would expand on how this is being done and so a follow up discourse analysis would focus on how these discourses interact with one another, such as judging statements and responses to assist in the build-up of an in-depth analysis of the utility and maintenance of their relations with one another and so the maintenance of the tacit alliance that has been identified.

Another limitation of this research project was the lack of attention given to the specific foreign policies, and policy-makers, of each state. In chapters four and five the emphasis was not on who does policy or on specific policies. The focus was, necessarily, on the formation of policy-making, on the cognitive process which inform it, as these processes share commonalities between both China and Iran with regard to concepts of identity, history, respect and legitimacy. It is important to locate these underpinning forces as they are used to assess the actions and potentials of alliance partners

and represent the schemas that are used to assimilate information which informs calculations of trust and risk assessments. Again though, this also highlights areas for further research as a separate, yet connected avenue to pursue would be the ways in which the cognitive process impacts on specific polices and their executions would result in a more statistical analysis of specific policies of each party and how they impact the other, as well as how they are represented and the degree of effect such representations have on the response to policies. This could be used for instance to look at China's growing presence in Africa along with Iran's burgeoning presence, or to look at the Israel-China-Iran relationship and how it is conducted with little securitisation by either party. China is a rising power in south-central Asia specifically and in the world generally, Iran in turn is a significant power in the energy abundant MENA. Their relations with one another in the sanctions era, and how they develop in the post-sanctions climate are of much interest to policy makers, economists, academics and diplomats alike, particularly in the western world which is vary of the potential of both states and the potential hard and soft power they may be able to accumulate

Bibliography

- Abbott. K.W., 1993. "Trust but Verify": The Production of Information in Arms Control Treaties and Other International Agreements. *HeinOnline:* http://heinonline.org-downloaded 11.07.12: 12.48pm)

- Abadi. M., 1982. *Iran, China and the Persian Gulf*. Radiant Publishers: New Delhi.

- Afrasiabi. K., and Maleki. A., 2003. Iran's Foreign Policy After 11 September. *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*. VIX:2 pp255-265

- Abbott. K.W., 1993. "Trust but Verify": The Production of Information in Arms Control Treaties and Other International Agreements. *HeinOnline* – 26 Cornell Int'l L.J. 1 (http://heinonline.org-downloaded 11.07.12: 12.48pm)

- Almeidi. M., 09.07.2015. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization Waits for Iran. *Al Arabiyia News*. http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/middle-east/2015/07/09/The-Shanghai-Cooperation-Organization-waits-for-Iran.html

- Aminmansour, M., Nov 2007. *Uneven urbanization in Iran/Globalization*: E:\Iran-Globalization.mht

- Amiri. R.E., and Samsu. K.H.B.K., 2011. Security Cooperation of Iran and Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*. V2:16 pp246-252

- Amiri, R.E., Samsu, K.H.B.K., and Fereidouni. H.G., 2010. Iran's Economic Considerations After the War and its Role in Renewing of Iran-Saudi Diplomatic Relations. *Cross-Cultural Communications.* V6:3 pp45-54

- Anderson, E.W., and Anderson, L.D., 2010. *An Atlas of Middle Eastern Affairs*. Routledge; London

- Amuzegar. J., 2014. *The Islamic Republic of Iran: Reflections on an Emerging Economy*. Routledge: London.

- Anderson. B., 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism.* Verso: London.

- Anon. 09.06.2010, UNSC/9948: Security Council Imposes Additional Sanctions on Iran, Voting 12 in Favour to 2 Against, with 1 Abstention. *Security Councils Meetings Coverage.* http://www.un.org/press/en/2010/sc9948.doc.htm. Accessed 20.01.2014.

- Anon, 13.05.2013. Expanding Ties with Neighbours, Iran's Core Policy: Foreign Minister. *Press TV*

- Anon. 29.09.2012. Wang Lijun. *The Economist.* P9.

- Anon. 14.11.2008. Caught in the Middle East but still Perky: *The Economist*

- Anon. 26.03.2014. *BBC News* http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-26747649. Last Accessed 20.10.2014

- Anon. 29.09.2012. Wang Lijun. *The Economist.* P9

- Aras. B., 2008. From Conflict to Co-operation: Desecuritization of Turkeys Relations with Syria and Iran*. Security Dialogue*. V39:5, pp495-515

- Baker-Beall. C., Heath-Kelly. C., and Jarvis. L., 2015. *Counter-Radicalization: Critical perspectives*. Routledge: London

- Balzacq. T., 2005. The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context. European Journal of International Relations vol. 11 no. 2 171-201

- Bauer. M.W., and Gaskell. G., 2000*. Qualitative Researching in Text, Image and Sound.* Polity Press: Oxford

- Bayliss. J., and Rengger. N.J., 1992. *Dilemmas of World Politics: International Issues in a Changing World.* Oxford University Press: Oxford

- Beach. D., 2012. *Analyzing Foreign Policy. Palgrave Macmillan*: London

- Beeson. M., 2004. *Contemporary Southeast Asia: regional dynamics. National differences*. Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire

- Benari. E., and Ross. A., 10.09.2013. Details of Iran's Nuclear Compromise Emerge. *Arutz Sheva 7*. Israelnationalnews.com http://www.israelnationanews .com/News/News.aspx/ 172660#.VNNShp2sWmE

- Bentley. J.H., 1993. *Our World Encounters: Cross Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

- Beranek. O., 2009. Divided We Survive: A Landscape of Fragmentation in Saudi Arabia. *Crown Centre for Middle East Studies*. No. 33 p1-8

- Berti, B., and Guzansky. Y., 2014. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Policy on Iran and the Proxy war in Syria: Toward a New Chapter*? Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*. V1113 pp25-34

- Bickers. R., 2012. *The Scramble for China*. Penguin Books: London

- Bower. M., 2007: *Russia, America and the Islamic World*. Ashgate Publishing Limited: Hampshire

- Bowker. M., 2013. Russia, America and the Islamic World. Ashgate Publishing: Farnham

- Burchill. S., and Linklater. A., 2007. *Theories of International Relations,* 3rd ed. Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire

- Burman. E., 2009. *China and Iran: Parallel History, Future Threat.* The History Press: Gloucestershire.

