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LEGITIMIZING FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS

**A discursive perspective on sustainability of Chinese
investments in Sub-Saharan Africa**

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Author:
Meri Kekki

Supervisors:
Ph.D. Eriikka Paavilainen-Mäntymäki
Prof. Esa Stenberg

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Turun kauppakorkeakoulu • Turku School of Economics

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1 INTRODUCTION

In developing countries, foreign direct investment (FDI) has become a crucial source of capital. It has led to considerable progress in integrating less-developed nations into the world trade and global economy. (UNCTAD 2007.) However, some regions, such as Africa, still lag behind in economic development. Multiple domestic issues, including weak governance, corruption, financial issues and the history of colonization are essential determinants of why Africa has not gained its share of globalization's benefits. (Hilson 2012, 113.) The lack of development in various areas has enabled the neglect of social responsibility and sustainability of business operations among the local communities (Campbel 2012, 141). Hence, the discussion of responsibility of the foreign investment inflow is vital.

Indisputably, the position of developing African countries in the global economy is enormously fragile. While the continent is rich with natural resources and labor, few countries have seemed to progress with the profits derived from these abundances. As Hilson (2012, 113) presents, two essential explanations for this can be identified. The first one refers to the timing of investment inflow to the extraction industries. After gaining their independency, majority of the African countries were still in an evolving phase in terms of governance, policies and democracy. At the same time, presence of foreign companies in extraction sectors started to increase. With the lack of proper governance and institutions, the profits received from natural resources are then poorly distributed in societies, contributing to the evolvement of autocracy.

The second reason for the fragile situation is the debt burden these countries were facing in the 1980s while opening their borders to foreign investments. Large sums of money owed to Western banks and various institutions prevented the countries to spend the revenues on development projects. Furthermore, due to the substantial debt the countries were pressured to allow foreign investors to operate on their soils with the investors' own terms. The FDIs thus resulted in minimalistic tax revenues and royalties for local governments.

Regarding the proper economic integration of Africa, Chinese investments are a vital variant. China's presence in global economy has increased remarkably as a whole. (Sanfilippo, 2010, 599.) For instance, in 2013, China was the third largest source of FDI outflow (UNCTAD 2014, 5). Moreover, China is a substantial trading partner with Africa (UNCTAD 2007, 56). The FDI outflow from China to Africa has had a notable growth trend. In the early 90s, the flow was nearly \$100 million, while in 2006 it had reached over \$1 billion. (Zafar 2007, 123.) By 2011, the investments accounted for \$15 billion (Shen 2013, 3). The increase in China's financial contribution during the past twenty years has thus been significant, and since 2000 it has been Africa's largest economic partner. (Jayaram et al. 2017). As Jayaram et al. (2017) estimate in their study

for McKinsey & Company, there are currently roughly 10,000 Chinese companies operating in Africa. Key investment sectors are natural resource extraction industries (mainly oil, cobalt, chromium, manganese and timber), business services (including e.g. construction and infrastructure development), manufacturing (most essentially, textiles), finance, retail, and, most recently, telecommunications. (African Development Bank Group 2011, 20; Adem 2010, 336; UNCTAD 2007, 57.) The top five African countries hosting Chinese FDIs are (in order) Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia, Ethiopia and Egypt (Chen et al. 2017, 9).

Despite the notable financial inflow, Chinese FDI operations in Africa have caused intense discussion in terms of sustainability and ethics, regarding for instance environment protection and human rights. (Taylor 2007, 64; Mol 2011.) The investments made by the Chinese companies have been both criticized and encouraged in the public discussion. The dialogue has been colorful, and it is to a great extent dominated by some of the most influential media sources globally. This study focuses on that specific dialogue, underlining the perspectives of discussion and the rhetoric devices used for arguing those perspectives.

Scholars have offered various viewpoints of the responsibility issues occurring in the actions of Chinese companies in Africa, and the discussion has been vivid. However, little attention has been paid to the discussion *itself* in the context of sustainability and corporate social responsibility. This thesis fulfills that gap in the academic research by tying the concept of sustainability to sociocultural context through discourse analysis. Joutsenvirta & Vaara (2009) have studied the processes of legitimation in the discussion of Finnish investment project in Latin America, and the sustainability issues of that project. This thesis expands on their study regarding the construction of reality and meanings of sustainability, and, moreover, the generalization of common tendencies in sustainability debates.

The study centers around on the phenomenon of Chinese companies investing to Sub-Saharan Africa. The Sub-Saharan countries were chosen for the analysis due to their specific relevance in corporate social responsibility: since they are developing nations, some of them lack for instance proper economic or governmental institutions, providing grounds for sustainability and responsibility violations. As mentioned earlier, the lack of development has enabled neglects in many areas of responsibility in Sub-Saharan countries. (Campbel 2012, 141.)

The thesis studies how the investments are (de)legitimated in the media using discursive legitimation strategies. Significant media companies were chosen among the biggest, most well-known, and most considerable newspapers to represent differing outlooks of the dialogue. The newspapers were chosen to represent two main sides of the discussion: the Western countries and China. The objective is to find out what (de)legitimation strategies are used in the newspaper articles and how does the

legitimation differ in the Chinese media and the Western media. The perspectives presented in the articles of the newspapers are compared to legitimation categories introduced by Van Leeuwen (2007): *authorization*, *rationalization*, *moral evaluation* and *mythopoesis*. Thus, the theory of legitimation is applied to examine the process of creating and maintaining the perceptions of sustainability. Additionally, the differences of legitimation between the Chinese media and Western media is examined. Drawing from this, the research questions are the following:

1. *What legitimation strategies are used in newspaper articles published between the years 2013-2018 to (de)legitimize the Chinese investments in Sub-Saharan Africa?*
2. *How does the (de)legitimation differ in the articles between Chinese newspapers and Westerns newspapers?*

The study contextualizes legitimation in the discourse of sustainability by extracting four significant themes from the analysis: *economic rationale*, *expert repeal*, *personal experience* and *moral mirroring*. It is argued that these four legitimation themes are likely to appear in sustainability discourses more generally. Examining the variants of legitimation helps to better understand what are the social processes behind validating an investment from the perspectives of sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

In order to follow sustainable practices, it is crucial to understand that the concept and the elements of sustainability are forming and shaping in the discourses. Unveiling how the investments are (de)legitimized in public discussion the context of sustainability helps improving the sustainability of investments in practice. In the age of *'fake news'* and *'alternative facts'*, both terms derived from the populist wave emerging in Western countries during the last decade, it is increasingly interesting and topical to study who controls the discussion and knowledge in the society and on what basis. Finally, the more profound comprehension of the discourse enables a more constructive dialogue surrounding the investment inflow to Africa and supports the more sustainable integration of Africa to the global economy.

In Chapter 2, theory of sustainable foreign direct investment is presented to introduce the theoretical discussion of investment sustainability and corporate social responsibility. Chapter 3 discusses the role of China in Africa, including the incentives and the background of the relationship. Moreover, issues of corporate social responsibility prevailing in the current discussion are introduced to shed light on the common topics surrounding the discourse. The methodology and research methods are presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents the results of the study, and final conclusions are drawn in Chapter 6.

2 SUSTAINABLE FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

As mentioned earlier, FDI can bring significant economic and social welfare to the host country. It can also be a substantial source of profit for the investors. However, FDI includes aspects that can be harmful to both the host country and the investing company. The development of the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be seen as a response to these problems and globalization, which often connects MNEs to profit-seeking corporations that ignore the possible malpractices of their business operations (Žėkienė & Ruževičius 2011, 631). For instance, many cases illustrate how MNEs do not take the local development into consideration in developing nations (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009, 59). Furthermore, the discussion of CSR has recently increased remarkably due to the accusations companies are receiving despite the fact that they have for long aimed at shifting their operations towards more sustainability (Joutsenvirta, Jalas, Halme, Mäkinen 2011, 41).

Waddock (2002, 10) defines corporate social responsibility as company's voluntary consideration and accountability of social welfare of the community it is operating in. European Commission presents CSR as combining social and environmental aspects to business actions. It also addresses that CSR starts where the law ends; socially responsible actions of the companies go beyond what is legally required. (European Commission 2011, 1.) A key aspect to CSR is that in addition to meeting the expectations of traditional stakeholders (such as investors and owners) the company should also attempt to fulfill the expectations of other stakeholders. These include for instance employees, civil societies and communities, different organizations and future generations. (UNEP 2011, 13.)

The four main areas of CSR are human rights, environmental protection, labor standards, and anti-corruption. (Žėkienė & Ruževičius 2011.) The concept of CSR has often been categorized alongside with various other terms, such as corporate citizenship, business ethics, and corporate social performance (Waddock 2002, 10). While not having a permanent definition, the definitions of CSR often vary according to the context and the purpose in which it is used (Hack, Kenyon, Wood 2014, 46). Thus, for different companies operating in different industries CSR can have varying dimensions. Furthermore, society's expectations affect the nature of CSR to a great extent (UNEP 2011, 13). For instance, Blowfield and Murray (2011, 17) describe how the role of CSR varies according to the country. In countries with strong social system and employee protection, CSR has less significance than in countries with no such institutions. The government is considered to have a great part of the responsibility, whereas if these institutions do not exist, corporations are expected to integrate CSR strongly to their governance.

Jokinen et al. (2011) indicate that CSR is intensely interconnected with market economy dimension as well. In an open market economy, capital and ownership bring significant power to the stakeholders. The budget of one MNE can be larger than that of a small country's, and one MNE can have notable influence on the society. Hence, the responsibility is often in the hands of those who have the capital. Furthermore, Jokinen et al. (2011) underline that the decision making in large organizations is not often democratic. In a large corporation, one employee has little power to the actions of the company. Therefore, management, board and other decision makers have the control of responsibility. Alongside with globalization, there has been a clear shift toward a view that a common, universal understanding of what is considered socially responsible behavior is essential. (Žėkienė & Ruževičius 2011.) Thus, internationally recognized ethical guidelines and principles are crucial.

Companies can conduct various types of actions and strategies to ensure that their investments are operated in socially, economically, and ethically sustainable way. Companies all around the world have implemented different programs and instructions to increase the role of these types of operations (UNEP 2011, 7). A stable and solid market environment is in the interest of all agents in the world economy. This type of market requires the integration of more sustainable decision-making in terms of social and economic development. (The Global Compact 2004.) *Sustainability* is a term that is deeply connected to CSR. It was first launched by the Commission of the United Nations in 1987, and it refers to creating economic growth with the consideration of sustainable social and environmental development. The main idea is to ensure that the future generations can have the same access to welfare as the current generation does. (Joutsenvirta et al. 2011, 13.) The concept *sustainable investment* underlines finding solutions to capital allocation that would bring long-term development and innovation to the investment target (Blowfield & Murray 2011, 235).

The investments in which their influence on the target community is carefully taken into account are called socially responsible investment (SRI) (Blowfield & Murray 2011, 230). The concept of socially responsible investment is previously known also as "ethical investment" (Richardson & Cragg 2010, 21). In SRI, the importance of social, ethical and environmental aspects are interconnected with financial decision making (Žėkienė & Ruževičius 2011, 632). Investment decision in itself reflects company's responsibility. The investments are made to conduct the preferred operations, and the sustainability of those operations often represents the values of the decision makers. (Jokinen et al. 2011, 304.) The need for a socially responsible approach in investments has increased tremendously as a result of a large number of cases of e.g. labor and resource exploitation and environmental hazards in the host countries (Žėkienė & Ruževičius 2011, 631). With similar scenarios in mind, many Western governments

have implemented certain regulatory policies to encourage and increase SRI (Escrig-Olmedo, Muñoz-Torres, Fernández-Izquierdo 2012, 411).

2.1 Incentives of sustainability and CSR

As stated by Blowfield and Murray (2011), one specific explanation to why companies choose to implement social responsibility to their business operations cannot be identified. Two main ideologies, however, seem to occur. These two motivation factors are called *values motivation* and *materiality motivation*. The first one refers to company's inner values and morality guiding its actions. The company can be assimilated with an individual person having views on morality and ethics. Those values and ethical views are thus a vital element in company's decision-making process. When discussing values motivation companies often have to consider which one ultimately determines the values of the company: the company itself or the society. The second motivation, materiality motivation, addresses that to be successful the company has to maintain good relationship and image among the society it is operating in. In other words, the role and image of the company in the society is a key to its success. Operating in an ethically sustainable way will lead to better results in profit outcomes. Some scholars, however, criticize this view, stating that CSR should be a goal in itself rather than a method to gain goodwill in society. Findings of Blowfield and Murray (2011) are summarized in Figure 2 below.

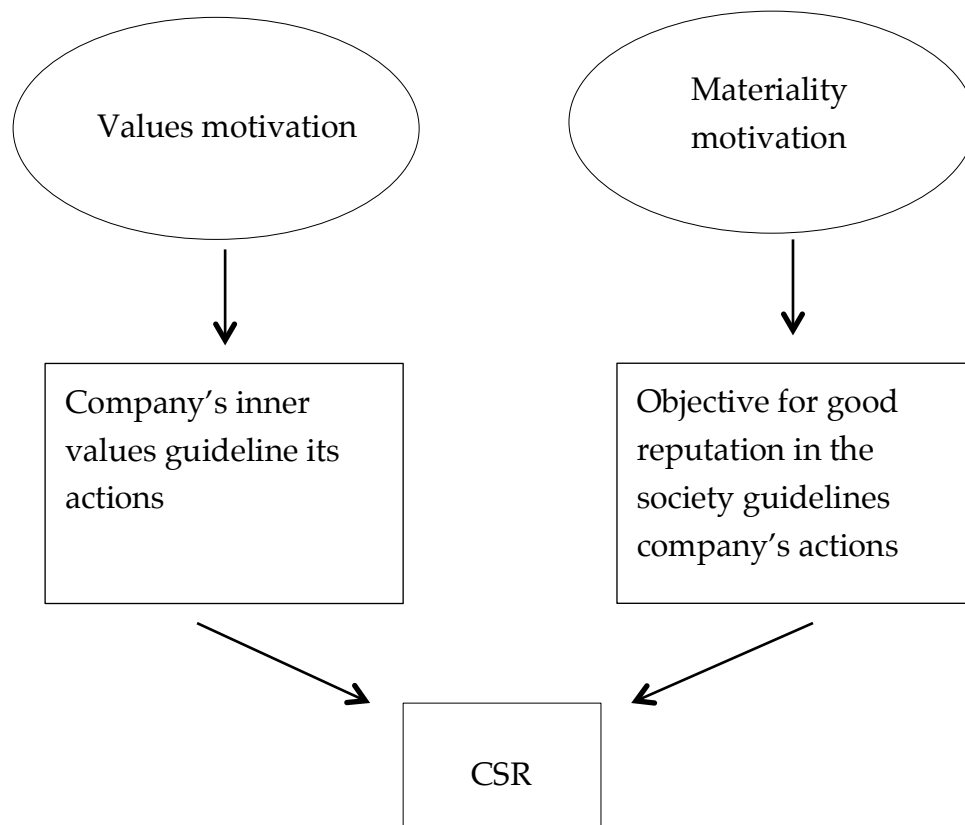


Figure 1 CSR incentives (according to Blowfield & Murray 2011, 13).

UNEP (2011, 14) presents multiple business benefits the company can gain from CSR, such as better access to capital, cost savings, enhanced productivity and quality and the increased attraction of skills. These benefits, however, seem to be marginal in the overall strategic profits of the company. In order to maximize them, the CSR actions need to be carefully implemented to all the organizational functions of the company. In their study, Brammer and Pavelin (2006) found that corporate social responsibility can have an impact on corporate reputation and thus indirectly on company's competitive advantage. However, the study indicated that the nature of CSR actions influence the final impact to corporate reputation. As explained earlier, CSR can have different scopes depending on for instance the industry or the business environment it occurs in. Thus, the final impact of CSR actions on company's reputation is also influenced by these variables. Brammer and Pavelin (2006) also make a vital observation that the correlation between CSR and corporate reputation is strongly reliant on the stakeholders' areas of interest in terms of sustainability. For instance, CSR actions can be targeted on environmental issues, but the stakeholders may not specify their appreciation to environmental questions. In this case, the corporate reputation most likely will not improve in the eyes of stakeholders. In contrast, engagement in the host

community seemed to affect positively to corporate reputation in almost every business field. (Brammer & Pavelin 2006.)

2.2 Instruments of SRI and CSR

Blowfield and Murray (2011) present different strategies for investing companies to conduct SRI. One of them is *screening*. Company can go through the investment targets it is considering and evaluate them based on their sustainability. Screening can be both positive and negative. Positive screening means that the company is focusing on investments that contribute positively to environmental, social and ethical issues. In contrast, negative screening limits out investments that are involved with unethical business fields or would other way result as an in an unethical consequences.

Another strategy of SRI concerns the post-investment stage. It is called *engagement*, and it is defined as investors being involved in the investment process even after the investment is done. Investors can for example participate in following business operations and ensure that they are conducted in an efficient and sustainable way. Furthermore, investors can take an active role in the development of the local infrastructure and welfare distribution. (Blowfield & Murray 2011.) This way, the investing institutions can contribute to the sustainable development of the communities. Many companies have also adopted various policies and systems with the purpose of increasing sustainability in their operations. These codes of conduct can be for instance management guidelines or clear instructions on how to operate systematically in an ethical way. However, it is essential to notice that if these instructions are not clear enough they do not necessarily offer solutions to ethical issues. In addition, all the codes of conduct cannot be applied to every situation. Thus, the codes of conduct require careful implementation in the organization. (Joutsenvirta et al. 2011.)