- Blanchard. B., 15.07.2014. China Tells U.S. to Stay out of South China Seas Dispute. *Reuters*

(ed US). http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/15/us-china-usa-asean-idUSKBN0FK0C M20140715 last accessed 02.10.2014

- Bijian. Z., 2011. China's Rad to Peaceful Rise. Routledge: Oxon

- Burman. E., 2009. *China and Iran: Parallel History, Future Threat*. The History Press: Gloucestershire.

- Bush. G.W., 'State of the Union address', 29 Jan. 2002, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html; Associated Press, 'Bush: "All options are on the table" regarding Iran's nuclear aspirations', *USA Today*, 13 Aug. 2005

- Buzan. B., Waever. O., and De Wilde. J., 1998. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

- Brown. C., 1994. 'Turtles All The way Down': Anti Foundationalism, Critical Theory and International Relations. *Millennium Journal of International Studies*. V23:2 pp213-236.

- Cable. V., 1995.What is International Economic Security? *International Affairs.* V 71:2, pp. 305-324

- Callahan. W., 2012. *China: The Pessoptimism Nation*. Oxford University Press: Oxford

- Callahan. W.A., 07.11.2012. Who is Xi Jinping, and Where Will He Lead China? Open Democracy.

- Cebeci. M., 2011*. Issues in EU and US Foreign Policy.* Lexington Books: Plymouth.

- Ciuta.F., Regions, Areas and Exception: IR and the Hermeneutics of Context. Paper for the 6th ECPR-SGIR Conference, Turin. *The Contribution of Regional Studies to IR theory*

- Chen. H.T., 1990. *Theory-Driven Evaluation.* Sage Publications; London

- Chinability. March 2015. GDP Growth in China 1952-2014. http://www.chinability.com/GDP.htm.

- Chomsky. N., and Achcar. G., 2007. *Perilous Power*. Penguin Books: London

- Christian. D., 2000. Silk Roads or Steppe Roads? The Silk Roads in World History. *Journal of World History*. V11:1 pp1-26.

- Clarke. M., and White. B., 1989. *Understanding Foreign Policy: The Foreign Policy Systems Approach.* Edward Elgar Publishing Limited: Cheltenham.

- Chomsky. N., and Achcar. G., 2007. *Perilous Power*. Penguin Books: London

- Chopra, D., 16.11.2007. Curing the Post-Colonial Hangover. *The Huffington Post*: http://huffingtonpost.com/deepak-chopra/curing-the -postcolonial-h_b_73049.html

- Colachal. A.R., July 2007. Iran and Turkey: Towards a Patch up? *World Institute for Asian Studies*. Vol. 11 No. 3

- Clough. P., and Nutbrown. C., 2012. *A Students Guide to Methodology*. 3rd ed. Sage Publications: London

- Coughlin. C., 2009, *Khomeini's Ghost.* Macmillan: Oxford

- Collins. K., and O'Cathain. A., 2009. Ten Points about Mixed Methods Research to be Considered by the Novice Researcher. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches.* V3:1 pp2-7

- Creswell. J., 2011. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Sage: London

- Creswell. J., and Plano Clark. V.L., 2011*. Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. 4th Ed. Sage: London.

- Ciuta. F., Regions, Areas and Exceptions: IR and the Hermeneutics of Context. Paper for the 6th ECPR-SGIR Conference, Turin. *The Contribution of Regional Studies to IR Theory*

- Coker. C., 2002. Globalization and Insecurity in the Twenty-first Century: NATO and the management of Risk. *The international Institute for Strategic Studies.* Adelphi Paper 345.

- Crosbie, S., 1974. A Tacit Alliance. Princeton University Press: New Jersey.

- Dacey. R., and Carlson. L.J., 2004. Traditional Decision Analysis and the Poliheuristic Theory of Foreign Policy Decision Making. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. V48:1 pp38-55

- Davenport. K., 2014. History of Official Proposals on the Iranian Nuclear Issue. *Arms Control Association.* http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-24170726

- Dakroub. H., 06.09.2014. ISIS brings Saudi Arabia and Iran Closer. Lebanon News. http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Sep-06/269754-isis-brings-saudi-arabia-and-iran-closer.ashx Accessed 13.01.2015

- Dagres, H., 1306.2012. Viewpoint: Three Years in, Is Iran's Green Revolution Still Going? *VOA news online*: http://middleeastvoices.voanews.com/2012/06/viewpoint-three-years-in-is-irans-green-revolution-still-going-34727/ accessed 11.11.14

- Davidson. C., 2010. The Persian Gulf and Pacific Asia: From Indifference to Interdependence. Hurst: London

- De Burgh. H., 2006. China, Friend or Foe? Icon Books: Cambridge.

- Delpech. T., (2006). *Iran and the Bomb: The Abdication of International Responsibility.* Columbia University Press: Columbia

- Dennis Van Vranken Hickley (1990). "New Directions in China's Arms for Export Policy: Of China's Military Ties with Iran" *Asian Affairs*

- Dehghan. S.K., 20.04.2015. Western Businesses Eye Iran After UN Backs Nuclear Deal. *The Guardian*.

- Diamond H.S., 2012. Reinterpreting Nuclear Consequences: Realism, Constructivism, and

the Iranian Crisis. University of Puget Sound.

- Dikotter. F., 2010. Mao's Great Famine. Bloomsbury: London

- Dingli. *S., 2015.* We Need to Talk about Silence: Re-examining Silence in International Relations Theory. *European Journal of International Relations.* V21:4 pp721-742.

- Dittmer. L., 2003. Leadership Change and Chinese Political Development. *China Quarterly* 176:918

- Djallil, L., 2011. China and the Nuclear Crisis; Between Ambiguities and Interests. *European Journal of East Asian Studies.* V10: pp227-253

- Dorraj. M., and Currier. C.L., 2008. Lubricated with Oil: Iran-China Relations in A Changing World. *Middle East Policy Council.* VXV:2

- Downs. E.S., and Maloney, S., March 2011: Getting China to Sanction Iran. *Brookings.* http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2011/02/03-china-iran-downs-maloney

- Early, B.R., 2014: Why Sanctions Busting Leads to Broken Sanctions Policies. *CATO UNBOUND A Journal of Debate*. http://www.cato-unbound.org/2014/11/17/bryan-early/why-sanctions-busting-leads-broken-sanctions-policies. Accessed 02.01.2015

- Early. B.R., Unmasking the Black Knights: Sanctions Busters and Their Effects on the Success of Economic Sanctions. *Foreign Policy Analysis*. V7. Pp371-402.

- Edelman, E.S., Krepinevich. A.F., and Montgomery. E.B., 2011. The Dangers of a Nuclear Iran: The Limits of Containment. *Foreign Affairs*. V90:66 pp66-81

- Edmonds. W.A., and Kennedy. T.D., 2013. *An Applied Reference Guide to Research Designs*. Sage: London.

- Ehteshami, A., and Zweiri, M, 2011. *Iran's Foreign Policy; From Khatami to Ahmadinejad.* Ithaca Press: Berkshire

- Ellings. R.J., Simon. S.W., 1996. *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*. M.E. Sharp Inc.: New York.

- Elisseeff. V., 2000. *The Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce*. UNESCO: Paris

- Ellman. B.A., 2009. Moscow and the Emergence of Communist Power in China, 1925-30. Routledge: London

- Eichengreen. B., and Tong. H., 2011. The External Impact of China's Exchange Rate Policy: Evidence from Firm Level data*. IMF Working Paper* WP/11/155 (wp11155.pdf).

- EUI: 2012. China's Next Generation of Leaders New Faces, Old Policies? *The Economist Intelligence Unit limited*: London

- European Commission. 2015. Trade: China. http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/ countries-and-regions/countries/china/ Accessed 07.11.2015

- Farndon, J., 2006. *Iran*. Icon Books: Cambridge

- Farrar-Wellman. A., and Frasco. R., July 2010. China-Iran Foreign Relations. *The Iran Tracker.* Http:www.Irantracker.org/foreign-relations/china-iran-foreign-relations: ccesses24/03/2011

- Fayezmanesh. S., 2003. The Politics of the US Economic Sanctions Against Iran*. Review of Radical Economic Politics*. V35:3 pp221-240.

- Finnemore. M., 1996. National Interests in International Society. New York: Cornell University Press.

- Fischel, J.W., 1951 Semitic and Oriental studies: a volume presented to William Popper, professor of Semitic languages, emeritus, on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday, October 29, 1949. *Volume 11 of University of California publications in Semitic philology.* University of California Press.

- Fisman. R., and Khanna. T., 1999. Is trust a historical residue? Information flows and trust levels. *Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organization*. V38, pp79-92

- Freeman. C.W., 2013. Coping with Kaleidoscopic Change in the Middle East. *Middle East Policy Council*. V XX:4 pp 1-6

- *Gadamer, Hans-Georg* (1975). "*Hermeneutics and Social Science*". Philosophy Social Criticism / Cultural Hermeneutics 2 (1975) 307-316, D. Reidel Publishing Company, Dordrecht, Holland (*http://psc.sagepub.com*) 2 (4): 307–316.

- Gamble. A., and Payne. A., *Regionalism and World Order*. 1996. Macmillan Press: Hampshire.

- Garrison, J.A., 2003. Foreign Policy Analysis in 20/20; A Symposium. *International Studies Review*. V5: pp155-202

- Garver, J.W., 2006. *China and Iran: Ancient Partners in a Post-Imperial world*. University of Washington Press: Washington, USA.

- Gartenstein-Ross. D., 2005. No Other Gods Before Me: Spheres of Influence in the Relationship Between Christianity and Islam. *International Law and Policy*. V33:2 pp223-284.

- Gentry. B.J., Nov 2005. The Dragon and the Magi: Burgeoning Sino-Iranian Relations in the 21st Century. *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*. V3:3 pp111-125

- Gheissari. N., and Nasr. V., 2009. Iran: History and the Quest for Liberty. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

- Goh. E., 2005. Constructing the US Rapprochement with China, 1961-1974: From "Red Menace" to "Tacit Ally". Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

- Ghorbani, Fahimeh. 2012. "Roots of Tensions Between Iran and Saudi Arabia." *Iran Review*. Accessed September 15th 2016. http://www.iranreview.org/content /Documents/Roots-of-Tensions-between-Iran-and-   Saudi-Arabia.htm

- Guzzini. S., 2000. A reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations. European Journal of International Relations. V6:2 pp147-182.

- Hale. W., 1992. Turkey, The Middle East and the Gulf Crisis. International Affairs. V68:4 pp679-692

- Hall-Kenyon. K.M., Bingham. G.E., and Korth. B.B., 2009. How do Linguistically Diverse Students fare in full and Half Day Kindergarten? Examining Academic Achievement, Instructional Quality and Attendance. *Early Educational Development*. V20 pp25-52

- Harold. S., and Nader. A., 2012*. Iran and China, Economic, Political and Military Relations.* The RAND corporation: California.