Governance guidelines are overall instructions and standards on how the company is controlled. The guidelines help the organization to involve non-traditional shareholders (such as communities) and integrate long-term planning to their operations. (UNEP 2011.) For instance, in 1999 OECD presented standardized guidelines (*OECD Principles of Corporate Governance*) for companies with varying business environments and legal structures. (OECD 2004). *Management standards* provide assisting instructions on how to implement management protocols and systems with wider focus on environmental and social aspects. They also assist the management to develop strategies that include these dimensions. External instruments for improving organization's performance sustainability also exist. *Sector-Based Certification Standards* are standards a certain third party sets with the intention of setting criteria for company's transparency, operations and products. *Performance Reporting and*

Assurance Standards have a purpose of increasing the reporting regarding the environmental, social and financial features in business operations. (UNEP 2011.)

Initiatives to promote and increase responsibility occur on a global dimension as well. For instance, the contribution of international organizations on this field is remarkable. Since 2003, the United Nations has been studying the degree of responsibility of the private sector when it comes to human rights. With the aim of better specifying and underlining the responsibility, the United Nations has created a particular framework for this purpose. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is an important actor in developing global labor standards. ILO also underlines that globalization has not affected positively to job creation in every country due to an unfair distribution of welfare. International environmental cooperation is also an essential institution of global CSR. Different agreements and frameworks on environment protection, such as The Kyoto Protocol, are negotiated in order to for instance delay the climate change. In addition, corruption is aimed to prevent through various conventions, such as the UN Convention against Corruption (2005) and the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Officials (1997).

International agreements and frameworks set an important platform of CSR for many companies, such as the agreements of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). WTO's main objective is to develop more transparent, sustainable and open global economy that every nation could benefit from. Multiple other cooperation and bilateral agreements also occur. Standardized, international trade policies and rules can be an extensive source of increasing responsibility in areas of environmental, social and economic development. (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2009.)

3 CHINA'S PRESENCE IN AFRICA

In this chapter, China's role and presence in Africa are discussed. To better understand the current situation, it is crucial to familiarize with the history and background of the Sino-African relations. The term Sino refers to China, and thus Sino-Africa refers to the relation between China and Africa. Relevant events from the past regarding the relations of the two are introduced briefly. In addition, China's key objectives and areas of interests in Africa are examined.

3.1 Background of the Sino-African relations

China's presence in Africa is not a recent phenomenon (Cheung, De Haan, Qian, Yu 2012, 206). As stated by Zhao (2014, 1035), the relationship between China and Africa can be considered to fully begin in the 1950s. The relationship with the Soviet Union had deteriorated (Samy 2010, 79), and China was aiming at isolating Taiwan from international cooperation and promoting the "one-China" -policy. Thus, at the time, China was looking for support for these objectives from Africa, as well as increasing global political presence. (Wang & Zou 2014, 1116.) This was done to a large extent by conducting multiple aid and development programs in the Sub-Saharan Africa (Samy 2010, 76). One of the most remarkable projects was the building of a railway between Zambia and Tanzania in 1968 (Zhao 2014, 1035). Hence, China's interests in Africa in the early stage were essentially political. Financial benefits were not the main priority. (Wang & Zou 2014, 1117.) Political approach in Africa paid off for China, as in 1971 altogether 26 African countries gave their vote for China to be a member of the United Nations Security Council (Samy 2010, 79).

Multiple African economies became more welcoming towards foreign investors and trade during the 80s, when some structural adjustment programs by IMF and the World Bank took place (Mohan 2013, 1259–1260; Samy 2010, 79). After that, Africa's economy as a whole was struggling as a result of oil-shocks and debt crisis. China aimed at improving Africa's situation with various capital inflows, such as joint ventures, investments and loans. (Samy 2010, 79.) Furthermore, the economic reforms conducted in China in 1978 facilitated the development of China's own economy considerably (Shirk 1993, 4). Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms and the death of Mao helped China to slowly shift from communistic ideology into a more open market economy (The African Development Bank Group 2011, 9). Since the reforming and opening the economy in China, the economic interest toward Africa started to gradually evolve (Wang & Zou 2014, 1117).

Still, until 2000s these reforms and development were China's key focus, and Africa did not have a significant role in China's foreign policy. Most of the attention was in the domestic policy. In addition, other nations, such as Japan and the United States became more relevant than Africa in terms of economic cooperation. During the past decade, however, China's presence in Africa has increased remarkably. (Samy 2010, 76–79.) For instance, Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was founded in 2000 in order to improve and enhance the relations of the two (FORAC 2013). From 1990 to 2006 China's FDI inflow to Africa had a higher growth rate than the inflow from China to any other country in the world. In the early 90s, the FDI inflow was close to \$100 million, and in 2006 it reached \$1 billion. (Zafar 2007, 123.) The increase in the FDI flow is thus remarkable. In terms of value, Africa's share of China's total FDI was 17 percent in 2000 (UNCTAD 2007).

Adem (2010, 336) states that the increased presence in Africa was fueled by China's growing need for natural resources to boost its own economic growth. Until today, this period in the Sino-African relationship has gained the most global attention, since China's engagement projects in Africa are often considered controversial. Although China has offered tremendous amounts of development aid, the main objective of it has been to secure its supply of natural resources, most essentially petroleum and gas. (Samy 2010, 80; Hong 2008, 100.) By the year 2005, China had invested in oil and gas mining in 14 countries in Africa (Hong 2008, 100), and between the years 2001 and 2006 Africa accounted for 26 per cent of China's oil sources (Adem 2010, 336). Furthermore, the fluctuation of raw material prices has been a main driver of China's increased investments in natural resources (Biggeri and Sanfilippo 2009, 33).

3.2 Current incentives

UNDP (2007) presents multiple possible objectives the Chinese companies are pursuing with FDI outflow to Africa. One of them is gaining market share instead of exporting activities. The Chinese companies are thus seeking direct access to the African markets. Furthermore, the companies are aiming to increase market penetration with products that have more supply than demand in China. Another reason for Chinese companies to invest in Africa is that they want to avoid the import quotas and tariffs that the African governments have set to Chinese products.

Some companies have established a production facility in Africa because of reduced transportation costs. For instance, a Chinese electronic company SVA Electronics (PTY) Ltd. relocated its operations in South-Africa. The profit margins from exporting were not sufficient enough, even though the volume of exports was relatively high. Main reason for this was the transportation costs. Thus, by starting a production facility

in South-Africa the company was aiming at increasing the profit margin. Furthermore, the company manufactured for instance televisions, and the domestic demand for black and white TVs had decreased almost entirely. Hence, the company had a lot of equipment that was no longer useful in China. By setting up an affiliate in South-Africa, the company could benefit from the equipment. Technology transfer in general is a notable asset for Chinese companies in Africa. Although China may not hold the most advanced technological know-how, the level of technological development is more or less the same as in Africa. For this reason, the technology is often easily transferred across borders with the investment. (UNDP 2007.)

As well as in the past, the empirical findings of Cheung et al. (2012) indicate that natural resources are still a key motivator for the Chinese FDI in Africa. Natural resources are needed to ensure the economic growth in the future. This certainly concerns countries with rich oil and mineral reserves, such as Nigeria (ADBG 2011). As mentioned earlier, securing the supply of natural resources and energy independency is one of China's official policies. Moreover, according to the study of Kolstad and Wiig (2011), the attraction of FDI in Africa seems to be located to the countries with poor governance and weak institutions. China's operations in Africa reach beyond natural resources as well: China has entered the markets of for instance manufacturing, telecommunications and service sector in order to gain market share and presence in those industries (Zafar 2007, 105). The most common mode of entry of the FDI of Chinese MNEs to Africa is through equity joint ventures (UNDP 2007, 56).

From a political perspective, China's objectives in Africa today do not differ from those we have seen in the history of Sino-African relations. Underdeveloped African nations are an important strategic asset for China in gaining global credibility. For other developing nations, China is presenting itself as a "partner" developing nation, offering assistance and aid without terms and conditions. According to FOCAC (2014), China is actively participating in mutual cooperation and aid projects in order to intensify Africa's development. In contrast, one explanation to this is that China needs the support of developing nations in order to use its veto-right at the United Nations Security Council in response to the power of the United States. (Biggeri & Sanfilippo 2009, 33.) Energy independence has recently become one of China's main political objectives as well. The Chinese Government, however, emphasizes that its Africa-policy in this context represents mutual and reciprocal benefits. (Kolstad & Wiig 2011, 32.)

3.3 Political economy of Chinese investments in Africa

China's outward FDI policy has evolved massively since the economic reforms. Until the beginning of the 1980s, China's policy toward FDI outflow was rather restrictive. As a result of a powerful central planning system, the Chinese Government used specific and efficient screening systems to assess the outward FDI projects. However, in the late 80s a new approach entered the Chinese FDI policy; The Government became more open and encouraging on FDI outflow. Chinese companies started to gradually invest abroad, mostly through joint ventures.