- Hashim, A., 1995. *The Crisis of the Iranian State*, Adelphi Books: Oxford University Press: Oxford

- Hobbes, T., 1996. *Leviathan*. New York: Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1651)

- Hobsbawn, E., 1995. *The Age of Extremes 1914-1991.* Abacus: London.

- Hoffman. A., 2002. A conceptualization of Trust in International Relations. *European Journal of International Relations.* V8:3, pp375-401

- Hopf. T., 1998. The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory. International Security. V23:1 pp171-200

- Hill. C., 2003. *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy.* Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire.

- Huasheng, Z., 2006. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation at 5: Achievements and Challenges Ahead. *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 3. p. 117-118.

- Hufbauer. G., Schott. J.J., and Elliott. K.A., 1990. *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered: History and Current Policy,* 2nd ed. Institute for International Economics: Washington.

- Huntington. S., 2002. *The Clash of Civilizations and the remaking of world order.* Simon and Schuster Inc.: London.

- Huntington. S., 2002. *The Clash of Civilizations and the remaking of world order.* Simon and Schuster Inc: London

- Inkpen. A.C., and Currall. S.C., 1998. The nature, antecedents and consequences of joint venture trust. *School of Business and Management*. V4:1 pp1-20

- Jacques. M., 2012. *When China Rules the World*, 2nd ed. Penguin books: London

- Jacobsen. H.K., and Putnam. R.D., (eds) 1993. *Double-edged Diplomacy: International*

Bargaining and Domestic Politics. California: University of California press.

- Jaffe. A.M., and Lewis, S.W., 2002. Beijing's Oil Diplomacy. *Survival*. V44:1 pp115-134

- Jahner. A., 2012. Saudi Arabia and Iran: The Struggle for Power and Influence in the Gulf. *International Affairs Review*. Xx:3 pp38-50

- Jennings R., 11.11.2014. Crouching Puppy, Hidden Pitbull: China's Approach to Bristly Taiwan. *Forbes Asia.* Last accessed 11.11.2014

- Jensen. L., 1982. *Explaining Foreign Policy.* Prentice-Hall Inc.: New Jersey, USA.

- Jervis. R., 1970. *The Logic of Images in International Relations.* Princeton University Press: Princeton, USA.

- Kaarbo, J., Foreign Policy Analysis in the Twenty-First Century: Back to Comparison, Forward to Identity and Ideas. In Garrison, J.A., 2003. Foreign Policy Analysis in 20/20; A Symposium*. International Studies Review* (2003) 5, 155–202

- Khaloosadeh. S., 8.10.2011. Iran-Iraq War: Legal and International Dimensions*. Iran Review.* Iranreview.org/content/Documents/Iran_Iraq_Wa_Legal_and_international_Dimensions.htm

- Kaljian. L.C., Jones. E. W., Rosenthal. G.E., Tripp-Reimer. T., and Hillis. S.L., 2006. An Empirically Derived Taxonomy of Factors Affecting Physicians' Willingness to Disclose Medical Errors. *Journal of general Internal Medicine*. V24 pp942-948

- Kay. S., 2015. *Global Security in the Twenty-First Century: The Quest for Power and the Search for peace* 3rd Ed. Rowman and Littlefield: London

- Kemanade W., 2010. China vs. the Western Campaign for Iran Sanctions. *The Washington Quarterly*. P99-114

- Kifner, John. 1987. "400 Die as Iranian Marchers Battle Saudi Police in Mecca; Embassies Smashed in Tehran." *The New York Times*. Accessed November 20 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/1987/08/02/world/400-die-iranian-marchers-battle-saudi-police-mecca-embassies-smashed-teheran.html?pagewanted=all

- Khorami, A., 13.11.2014. Water Scarcity to Water Crisis in Iran. *Middle East Eye.* http://www.middleeasteye.net/in-depth/features/water-scarcity-water-crisis-iran-377184594 Accessed 05.01.2015

- Koddenbrock. K.J., 2014, European Journal of International Relations June 2015 vol. 21 no. 2 243-266

- Kozhanov. N.A., 2011. U.S. Economic Sanctions Against Iran: Undermined by External Factors. *Middle East Policy*. Vxv111:3 pp144-160

- Korybko. A., 15.08.2015. "New Silk Road" and Iran's Potential as Energy Disruptor". Polar Reorientation in the Middle East. *Globalreasearch.org* http://www. global research.ca/new-silk-road-and-irans-potential-as-energy-disruptor-polar-reorientati on-in-the-middle-east/5469473

- Kozhanov. N.A., 2011. U.S. Sanctions Against Iran: Undermined by External Factors. *Middle East Policy Council*. Vxviii:3

- Krings. H., Baumgartner. H., and Wild. C., 1973,

- Kurtaran. G., 18.04.2011. Iranian firms break into world markets via Turkey. *Economic Review: The Hurriyet daily news:* http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=iranian-firms-break-into-world-markets-via-turkey-2011-04-18. Cited 20/04/2011

- Kydd. A., 2007. "Trust and Mistrust in International Relations." *Political Psychology*, Vol. 28, no. 3: 378-381.

- Langer. R., 2013. To Kill a Centrifuge: A technical Analysis of What Stuxnet's Creators Tried to Achieve. *The Langer Group:* Arlington. http://www.langner.com/en/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/To-kill-a-centrifuge.pdf

- Langteine. M., 2013. *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*. (snd Ed). Routledge: Oxon

- Larson. D.W., 1997. Trust and missed opportunities in international relations. *Political Psychology*. V18:3 pp701-734

- Lawrence. S.V., 2013. China's Political Institutions and Leaders Charts. *Congressional Research Service:* USA. www.crs.gov

- Leese. D. 2014. The Cult of Personality and Symbolic Politics. In Smith. S.A., (ed). The *Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

- Legro. J.W., 2009. The Placticity of Identity Under Anarchy. *European Journal of International Relations:* Vol. 15 no. 1 37-65

- Leverett. F., 2014. American Hegemony (and Hubris), The Iranian Nuclear Issue, and the Future or Sino-Iranian Relations. Legal Studies Research Paper no.39: The Pennsylvania State University

- Lindsay. J.M., and Takeyh. R., 2010. After Iran Gets the Bomb.: Containment and its Implications. *Foreign Affairs.* V89:3 pp33-49.

- Little. R., and Smith. M., 1991. *Perspectives on World Politics.* 2nd ed. Routledge: London.

- MacAskill, E., and McGreal, C., 27.10.2005. Israel Should Be Wiped off the Map, Says Iran's President. *The Guardian on-line*: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/oct/27/israel.iran Accessed 04.04.2014

- MacFarquhar, N., April 2016. "Putin Lifts Ban on Russian Missile Sales to Iran". *The New York Times*. Accessed April 14,2016.

- Mahruqi, Z, 24.09.2014. Where Has Iran Gone Right and Saudi Arabia Gone Terribly Wrong? *Foreign Policy online*. http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2014/09/24/where-has-iran-gone-right-and-saudi-arabia-terribly-wrong/ Accessed 20.10.2014

- Maloney. S., 2015. The Revolutionary Economy. *The Iran Primer*. http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/revolutionary-economy accessed 01.03.2016

- Marcel. V., 2001. The Constructivist Debate; Bringing hermeneutics (Properly) In. Panel WD18 ISA Conference 21.02.01

- Marsh. D., and Stoker. G., 1995. *Theory and Methods in Political Science.* Macmillan Press LTD: Hampshire

- Matsuda. Y., 2004. PRC-Taiwan Relations Under Chen Shui-Bian's Government: Continuity and Change Between the First and Second Terms. Presented at The Brookings-FICS Conference: 23.05.2004.

- McGregor. R., 2012. *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Leaders.* Penguin Books: London

- McLuhan, M. and Q. Fiore (1967): *The Medium is the Message*. New York: Bantam

- McQueen. R., and Knussen. C., 2002*. Research Methods for Social Science, and Introduction*. Prentice Hall: London

- Mesjasz. C., 2004. Economic Security. *Paper presented at the IRPA general conference*, Sopron, Hungary.

- Migdalovitz. C., 17.04.2011. AKP's domestically driven foreign policy. *The Hurriyet daily news:* http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=akp8217s-domestically-drivenforeign- policy-2011-04-17. Cited 20.04.2011

- Milliken. J., 1999. The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods.

- Mintz. A., 1993. The Decision to Attack Iraq: A non-compensatory theory of decision-making*. Journal of Conflict Resolution*. V37:4 pp595-618

- Mintz. A., 2004. How do leaders make decisions? A Poliheuristic Perspective. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. V48:1 pp3-13

- Mintz. A., and Geva. N., 1997. The Poliheuristic Theory of Decision. In Geva. N., and Mintz., A. (eds) *Decision Making on War and Peace: The Cognitive Rationale Debate.* Lynne Reinner: Boulder Pp 91-101

- Mintz. A., and De Rouen Jr K., 2010*. Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making*.

Cambridge University Press: New York

- Monshipouri. M., and Dorrl, M., 2013. Iran' Foreign Policy: A Shifting Strategic Landscape. *Middle east Policy Council*. VXX:4 pp1-9

- Mor, B.D., 2012. Credibility Talk in Public Diplomacy. *Review of International Studies*. V38:2 PP393-422

- Moore. G., 2014. The Difference a Day Makes: Understanding the End of the Sino-American "Tacit Alliance". *International Studies Review.* V16:4. Pp540-574

- Morin. J.F., and Gold. R.E., 2010. Consensus-seeking, distrust and rhetorical entrapment: The WTO decision on access to medicines. *European Journal of International Relations.* V16:563, pp563-587.

- Morin, A., 2014. China's Instructive Syria Policy, *The Diplomat.* Accessed 03.01.2015 http://thediplomat.com/2014/05/chinas-instructive-syria-policy/

- Morrison. W.M., and Labonte. M., 2011. China's Currency Policy: An Analysis of the Economic Issues. *Congressional Research Service*.

- Mueller. J. & Mueller. K., 1999. Sanctions of Mass Destruction. *Foreign Affairs*. V78:4 pp43-43.

- Mullen, J., September 2015. "Iraq agrees to share intelligence with Russia, Iran and Syria". CNN. Accessed September 28, 2015.

- Naji. K., 18.01.2016. Iranian Nuclear Deal: Five Effects of Lifting Sanctions: BBC news. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-35342439 accessed 19.01.2016

- Nasu. H., 2011. The Expanded Conception of Security in International Law: Challenges to the UN Collective Security System. *Amsterdam Law Forum*. V3:3 pp1-19

- Neack. L., Hey. J.A.K., and Haney. P.J., 1995. *Foreign Policy Analysis: Continuity and Change in Its Second Generation.* Prentice Hall Inc.: New jersey, USA.

- Nia, M.M., 2011. A Holistic Constructivist Approach to Iran's Foreign Policy. *International Journal of Business and Social Science.* V2:4 pp279-294

- Norton-Taylor., 20.06.2007. The errors that let Iran seize 15 crew members. *The Guardian* http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2007/jun/20/iran. military accessed: 15.02.08.

- Nye, J. S., 2015. Is the American Century Over? London: Wiley

- O'Donnell. K., and Newland. K., 2008. The Iraqi Refugee Crisis: The Need for Action. *Migration Policy Institute*: Washington

- Oest. K.J.N., 2007. The End of Alliance Theory? *Institute for Statskundskab*. ISBN 978-87-7393-561-3.