In the late 1990s the central Government started to promote the outward FDI. It announced an FDI encouraging strategy, the "Going Out" strategy (*zou chu qu*) (Biggeri & Sanfilippo 2009, 32). It included certain incentives for companies investing abroad, such as tax incentives and easy access to credit and loans. These incentives were mainly targeted to companies that were conducting resource extraction projects, projects promoting export of domestic products and goods, R&D projects and M&A projects that increase the competitiveness of Chinese companies abroad. During recent years, the encouraging of overseas investment projects has become even more significant. The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and Export-Import Bank of China (EIBC) started to support the FDI outflows of certain projects in 2004. They offered for example specific loans and credit plans for these projects. As well as in the 90s, the Chinese Government has recently introduced few industries in which it is aiming to boost the FDI from Chinese companies. These industries include agriculture, infrastructure and real-estate development, industrial processing and natural resources. Supporting the FDI to these sectors goes in line with China's policies to secure energy independency and the supply other raw materials, as well as economic development (UNDP 2007.)

As Adem (2010, 335-336) indicates, different approaches and views of China's increased presence in Africa also occur from the African perspective. According to the *Sino-optimistic* school, China's engagement is considered to have a positive effect and it is embraced. It can be seen as a liberalistic view that encourages deeper cooperation with Africa and China. *Sino-skeptic* school is less positive about the issue and sees China's actions in Africa as neo-colonialism. Sino-skepticism reflects Chinese companies continuing the exploitation the Western companies started formerly. Furthermore, the Sino-skeptic view sees positive effects of the Chinese engagement in Africa, but underlines that the trade occurs between two unequal partners.

For example, the views of Cheung et al. (2012, 217) could be considered Sino-skeptic. According to their study, the exploitation of Africa's natural resources has traditionally been an activity of the Western countries in the past, whereas in China it is a relatively new phenomenon and following the traditional pattern in Africa. China's

FDI objectives are, however, no different than the economic FDI purposes presented in literature in general. Put in the context of traditional ideologies of political economy, Sino-skepticism would be in line with Marxism. *Sino-pessimism* is the least accepting view, stating that China's presence is an obstacle for Africa's development and progress. It is contributing negatively to Africa's improvement objectives. Sino-pessimism view can be perceived as political realism, understanding that the stronger party is gaining benefits at the expense of the weaker. However, political realism includes the realization that this is often the case in international dimension. (Adem 2010, 335-336.)

In general, according to Shambaugh (2013, 111), the African governments have a fairly welcoming attitude toward Chinese FDIs. Some governments have taken active policies to encourage the investments. For example, Nigeria and South Africa have promoted their investment opportunities via consulting companies in China. (UNCTAD 2007, 61.) The local societies in Africa view that aid, education, trade, debt reliefs and economic growth among other variants received from Chinese companies have contributed positively to their communities. Another reason for an accepting view is that the Chinese companies (or government) conduct various projects in Africa without conditions or engagement in local governance. (Shambaugh 2013, 110; Biggeri & Sanfilippo 2009, 33.)

On the contrary, Chinese companies have negative implications on local market balance, which causes distress from the African perspective. The local businesses cannot compete with the Chinese low-cost production of pharmaceuticals, consumer goods and textiles. This leads to for example unemployment, causing restlessness among the local societies. In order for the African countries to fully benefit from the FDI inflow received from China, multiple policy improvements and institutional reforms are required from the governments. The extremely severe issue of corruption is one of the main obstacles preventing the African societies from maximizing the investment benefits. Enhancement regarding this issue has already been addressed by many in governmental level in Africa, such as the Vice President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan. (Anuy & Ifedi 2008.)

The political and economic environment of Africa poses certain risks for Chinese companies in terms of foreign investment. The economic environment is unstable and underdeveloped, which weakens its attractiveness for FDI location. Proper policies, infrastructure and governance to ensure stable business environment lack in majority of the countries in Africa, increasing for example transaction costs. Likewise, high level of regulation, crime and corruption are considerable threats for businesses (Bah & Fang 2011.) Also, the unstable foreign exchange system poses a risk for investors. The regulations of the exchange system often force the businesses to have local currency accounts, which contribute to the risk of foreign exchange.

Another economic risk concerns labor. Even though Africa has abundance in low-cost labor, the workers often lack the skills the companies' desired quality requires. This decreases the competitive advantage that could be gained from low-cost workers and hence lower production costs. The investment decision of Chinese companies to Africa has also been influenced by uninviting tax policies in some African countries. (UNCTAD 2007, 60-61.)

3.4 Sustainability issues of Chinese investments

As was explained in Chapter 2, the responsibility of the companies starts where the law ends. Unfortunately, the owners of for example oil and mining companies recognize this circumstance comprehensively. This combined with the weak governance, regulations, institutions and economic position of the many African countries requires the implementation of CSR to this context. (Campbell 2012, 141; Hilson 2012.) Three of the main areas of CSR evolving often in the discussion of China's FDI in Africa are introduced here: labor conditions, human rights and environmental protection. The purpose of this chapter is not to introduce the mere assumption that issues of responsibility occur, but to highlight the common topics discussed in the literature in order to better understand the respective debate.

When it comes to labor and human resource management policies, some Chinese companies have been accused to operate in an extremely unethical way, following the pattern of colonializing behavior of the Western countries. Radical measures have been used to for example solve conflicts between the managers and workers, causing anger and disappointment in local African communities. For instance, in 2010, 13 employees were shot and injured in Zambia due to a salary disagreement. Moreover, during the same year, several local employees injured physically in a strike in a Chinese owned company. The strike escalated into a riot, which the manager tried to end by shooting toward the rioting crowd.

The strike originally started from the workers demanding better working conditions. Indeed, poor working conditions and treatment in Chinese companies commonly cause restlessness among the local workers. These kinds of events have projected negatively to the labor relations between the Chinese enterprises and African work force. (Africa Research Bulletin 2010.) Some countries, such as Zimbabwe, are extremely underdeveloped in terms of human rights, and the operations of the Chinese companies are considered to support the poor human rights practices of the government. Oil-rich countries, such as Nigeria and Angola, have faced a large number of human rights violations as well by the Chinese oil-companies. (Taylor 2007.)

Other sources of dispute between Chinese companies and local communities are the cases in which the Chinese companies have imported their own workers from China instead of hiring local people. This is particularly accurate in the textile sector. (Peh & Eyal 2010, 4729.) Many Sub-Saharan countries suffer from substantial unemployment, which the foreign investments are expected to lower. The Chinese companies have, conversely, been accused of stealing the jobs of the local people, making the unemployment rate even higher. Bringing Chinese workers to investment locations in Sub-Saharan countries combined with the prevailing perception that the Chinese companies exploit natural resources and enable corruption has fueled the workers' mistrustful attitude toward the Chinese investments. (Africa Research Bulletin 2010.)

Particularly in mining industries, the employees are often low-skilled and low-paid. They also lack job security. Accidents and safety errors among the industry are common, but the employees are rarely compensated for the incidents. Social security, health care and other employment benefits lack as well. The main reason for the employment security derives from the lack of proper labor standards, laws and regulations. (Cooke 2014, 885.) Moreover, China bases its neglects of human rights on its non-interference and national sovereignty policy. According to the policy, China will not take a stand on the local issues and thus views the human rights violations as not being the accountability of China. (Taylor 2007, 69.)

In order to better comprehend the poor HRM practices the issue can be viewed from China's perspective of individual and collective benefits. The well-being and development of the nation as a whole is often seen as a priority in China, since this is considered to benefit every individual. This understanding, however, in some context is conducted with inattention to individual's rights. The one-child policy is a describing example of this ideology. The collectivistic system is also strongly connected to labor practices through different labor organizations: instead of focusing on the rights and benefits of an individual employee, the organizations seem to concentrate more on the interest of the state as a whole. (Jackson 2014, 904.) The Chinese view seems to cross with certain Sub-Saharan communities that have adopted a concept of *ubuntu* management, underlining people's value in an organization. In this management style, people are seen as individuals with own rights and empowerment rather than as value-creation objectives. (Jackson 1999, 37.)

As well as from the labor and human rights perspective, China's involvement causes concern in the Sub-Saharan region from the environmental viewpoint. China needs environmental assets to support its economic growth and increased consumerism. The rapid growth has increased harmful environmental consequences, such as energy-related emissions. (Hu, Zhang, Lin 2014.) In China, pollution laws have become stricter, and certain polluting industries are not permissible anymore. This is one explanation for why the Chinese Government encourages Chinese companies to move operations

abroad. (Hensengert, 2012, 285-286, according to Brautigam 2010.) The environmental consequences have thus shifted overseas from China alongside with China's FDIs.