- Ortega. A., 21.07.2015. The New Silk Road Passes Through Iran. *Elcano Royal Institute*: Global Policy. http://www.blog.rielcano.org/en/global-spectator-the-new-silk-road-passes-through-iran/ Accessed 08.08.2015

- Outhwaite, W., 1987. *New Philosophies of Social Science: Realism, Hermeneutics and Critical Theory*. Macmillan Education Limited: Hampshire

- Panitchpakdi. S., and Clifford. M.L., 2002. *China and the WTO*: Changing China, Changing World Trade. John Wiley and Sons (Asia) Pte Ltd: Singapore.

- Patrikarakos. D., 2012. *Nuclear Iran: The Birth of an Atomic State*. I.B. Taurus: London.

- Paul. A., 10.12.2012. Turkey and Iran: An unravelling Relationship. *Al Arabiya News*. http://english.alarabiya.net/views/2012/08/12/231743.html

- Pipe, J., 2013. *Hoping for Peace in Iran*. Gareth Stevens Publishing: New York

- Polakow-Suransky. S., 2014. *The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Alliance with Apartheid South Africa*. Penguin Random House: London

- Poling. G.B., July 2013. The South China Sea in Focus: Clarifying the Limits of Maritime Dispute. *Center for Strategic Studies and International Studies.* http://csis.org/files/publication/130717_Poling_SouthChinaSea_Web.pdf accessed 01.07.2014

- Pomfret. R., 1997. The Economic Co-operation Organization: Current Status and Future Prospects. *Europe-Asia Studies*. V49:4, pp657-667.

- Ramazani, R.K., 2009. Understanding Iranian Foreign Policy. *The Middle East Institute*: Payvand Iran News.

- Ramcharan Bertrand. 2015. *International Peace Conferences.* Leiden: Brill Publishers.

- Rakel, Eva. 2007. "Iranian Foreign Policy Since the Iranian Islamic Revolution: 1979-2006." *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology.* Vol. 6, No. 1: 159-187.

- Rezaei. F and Ronen A.C. 2014. "Iran's Nuclear Program and the Israeli-Iranian Rivalry in the Post-Revolutionary Era." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 4: 442-460.

- Rundle, Michael. 2011. "Iran Warns US to Keep Navy Out of Persian Gulf." *The Huffington Post*. Accessed October 1st 2015. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/news/iran/21/

- Rakel, E. P., 2007. Iranian Foreign Policy Since the Iranian Islamic Revolution: 1979-2006. *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology. PGDT 6*, pp158-187

- Rathbun. B.C., 2012. From Vicious to Virtuous Circle: Moralistic trust, diffuse reciprocity, and the American Security commitment to Europe. *European Journal of International Relations.* V8:323, pp322-344

- Resis. A., 1981. Spheres of Influence in Soviet Wartime Diplomacy. *The Journal of Modern History*. V53:3 pp417-439.

- Richardson. J.E., 2006*. Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis.* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke.

- Rezaei. F., and Ronen. A.C., 2014. Iran's Nuclear Program and the Israeli-Iranian Rivalry in the Post-Revolutionary Era. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. V41:4 pp442-460.

- Roberge. M., and Youkyung. L., 11.08.2009. China-Taiwan Relations. *Council on Foreign Relations.* P1-6. http://www.cfr.org/china/china-taiwan-relations/p9223 accessed 20.10.2014

- Rogan, T., 20.10.2014. Iran and Saudi Arabia Clash. *National Review on-line*. http://www.nationalreview.com/article/390713/saudi-arabia-and-iran-clash-tom-rogan Accesses 05.01.2014

- Romaniuk. N., 2014. Foundationalism and Anti-Foundationalism in International Relations: A Possible Synthesis. *Memorial University Political Science Journal*. V6 pp68-76.

- Ronen, Y., 2014. Libya's Relations with China: Convergence and Conflict. *The Maghreb Review*. V39:1 pp3-18

- Rostami-Povey, E., 2010. *Iran's Influence*. Zed Books: London

- Rowan. J.P., 2005.The US-Japan Security Alliance, ASEAN, and the South China Sea Dispute. Asian Survey. V45:3 pp414-436.

- Ruggie. J., 1998. What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Unilateralism and the Social Constructivist Challenge. International Organization (CUP) 52: 4 pp855

- Santini, R.H., 2010. European Union Discourses and Practices on the Iranian Nuclear Programme. *European Security*

- Sauer. T., 2007. Coercive Diplomacy by the EU: The Iranian Nuclear Weapons Crisis. Third World Quarterly. V28:3 pp616-636

- Scobll. A., 2005. China's Evolving Civil-Military Relations: Creeping Goujiahua. Armed Forces and Society. V31:2 pp227-244

- Scott. E., 07.2015. A Nuclear Deal with Chinese Characteristics: China's Role in the P5+1 Talks with Iran. *Jamestown Foundation*: China Brief. V15:14

- Shambaugh. D., 2008. China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation. University of California Press: California.

- Shariatinia. M., cited in Erdbrink, T., 2015. Iranian weary of deeper ties with China. *The Washington Post*. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010 /04/13 /AR2010041304242.html. accessed 15.04.2015.

- Shaoxian. L., 15.07.2015. China Eyes Trade, Silk Road Projects with Iran as Sanctions go. *China Daily.* http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-11/21/content_22506412.htm. Accessed 08.08.2015

- Smart. A., and Hsu. J.Y., 2007. The Chinese Diaspora, Foreign Investment and Economic Development in China. The Review of International Affairs. VV3:4 pp544-566.

- Stanzel. A., 15.07.2015. China's Actions, India's Worries. *Ecfr.eu.* http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_chinas_actions_indias_worries3067

- Summers. T., 2015. China's big idea could face problems ahead. *Chatham House.* V71:5.