Following this context, Chinese MNEs have faced a lot of criticism of the environmental consequences of their actions in Sub-Saharan Africa. Multiple organizations and civil societies accuse the Chinese companies of neglecting the environmental aspect when fueling their own economic growth. For example, Green Peace has criticized the lack of sustainability in wood and fishing industries of Chinese enterprises in Africa. China's hydropower investments are also causing discussions due to their impact on nature. Hydropower constructions, such as dams, produce greenhouse gas, since they emit methane. They can also have adverse effects on river's ecosystem and harm its natural resources, such as the fishes. (Frey & Linke 2002; Mol 2011.) Strong disapproval of natural resource extraction projects have led to closing down multiple operations. For instance, a Chinese coal mining company was prohibited to operate in Zambia in 2006 because it did not follow environmental and safety regulations. Furthermore, one of China's largest oil companies, Sinopec, was forced to stop its oil-exploitation in Gabon due to pollution in 2006. In 2010, a hydropower dam project was prevented because it had showed little concern of the environment.

Along with other sustainability issues in Africa, China's poor performance in environmental sustainability is also to a large extent explained by the policies of non-interference and no-conditions. China does not take a stand on issues regarding for example governance or domestic policies abroad. The environmental questions are interpreted being in the same category, and thus China does not engage with them. In addition, it is vital to state that while the practices of Chinese MNEs face strong criticism abroad, they are dealing with the same environmental problems in their home country as well. The lack of environmental regulation and their poor implementation is a major problem in China, and the Chinese companies are conditioned to operate within these institutional frameworks.

In terms of environmental sustainability and concern, China has made some progress. By enhancing the environmental aspect of the Chinese companies, China is aiming at avoiding criticism of it colonizing the Sub-Saharan region and neglecting the CSR issues. For instance, some major Chinese capital sources, such as Industrial Bank of China, have adopted sustainability criteria and performance evaluations for investment funding. In addition, these financial institutions have agreed to deepen their cooperation with institutional organizations in order to improve transparency and sustainability in natural resources industry. In its modernization program, China has added inclusion of renewable energy and reduction of emission as strategies for environmental involvement. (Mol 2011.)

3.5 Synthesis

For the purpose of understanding the sustainability discussion around Chinese investments in Sub-Saharan countries, certain aspects of the theoretical background of China's presence in Africa and the theory of sustainability and corporate social responsibility can be merged. As Žėkienė & Ruževičius (2011) explain, the four main areas of CSR are human rights, environmental protection, labor standards, and anti-corruption. As was introduced in Chapter 3.4, three of the four themes dominate the discussion regarding the sustainability of Chinese investments in Africa: labor standards, human rights and environmental protection. Sources of dispute have been for instance poor working conditions and employment practices, exploitation and violations of environmental sustainability (Africa Reseach Bulletin 2010; Taylor 2007; Peh & Eyal 2010; Hu, Zhang & Lin 2014).

Despite notable benefits FDIs bring to the host countries, they can have harmful effects both for the host countries and the investing companies. The concept of corporate social responsibility can be seen to have emerged as a response to these effects. Additionally, the concept has developed along with globalization. Certain viewpoints of globalization view multinational companies as profit-seeking entities ignoring the possible drawbacks their investments have for the host countries. (Žėkienė & Ruževičius 2011, 631.) Three different theories of China's engagement in Africa were presented in Chapter 3.3: Sino-optimistic school, Sino-skeptic school, and Sino-pessimistic school, Sino-optimistic school having the most positive approach to Chinese investments in Africa and Sino-pessimistic school the most negative. Thus, the origins of the concept of CSR concerns particularly the Sino-skeptic school and Sino-pessimistic schools: they see the actions of Chinese companies as exploitative and even as obstacles for Africa's development. (Adem 2010, 335-336.)

The discussion of CSR has recently increased remarkably due to the accusations companies are receiving despite the fact that they have for long aimed at shifting their operations towards more sustainability (Joutsenvirta, Jalas, Halme, Mäkinen 2011, 41). Despite accusations, China has made some progress in environmental sustainability in its operations in Africa. By doing this, China is aiming to avoid the criticism it has received, claiming that it is following the colonializing patterns in Sub-Saharan region and neglecting the sustainability issues. (Mol 2011.) This goes in line with Blowfield and Murray's (2011) theory of CSR motivation presented in Chapter 2.1: The Chinese companies have made improvements in their sustainability practices based on *materiality motivation*. The companies are thus seeking a better reputation through more sustainable and responsible business practices.

Blowfield and Murray (2011, 17) describe how the role of CSR varies according to the country. In countries with strong social system and employee protection, CSR has

less significance than in countries with no such institutions. The government is considered to have a great part of the responsibility, whereas if these institutions do not exist, corporations are expected to integrate CSR strongly to their governance. Regarding China's presence in Africa, it was mentioned that the economic environment of many African nations is underdeveloped and unstable. Proper policies, governance, and infrastructure lack in majority of the countries in Africa. (Bah & Fang 2011.) Combining these two frameworks, CSR then has a significant role in terms of sustainability of Chinese business operations. Since the African nations lack strong institutions protecting the communities from exploitation and unsustainable actions, the companies have a greater responsibility in ensuring the sustainability of their actions.

Moreover, corporate social responsibility can be defined as company's voluntary consideration and accountability of social welfare of the host communities of its operations (Waddock 2002, 10). Besides traditional stakeholders (investors, owners etc.), companies should also pursue to fulfill the expectations of other parties involved, such as communities, societies, and even future generations (UNEP 2011, 13). CSR thus starts where the law ends; socially responsible actions of companies go beyond what is legally required (European Commission 2011, 1). As was explained in Chapter 3.4, some companies operating in Africa have taken advantage of poor regulation and institutions of the African countries. This also calls for an implementation of proper CSR and sustainability practices in African countries.

4 METHODOLOGY

This thesis examines the discursive legitimation strategies found in media articles regarding China's investments in Sub-Saharan Africa. The objective is to find out what (de)legitimation strategies are used in the newspaper articles and how does the legitimation differ in the Chinese media and the Western media. It seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. *What legitimation strategies are used in newspaper articles published between the years 2013-2018 to (de)legitimate the Chinese investments in Sub-Saharan Africa?*
2. *How does the (de)legitimation differ in the articles between Chinese newspapers and Westerns newspapers?*

To efficiently answer the questions, certain choices were made regarding the research approach and methods. This chapter presents those choices and procedures, as well as discusses their reasoning and functionality.

4.1 Research approach

As with any scientific study, the first step of this thesis was to choose the broad methodological approach, i.e. whether to conduct a qualitative or quantitative study. The two paradigms are principally considered to distinct from each other based on the research techniques related to data gathering and analysis, and ultimately how they treat data. (Brannen 1992, 3). More fundamentally, the difference between the paradigms is that they both originate from different ontological and epistemological understandings. The ontological view of quantitative approach is that there is only one existing truth. Furthermore, truth can be perceived through quantitative research as an ultimate truth. From the epistemological view, certain procedures are included to quantitative research in order to validate the results of the study, and as long as those procedures are followed, truth can be found.

Qualitative research is often tied to one or multiple cases which are then being interpreted and analyzed, as has been done in this thesis (Chakhovich 2015). Types of qualitative study vary depending on the research problem. The object being studied in qualitative research can be an individual, a group, an organization or even a particular event. Sometimes a comparative method is being used to analyze various different cases. This thesis focuses on studying a specific phenomenon: the Chinese investments in Sub-Saharan Africa and the sustainability of those investments. Sustainability a

concept is something that is hard to measure numerically, which supported the selection of qualitative research approach. Furthermore, the research method of this study is a discursive analysis based on various articles in well-known newspapers. The legitimation strategies of the investments in terms of sustainability was studied in the sample articles. Reality is thus constructed through social context and circumstances and not presented as one existing truth. Qualitative research is based on the philosophical idea that a researcher can only offer his or her own perception of the truth; the truth is a constructive concept that is being affected by the subjective interpretations of one perceiving it.

Thus, multiple truths and realities exist. (Slevitch 2011). This thesis focuses on *how* the reality is constructed, rather than what is the causal relationship of the concepts and its measurements. The latter focus is subject to quantitative research. (Silverman 2005, 10). To answer the research questions, quantitative research seemed less suitable. For the purpose of investigating the socially constructed reality, a *constructionist* model was applied for this thesis. Constructionist model focuses on the interaction within a certain phenomenon, focusing on the action and behavior rather than the variants they embed (such as emotions). The suitable data for constructionist model is for instance different texts, which was the form of data in this thesis. (Silverman 2005, 10–11.) Due to the nature of this study, the reasoning was originated inductively from individual observations and inferences were drawn by making broader generalizations of the data findings. Thus, the approach was not based on a theory which was aimed to be proven, but the theory and data collection and analysis process were in-line with each other. Drawing from this approach, this thesis applied *grounded theory*, in which the theory derives and develops from the procedure of observation, analysis and reasoning of the phenomenon. (Titscher et al. 2000, 76).

Considering further the nature of the qualitative research, it needs to be added that this is not an absolute description of the phenomena being studied. It is rather an explanatory approach to the subject. (Bartos, 1986, 5). Additionally, the aim of this thesis is to align the research with the previous literature regarding the issue. Due to the qualitative nature of the methods and the concepts of this research, the concerned literature itself is mostly qualitative, and in order to place this thesis in line with that literature, qualitative study seemed the most appropriate approach.