- Steel. R., 1972. A Spheres of Influence Policy. *Foreign Policy*: 5 pp107-118

- Steinberg. P.F., 2003. Understanding Policy Change in Developing Countries: The Spheres of Influence Framework. *Global Environmental Politics*. V3:1 pp11-35

- Story. L.J., 1999. Creeping Assertiveness: China, The Philippines and the South China Sea Dispute. Contemporary Southeast Asia. V21:1 pp95-118.

- Strauss. J., 2006. Morality, Coercion and State Building by Campaign in the Early PRC: Regime Consolidation and After, 1949-1956. The China Quarterly. 188 pp891-912.

- Swaine. M.D., Beijing's Tightrope Walk on ran. *China Leadership Monitor*, No33

- Tashakkori. A., and Teddlie. C.B., 2002. *Mixed methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* Sage: London

- Tashakkori. A., and Teddlie. C.B., 2010. *Sage Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research*. Sage: London.

- Tierney. R., 2002. BOOK REVIEW: Aristotle's Theory of Language and Meaning. In DEBORAH K. W. MODRAK. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001. *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 99, No. 4 (Apr., 2002), pp. 203-209

- Thies. C.G., 2010. Role Theory and Foreign Policy. In: Denemark, R. A., (ed.): *The International Studies Encyclopedia*. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, s. 6335-6356.

- Trading Economics. http://www.tradingeconomics.com/iran/foreign-direct-investment. Accessed 21.01.2016

- Trevelyan, L., 19.09.2007. UN rejects membership for Taiwan. *BBC News*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/7003811.stm. Last accessed 01.08.2014

- Unay. S., 2013. From Engagement to Contention: China in the Global Political Economy. *Perceptions*. Vol. xviii: 1 pp129-153

- UNSC., Press Release: 23.12.2016. SECURITY COUNCIL IMPOSES SANCTIONS ON IRAN FOR FAILURE TO HALT URANIUM ENRICHMENT, UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTING RESOLUTION 1737. http://www.un.org/press/en/2006/sc8928.doc.htm. Accessed 12.03.2012

- Vakil. S., 2006. Iran: Balancing East against West. *The Washington Quarterly*. V29:4 pp51-65.

- Walker, S.G., Malici, A., and Schafer, M., 2011. *Rethinking Foreign Policy Analysis: States, Leaders and the Micro foundations of Behaviour in International Relations.* Routledge: New York

- Wai-Yip. H., 2014. China's Emerging Policy of Soft Power in the Middle East: *CCTV Arabic International Channel*. V39:1 pp19-30

- Wallis. C.P., 02.08.1987. 402 Die in Clashes of Saudi Arabia, Iranians: Killings at the Shrine in Mecca Trigger Attacks on Four Embassies in Tehran. *Los Angeles Times online*. http://articles.latimes.com/1987-08-02/news/mn-971_1_saudi-arabia.   Accessed 10.01.2015

- Wetherall. M., Taylor. S., and Yates. S.J., 2002. Discourse Theory and Practice Management. In Hall. C., 2002. *The British Journal of Social Work* V32:2 pp386-388

- Wendt. A., 1987. The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory. *International Organization*. V41:3 pp335-70

- Wendt. A., 1992. Anarchy is What States make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics. International Organization. V46:2 pp399-403

- Williams. M.C., 2003. Words, Images, Enemies, Securitization and International Politics, *International Studies Quarterly* V47:512.

- Wilkinson. M., 20.10.2015. Xi Jinping: Everything You Need to Know about China's President and His Visit to Britain. The Telegraph.

- Wray. L., 2015. China's Maritime and Territorial Claims to the South China Sea: A focus on the Key Centers of Gravity Driving the South China Sea Disputes. Journal of the Australian Institute of Professional Intelligence Officers. V23:2.

- Wodak. R., and Meyer. M., 2009. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. 2nd ed. Sage: London.

- Xia, Y., May 2000. ""China-Russia Energy Cooperation: Impetus, Prospects and Impacts.""). James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University. pp. 5–6.

- Xiansi. L., 23.04.2015. "One Belt and One Road" draws a new blueprint for Suzhou tourism. *Suzhou Official Travel and Tourism*. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/m/jiangsu/ suzhou/travel /2015-04/23/content_ 20516980 .htm

- Xudong. W., and Junxiang. L., 2009. Modernization and the Study of Modern Chinese History. *Chinese Studies in History*. V43:1 pp46-60.

- Young. R., 1970. Equitable Solutions for Offshore Boundaries: The 1968 Saudi Arabia-Iran Agreement. *American Society of International Law*. V64:1 pp152-157

- Zhao. S., 2013. Chinese Foreign Policy as a Rising Power to Find its Rightful Place. *Perceptions* Vol. xviii:1 pp101-128

- Zweiri. M., 2011. Arab-Iranian Relations: New Realities? - In Ehteshami, A. and Zweiri, M, 2011. *Iran's Foreign Policy; From Khatami to Ahmadinejad*. Ithaca Press: Berkshire.

Appendix:

Appendix One: List of UN sanctions against Iran

- **passed on 31 July 2006**: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1696:

  o Iran advised to suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities.

- **passed on 23 December 2006**: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1737:

  o In response to failure of resolution 1696.

  o Iran ordered to suspend enrichment-related and reprocessing activities and cooperate with the IAEA

  o Imposed sanctions banning the supply of nuclear-related materials and technology, assets of key individuals and companies related to the program are frozen.

- **Passed on 24 March 2007**: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1747:

  o Arms embargo and expansion of freeze on Iranian assets.

- **passed on 3 March 2008**: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1803:

  o Extension of previous freezes and advised states to monitor the activities of Iranian banks, inspect Iranian ships and aircraft, and monitor individuals involved with the program through their territory.