Besides of qualitative data, such as interviews, it is possible to use quantitative data in qualitative research as well. (Power & Gendron 2015, 159.) Although being a qualitative study by nature, quantitative elements are used in this study as well. Legitimizing modules found in each of the articles analyzed were calculated to demonstrate the guidelines of legitimation in the articles. This borders the area of quantitative content analysis. However, since the meaning and different interpretations of the texts is the main focus of the findings (Titscher et al. 2000, 62), the quantitative

remarks simply function as directional and complimentary demonstration. The main philosophy of quantitative study, that the ultimate truth can be perceived by following the valid quantitative procedures (Chakhovich 2015), does not thus apply. The procedure and common steps of content analysis are applied qualitatively in the analysis for extracting the legitimation categories from the articles. This will be explained more thoroughly in the subchapter 4.3.

In their study *Discursive (De)Legitimation of a Contested Finnish Greenfield Investment Project in Latin America*, Joutsenvirta and Vaara (2009) research the discourse and productions of meanings around a controversial investment project. The focus of their study is the discussion around the sustainability issues of that investment. This study applies their findings on generalization of legitimation strategies in the sustainability debates more broadly. In the next subchapter, the tool to analyze the processes of meaning-making, *discourse analysis*, is presented.

4.2 Discourse analysis

Paltridge (2012, 7) presents discourse as *the social construction of reality*. Written and spoken texts always include social and cultural practices. These practices both form and are being formed by the texts we write and speak. (Paltridge 2012, 7.) Thus, as Rahimi and Riasati (2011, 107) argue as well, our worldview, ideologies and perspectives are to a great extent being shaped by language. Language is always being used in a certain social context involving discourse. Besides creating and shaping perceptions of the world, this context often mirrors the ongoing ideologies and views as well. In order to understand the prevailing mentalities language embeds, discourses need to be analyzed. (Rahimi & Riasati 2011, 107.) Texts have certain purposes, and those purposes have an impact on discourses (Paltridge 2012, 7). Conversely, language and discourses have a significant role in the study of ideologies (Schäffner & Kelly-Holmes 1996, 3).

Johnstone (2002, 2) defines discourse analysis (DA) as a study of language, but adds that the term "language" includes communication, talk and discussion. She points out that there is not a universally agreed definition for discourse analysis. As Rahimi and Riasati (2011, 107) explain, discourse analysis is a tool to examine communication and interaction in texts and conversations. It studies what is being meant with certain texts, how the meanings are understood and how the language represents and creates perceptions of the world (Paltridge 2012, 12). Fairclough (1995, 28-29) summarizes discourse analysis as an attempt to track down the connections between texts, discourse practices and sociocultural practices.

DA offers a framework for both linguistic and social analysis of social and personal constructions (Rahimi & Riasati 2011, 107). It has been applied in many research fields,

such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, law and business. It also helps breaking down constructions of social relations, for instance oppression or dominance. Discourse analysis can be used to identify how decisions are made, resources allocated, conflicts initiated et cetera. Ultimately, since the discussion and discourses are at the heart of human interaction, DA is a methodology that helps answering any question regarding people operating in the society. (Johnstone 2002, 7.) According to Johnstone (2002, 3) discourse analysis differs from a language analysis in a sense that discourse analysis is not primarily focused on the language as a system. Rather, the focus is on the consequences of people perceiving and interpreting language. Thus, instead of focusing on the formality of language, DA concentrates on *what the language is used for*. (Brown & Yule 2013.)

Van Dijk (1985) explains that discourse is not just a method of communication between the messenger and the receiver, but an institution itself. Thus, in order to analyze mass media content, discourse needs to be analyzed more profoundly than just as a "tool" of communication. This means that every aspect from rhetorical to visual variants must be considered. (van Dijk 1985, 5). Discourse analyst needs to approach the material studied from the outside to understand the context and the nature of the materials. To find out all the possible aspects, a heuristic approach is useful. This means that the analyst asks broad questions regarding the texts, not specific and narrow ones. The heuristic approach helps to ensure that the analysis does not simply bring out the planned or hoped answers, but multidimensional and pervasive outcomes. (Johnstone 2002, 27). In discourse analysis, heuristic method is not a procedure resulting in absolute truth. Rather, it helps to understand the problem or phenomenon more profoundly. (Johnstone 2002, 229.)

A central aspect of discourse analysis is *pragmatics*. Pragmatics is an approach which considers the meaning of a message in relation to the context in which it is being presented. The context can be situational, social or textual. It can also include the context of background, i.e. what is already known and understood about the world. Language and its context is vital in understanding of what is being said and how it is interpreted in discourses. (Paltridge 2012, 38.) Discourse analysis can be conducted using quantitative or qualitative approach (Ocler 2009, 183).

As mentioned earlier, discourses represent certain perspectives, values and norms of the context in which they occur. However, they are often not directly stated in discourses. The purpose of *critical discourse analysis* (CDA), a subcategory of discourse analysis, is to help identify and unveil these "hidden" and out-of-sight attitudes of discourses. It analyses discourse by mirroring it to social and cultural institutions such as politics, race or gender. (Paltridge 2012.) CDA does not, then, analyze the discourse itself but the relation between the discourse and other elements around it (Fairclough 1995, 4). In addition, critical approach to discourse analysis also

examines why and how discourses work the way they do. Thus, CDA helps to understand different relationships of the society. (Paltridge 2012.) It also concerns persuasion and manipulation through linguistic methods (Hart et al. 2011). Simply put:

"Critical discourse analysis explores the connections between the use of language and the social and political context in which it occurs." (Paltridge 2012, 186).

Hart et al. (2011) argue that the context referred above is not an objective representation of reality. It is rather a construction of different sets of perspectives and worldviews of those participating to the discourse. The contexts are then a subjective interpretation. The subjective perceptions in both creating and interpreting texts need to be considered in CDA.

Central element of the issues examined by CDA is the study of knowledge and its nature. Knowledge distributed, communicated and embedded in public discourses (such as in the media or in politics) has social, political and cultural aspects. According to Hart et al. (2011), knowledge itself is no longer considered to be a presentation of the ultimate truth. Today, knowledge is defined by the generally accepted criteria and standards of communities, not by traditional epistemology.

The criteria and standards for knowledge approved in scientific communities differ from those accepted by for instance mass media or other sociocultural branches. Hence, media reports, textbooks, corporate press releases and other sources of discourse all include assumptions of who the knowledge possessors in the society are. Interesting viewpoints of the social context of knowledge are also what kind of knowledge do certain social groups hold in general, how those groups administrate public discussion and how the masses adapt the knowledge the groups distribute. In addition, a relevant aspect to consider is which groups lack what type knowledge or access to it in order to participate in discourses of the society.

The viewpoints mentioned above lead to the core of critical discourse studies: the study of power in discourses and the misuse of power in distributing and communicating knowledge. Knowledge is not something individuals just simply have, but something that is being taught, produced, consumed and interpreted by different actors, such as schools, politicians and media corporations. (Hart et al. 2011.) Thus, discourses are not interesting simply as representations of social practices, but because of the purpose they serve: to execute power (Wodak, Mayer et al. 2001, 34). Questions of legitimacy and access of knowledge need to be then asked: who produces and distributes knowledge to whom, how and why? Who can participate to discourses? Whose words count? In practice, these questions can be applied to multiple fields in critical discourse analysis. (Hart et al. 2011.)

CDA used for unveiling structures of wider social messages and of power and privilege is holistic. In this context, it means that the analysis includes three parts: textual, interpretation and sociocultural analyses. The textual part aims at evaluating how social practices are expressed through linguistic choices, using for instance grammatical or lexical means. The interpretation part focuses on identifying how the text produces, reproduces or shapes a certain issue or idea. The text is being mirrored to the context in which it occurs, and in its essence the interpretation phase evaluates the larger meaning of the text. Finally, the sociocultural level of the analysis considers how the text reveals social, political and cultural structures of the society. The sociocultural level helps to understand, for instance, the power relations of the society by exposing how they are introduced in the text. (Jaekel, 2016, 849.)

On the other hand, as Weiss and Wodak (2003, 12) explain, there is not one specific theory or methodology for CDA research. CDA studies are diverse and derive from multiple different disciplines, data sources, methodologies and theoretical backgrounds. While this wide approach can cause confusion, it also enables innovation, open discussions and debates for the school to develop and change. In this thesis, the emphasis is on the knowledge communicated and distributed in media corporations' reports and publications. Relevant approaches are for instance what kind of knowledge is being produced and distributed, what is being emphasized and what kind of knowledge is possibly being left out from the discourses. It considers the role of media corporations as gatekeepers for certain agendas and attitudes, and how those values are distributed through discursive strategies.

4.2.1 *Discourse analysis and the mass media*

Mass media has specific traits that need to be considered when conducting a discourse analysis. These traits separate mass media from other mediums of communication. Besides its technical aspects, mass media has political, economic, institutional and sociocultural aspects as well. (Fairclough 1995, 38.) In order to conduct a thorough analysis, an understanding of the nature of the mass media is relevant. Today, discourse in the context of media is examined as its own meaningful branch, as a social and cultural product resulting in the production of ideologies and meanings. This, however, has not always been the case. The basis for discourse analysis of mass media was laid only in the 1970s. Before this, discourse was simply seen as a tool mediating between media houses and audience. (Van Dijk et al. 1985.)

As mentioned before, to conduct a profound analysis of the media content and context, a systematic analysis of the media discourse is needed. Every aspect of the analysis need to be considered, from superficial factors (such as lay-out and graphic

design) to underlying, "hidden" meanings in rhetoric or grammatical structures. In addition, the nature of text production processes in media need to be underlined: one piece of article in the newspaper is not a result of a single person reporting observations or experiences. Rather, it is often a combination of various forms of discourses including interviews, press conferences, documents, etc.

These discourses are processed and transformed into one piece of text. The cognitive models of journalists regarding discourse comprehension thus impact the end product. (Van Dijk et al. 1985.) In other words, texts in the media are a direct result of discourse, which is affected by the cognitive capacity of journalists, among other things. As Lipari (1996, 821) explains, although journalistic guidelines encourage journalists to seek for the objective truth, the description of the world can hardly be separated from interpretation. Thus, articles and other news sources are always affected by the interpretation of journalists. (Lipari 1996, 821.) Journalists can be perceived as mediators between the socially constructed reality and the public perception (Fiss and Hirsch 2005, 33). That being said, it needs to be added that the cognitive models, personal history, sociocultural statuses etc. of the audience also affect how the texts are received and interpreted. That is why the intended message does not necessarily add up with the message received. (Schröder 2007, 78–79.)

By analyzing the language in media content, we can reveal how the world is being represented in news mediums, what kind of identities is being given to the actors in news stories or programs and what kind of relationships is being built between the media audience and for instance journalists, experts or politicians. In discourse analysis, an interesting question is how the power structures of the society are represented in the media, and how, on the other hand, the media shapes these structures. (Fairclough 1995, 5.)

A relevant aspect of the mass media that needs to be addressed is commercialization. The profits of publishers or production companies are based on the size of audiences. Under fierce competition, media houses, production companies and other entities are pressured to create profits while consumers demand more entertainment value. While it results in producing material that already has a large audience, it also results in efforts to increase the appeal of news, documentaries and current affairs programs. This threatens the objectivity of neutrality. The line between fact-based media content and entertainment has thus become less distinct.

In mass media content, there is often a gap between the production and the consumption of it. The content can be produced in a different time and place than in which it is consumed. This gap is characteristic for mass media as a communication method. It allows the recording of the material and thus possibilities to consume it multiple times. The material becomes a commodity, which can be produced, broadcasted, distributed and consumed. Media differs from other means of

communication also with a lack of the second party participation, second party in this case being the audience. The lack of direct feedback from the audience results in producers creating the so-called "ideal audiences" based on the feedback they can get (from market surveys, audience ratings etc.). If the constructed ideal audience, however, differs vastly from those actually consuming the content, the risk of ideological manipulation and cultural dominance increases. In addition, the content and distribution of mass media material is still in the hands of few, usually those who already have political, economic and cultural power. The content is professionally and institutionally surveyed, which is why only limited amount of people have access to creation, production and distribution of mass media content.

Ideologies in media contents are often found when the ideologies represent the already existing power structures of the society. For that reason, they are hidden in the text and need to be read between the lines. They are not specifically brought up to the audience but are rather taken for granted. In this context, a clear difference needs to be made between ideologies and persuasion. Unlike persuasion, ideologies do not use certain rhetoric to advocate the issue. Ideologies are the assumptions that the audience is expected to have regarding the society and the world. These assumptions are then being reproduced.

Although mass media is often accused of being bias, manipulative and distorted, what was discussed earlier about the truth and knowledge needs to be applied here as well. The truth is always a representation of something and it includes certain perspectives and values. When studying the mass media, the representations need to be analyzed and evaluated: what do they include, what is being left out, what is being prioritized, what are the interests behind them etc. The absolute truth is never a simple topic, while the objectivity and the motives behind representations can be analyzed. Furthermore, it needs to be kept in mind that while the news mediums are a part of the reproduction process ideologies in the society, they are also cultural commodities and part of the entertainment industry. Thus, in the political and societal context the media texts are meant to keep people updated, whereas culturally they are also cultural products shaping and mirroring the cultural values and identities. (Fairclough 1995.)

4.2.2 *Legitimation in discourse analysis*

"Legitimation as a process is best described as a 'second-order' objectivation of meaning." (Berger and Luckman 1996, 110)

The purpose of legitimation, in its essence, is to create credible meanings to institutional processes (Berger and Luckman 1996, 110). As was discussed earlier, texts

represent social practices. In addition to representing those practices, they also bring meaning to them. This means that texts may include a notion of why certain action or practice is done, why it should not be done or why it needs to be done in a certain way. This is called *legitimation*. (Van Leeuwen 2008, 26.)

Drawing from the article of Rojo and Van Dijk (1997), legitimation is seen as a process of justifying actions based on their moral, social, political etc. acceptability. One way or another, legitimation most fundamentally answers to the question of ‘why’ (such as “why should or should not this action be conducted?”) (Van Leeuwen 2007, 93). Legitimation thus has rhetoric, narrative and discursive elements. It is a practice in which a certain action is portrayed either in a positive light or a negative light, constructing hence legitimation for or against that action (Joutsenvirta & Vaara 2015, 744, according to Rojo and van Dijk). In every case, legitimation works to justify the practices of some particular institution (Van Leeuwen 2007, 92).

Theo Van Leeuwen (2007) introduces a framework within which the legitimation categories can be divided into. The legitimation strategies can be divided into four major modules presented in Table 1 below:

<i>Authorization</i> Legitimation is based on authoritarian reference, such as an institution or an individual.	<i>Moral Evaluation</i> Legitimation is based on the framework of values.
<i>Rationalization</i> Legitimation is based on objectives, efficacy, utility and other approving variants of an action.	<i>Mythopoesis</i> Legitimation is based on narratives in which legitimate actions are rewarded and illegitimate actions are punished.

Table 1 Legitimation categories (according to Van Leeuwen 2007, 92).

The categorization of Van Leeuwen can be used as a ground for legitimation in a discursive analysis: the arguments made against or for the actions can be broke down into different modules. Each of these modules can take place simultaneously or separately. *Authorization* provides an answer to previously presented ‘why’ question with an explanation that “someone says so”. That someone can be for instance personal authority, expert authority, role model authority, impersonal authority or an authority of tradition and custom. *Moral evaluation* justifies legitimation with moral values. Actions are projected against certain moral framework and then evaluated whether they are good or bad according to that framework. *Rationalization* gives an explanation to what is the purpose and the objective of certain action. It is thus concerned with the goal-

orientation of the action. Rationalization can also be based on a commonly understood truth, or, as Van Leeuwen expresses it, on “the way things are”. Finally, using *mythopoesis*, legitimation is linked to storytelling. This means that actions are presented in a way that they produce myths, stories, symbols etc. that have certain outcomes, and the outcomes are then used to justify the respective action. (Van Leeuwen 2007.)

Van Leeuwen’s (2007) framework for legitimation is used as a tool for discourse analysis in this thesis. The texts of selected articles are analyzed by mirroring them against this framework. Different (de)legitimation strategies for the Chinese investments in Sub-Saharan Africa can then be extracted and analyzed. The framework provides a base for thematic categorization of the content in the articles and offers grounds for revealing the instruments used in the discourses to construct meanings for the concept of sustainability. This process is explained more in detail in the next subchapter.

4.3 The procedure: data collection and analysis

In conducting the discourse analysis, this thesis applied five operational steps commonly used in content analysis: design, unitizing, sampling, drawing inferences and validation (Hoeber et al. 2017, 388). In the design phase, the contextual framework for the analysis was set. The relationship between the objective of the analysis, i.e. what needs to be answered, and relevant data sources was identified. The analysis of this research was constructed based on the case of Chinese corporations investing in the Sub-Saharan Africa and the legitimation of the investments from the perspective of responsibility and sustainability. Articles from various influential newspapers were chosen, and the discursive legitimation strategies occurring in those articles were analyzed. The analysis was made to find answers to what kind of legitimation strategies occur in terms of sustainability issues of Chinese FDI in Africa. A viewpoint from different news mediums from different sides of the world, from Western countries and China, was pursued. To find out whether the legitimation strategies regarding sustainability of Chinese investments in Africa differed in the medias’ of the two was one of the end-goals of this research. Thus, articles from both geographical ends were chosen: from Western media houses and from Chinese media houses.