- **Passed in 2008**: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1835

- **Passed on 9 June 2010:** United Nations Security Council Resolution 1929:

  o Iran banned from participating in any activities related to the nuclear sector.

  o Arms embargo tightened, travel bans placed on individuals involved with the program, freezing of funds and assets of the Iranian Shipping Lines.

  o Recommended state inspections of Iranian cargo.

  o Prohibition of the servicing of Iranian vessels involved in prohibited activities.

  o Pretension of the provision of financial services used for sensitive nuclear activities.

  o Recommended States monitor Iranian individuals and entities they deal with.

  o Prohibition of opening Iranian banks in state territories and Iranian banks from entering into relationship with other banks which might contribute to the nuclear program, and prevent financial institutions operating in their territory from opening offices and accounts in Iran.

- **Passed on 9 June 2011**: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1984:

  o Extension of the mandate of the panel of experts that supports the Iran Sanctions Committee for a further year.

- **Passed on 7 June 2012**: United Nations Security Council Resolution 2049:
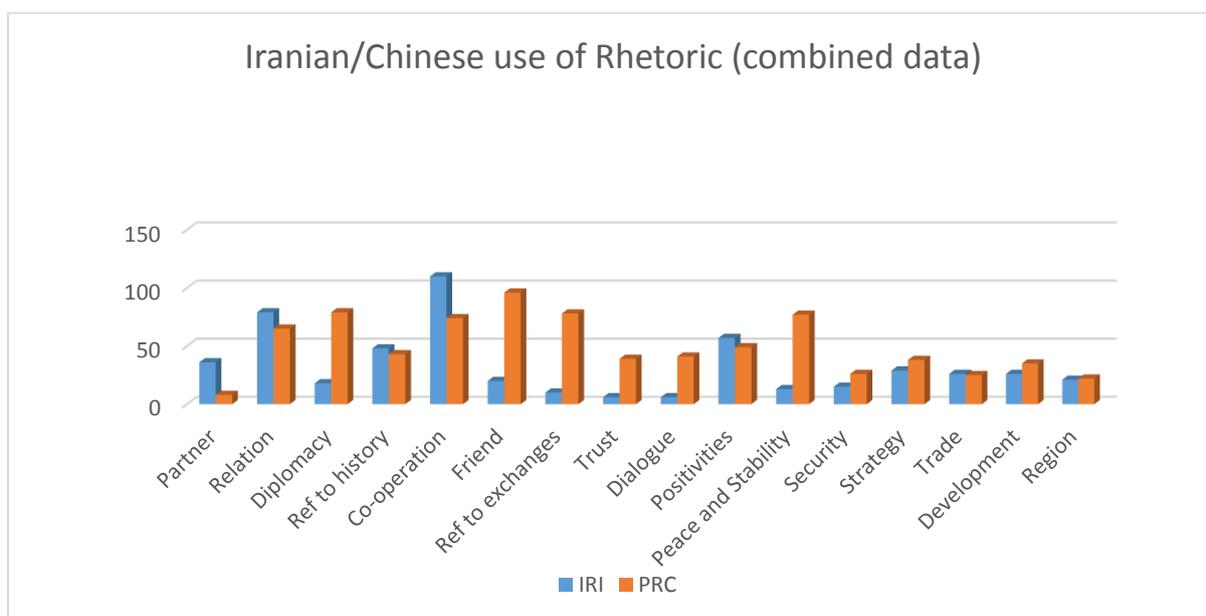
- o Renewal of the mandate of the Iran Sanctions Committee's Panel of Experts for a further 13 months.
- **Passed on 20 July 2015**: United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231:
  - o Identifies a schedule for the suspension and lifting UN sanctions, with provisions to re-impose UN sanctions in case of non-performance by Iran, in accordance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Appendix two: Critical Discourse Analysis Tables

Words identified as constitutive of the construction of a tacit alliance and number of times they are found across the selection of sources for each, and both states.

Presence of Rhetoric across sources	Iran	China
Partner	36	8
Relation	79	65
Diplomacy	18	79
Ref to history	48	43
Co-operation	110	74
Friend	20	96
Ref to exchanges	10	78
Trust	6	39
Dialogue	6	41
Positivities	57	49
Peace and Stability	13	77
Security	15	26
Strategy	29	38
Trade	26	25
Development	26	35
Region	21	22

Combined presence of Rhetoric across sources	
Partner	44
Relation	144
Diplomacy	97
Ref to history	91
Co-operation	184
Friend	116
Ref to exchanges	88
Trust	45
Dialogue	47
Positivities	106
Peace and Stability	90
Security	41
Strategy	67
Trade	51
Development	61
Region	43

Iranian/Chinese use of Rhetoric (combined data)

Appendix Three: Critical Discourse Analysis Frameworks

The allocation of rhetorical notes into identified frameworks.

		Iran: Strands/Themes/Frameworks		
F1	What: Modality	Trust	6	
F1	Modality	Exchange	10	
F1	Modality	Co-operation	110	Total: 126
F2	Why: Interest	P&S, Development and region	62	
F2	Interest	Diplomacy and dialogue	24	
F2	Interest	Security, strategy and trade	70	Total: 156
F3	How: Expression	Relate/partner	115	
F3	Expression	Friend/history	68	
F3	Expression	Positivities	57	Total: 240

		China: Strands/Themes/Frameworks		
F1	What: Modality	Trust	39	
F1	Modality	Exchange	78	
F1	Modality	Co-operation	74	Total: 191
F2	Why: Interest	P&S, Development and region	134	
F2	Interest	Diplomacy and dialogue	120	
F2	Interest	Security, strategy and trade	89	Total: 343
F3	How: Expression	Relate/partner	73	
F3	Expression	Friend/history	96	
F3	Expression	Positivities	49	Total: 218

The total figures for the combination of Iranian and Chinese Framework:

Framework 1 (modality)   317
Framework 2 (Interest)   499
Framework 3 (Expression)   458