In the unitizing phase, it was decided that the research would be done using solely secondary sources, and the sample would consist of news articles from six different newspapers. As Paltridge (2012, 7) explains, written and spoken texts always include social and cultural practices. Therefore, it was decided that only written media texts would be used for the analysis. Availability of written articles was abundant, and they

provided a fruitful basis for discourse analysis. The hidden meanings and nuances can be extracted from the texts more profoundly than for instance from spoken material.

Altogether four different newspapers were chosen from the Western media; two American newspapers and two British newspapers. From American media, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* were chosen. They both represent the leading newspapers in the United States (among *Los Angeles Times* and *Wall Street Journal*), and are considered among the most relevant newspapers of the country. Due to its location in the capital of the United States, *The Washington Post* has a special focus on the politics in its reporting. *New York Times* is owned by The New York Times Company and *Washington Post* by WP Company and Nash Holdings. In 2013, *New York Times* was the second most circulated newspaper in the United States, while *Washington Post* was number eight.

From the British media, *The Guardian* and *The Economist* were chosen. *The Guardian* is owned by Guardian Media Group and it is politically oriented to center-left. *The Guardian* was the only newspaper with an established political orientation, which was taken into account when analyzing the articles. *The Economist* is a London based, magazine-like newspaper and it is owned by the Economist Group. The magazine format of the paper was also something that needed to be considered during the analysis.

China Daily and *South China Morning Post (SCMP)* were selected from the Chinese media. To be specific, *South China Morning Post* is a Hong Kong based newspaper, which is a special administrative region of China. *China Daily* is headquartered in Beijing, owned by the Communist Party of China and the State Council Information Office of China. It is thus directly controlled by the state of China, and the newspaper identifies itself to be among the most authoritative English newspapers in China (*China Daily*). *South China Morning Post*, on the other hand, is privately owned by Alibaba Group. The two have thus very different baseline for the analysis. *China Daily* has the widest circulation of all English-speaking newspapers in China. *South China Morning Post* has the second widest circulation in Hong Kong but has the highest number of paid subscribers.

All the selected newspapers were chosen using certain qualifications. Firstly, they needed to be English-language papers due to language restrictions. Secondly, the newspapers were selected based on their recognition. Only well-known, widely published newspapers were selected. In order to identify common characteristics of the public discourse, and in order to analyze their meanings, newspapers with as wide recognition and audience as possible was ideal. Analyzing discourse involving smaller, perhaps exclusive group of audience was not appropriate in this context. It was more fruitful to get acquainted with texts that create and shape meanings to a larger mass audience.

After choosing the appropriate newspapers, the next step was to sample the articles for the analysis. The articles were chosen using *stratified sampling*, which is a common tool used in media analyses. It means that the chosen articles were sampled from the wider mass of data using certain limitations. (Hoerber et al. 2017, 388.) Following the criteria, altogether 31 articles were sampled from the chosen newspapers. This proved to be a sufficient amount, since the data provided abundantly material to conduct the analysis.

As Wodak et al. (2011) explain, there is no one specific method for data collection in CDA. Data collection is also not considered to be an individual phase of the research that needs to be completed before the next step can begin. During the process, new concepts, ideas and questions arise, which is why the data collection phase should not be a completely isolated part from the analysis. This was also the case for this study: the sample data formed throughout the whole process of the analysis and the data collection was not limited to be a specific, individual task of the study.

Due to abundance of data and the need for a narrower focus, a publication time frame for articles was set. The purpose of this study is to not analyze a particular event but the wider phenomenon and the discourse around it, which is why a longer time period seemed appropriate. However, since the discussion has been vivid around the sustainability of Chinese investments in Sub-Saharan Africa and the amount of data was extensive, the time frame needed nevertheless to be moderate. A five-year time span for the articles was then set, which means that only articles written in 2013 or later were selected for the sample. The year 2013 also served as an interesting mark for the discussion, since the heated market boom for natural resources in Africa started to relent after that. The selected time frame then offered an opportunity to follow the discussion beyond the biggest market peak.

Only articles from which legitimizing or delegitimizing elements could be extracted were selected for the article sample. This means that articles that simply focused on describing the phenomenon with unilateral facts, such as economic figures, were left out from the analysis. On the other hand, opinions, editorials and other texts were left out in order to avoid obvious biases. They are not in their nature designed to be objective, which was a valid criterion for this study. It was considered more interesting to study the legitimation strategies in texts that are not written with an implicated purpose of forming audience's opinion or the course of the discussion. Thus, only news articles and reports were selected. In addition, this study focused on the legitimation from the perspective of Sub-Saharan African countries. Accordingly, content covering the issue from the viewpoint of China were not selected for the sample. As an example, legitimating investments based on China's economic benefits of the investments was not the kind of content that provided answers to the research questions and were thus not included for the analysis.

Name of the newspaper	Country of origin	Number of articles used (n=31)
China Daily	China	12
South China Morning Post	China (Hong Kong)	5
Washington Post	United States	4
New York Times	United States	3
The Guardian	United Kingdom	3
The Economist	United Kingdom	4

Table 2 Names of the newspapers, their country of origin and the number of articles used from the respective newspapers.

All articles were electronically searched using Google as a search engine. Consequently, all of articles were from the online versions of the newspapers; no print versions were used. Key search words were *China, *Chinese, *Africa, *investments, *sustainability, *corporate social responsibility and various combinations and modifications of those keywords. In addition to the selected sample of articles, multiple other materials, such as think tank publications, governmental reports, and reports of consulting companies and agencies were searched, read and studied to gain a comprehensive and broad understanding of the phenomenon. This helped in process of defining the key concepts, issues and elements of the phenomenon.

The data of the articles was processed manually in the coding phase. As Hoeber et al. (2017, 387-388) explain, using automated data analysis methods have become increasingly popular but they do not cover textual data profoundly enough. In order to capture nuances and hidden, between-the-lines meanings from the texts, manual sampling of the data was conducted. The main thematic categorization was coding the texts in accordance with van Leeuwen's (2015) four modules of legitimation: *authorization*, *moral evaluation*, *rationalization* and *mythopoesis*. The articles were thus being mirrored against the framework of legitimation strategies, and the units of different legitimation modules were extracted and calculated. This phase functioned as a good test for the suitability of the sample articles: if no legitimizing or delegitimizing units appeared, the article was excluded from the sample. While reading and analyzing texts, four additional thematic subcategories also appeared under the legitimation categories. Discursive elements recurred in the articles that could eventually be classified under these four themes. The themes were named *economic rationale*, *expert*

repeal, moral mirroring and personal experience. The themes will be explained more in-depth in Chapter 5.

By drawing inferences, the relation of the content used in the research and the research questions was ultimately defined. Thus, drawing inferences was certainly the most crucial phase of the research. (Krippendorff 1989, 406-407.) However, drawing inferences and analyzing the results was not a strictly separate phase from data gathering, as is often typical for critical discourse analysis. During the process of analysis, more concepts arose, and those concepts were then expanded into categories. Further data collection occurred as a result. Thus, in CDA, data collection phase is never quite ready and complete. (Wodak & Mayer 2009, 27-28.)

The final stage of the study was validation, in which the trustworthiness of the study was analyzed and evaluated. This process is explained in the next subchapter.

4.4 Trustworthiness of the study

Since this is a qualitative study, the approach is that reality is constructed through social context and circumstances and not presented as one existing truth. Qualitative research is based on the philosophical idea that a researcher can only offer his or her own perception of the truth; the truth is a constructive concept that is being affected by the subjective interpretations of one perceiving it. (Slevitch 2011.) Thus, in order to prove the inferences and conclusions valid, the quality of the study needs to be assessed. Three categories to analyze the trustworthiness of the research are assessed here: validity, reliability and generalizability.

4.4.1 Validity

Simply put, validity of a study means how truthful it can be considered to be. Since this study was a qualitative one and was conducted analyzing discourses in articles, perhaps the main challenge regarding the validity of the study was the danger of *anecdotalism*. Anecdotalism means that the sample is collected based on material that provides well-representative examples of the case. Additionally, the data is analyzed in a manner that allows to make conclusions that have certain value. The inferences are thus not drawn using critically and systematically the entire data, but by extracting interesting and representable cases. This decreases the validity of qualitative study. It should be noted, though, that the researchers worldview cannot be completely isolated from the study. Still, the data should not be approached using certain lenses, but with an object manner. (Silverman 2005, 211.)

In order to stay as objective as possible regarding the data, assumptions regarding the data were sought to be discarded. In practice this meant for instance that presumptions regarding the nature of Western media and Chinese media were rejected and neutrality towards both were practiced. Additionally, drawing conclusions too lightly because the data provided evidence for certain appealing finding was avoided. A certain thematic pattern which was used to draw inferences was not confirmed until its existence could not be refuted. (Silverman 2005, 213.) When presenting the results, the findings and examples were presented as diversely as possible. This was done for the purpose of avoiding to present only few selected examples that had interesting qualities to them. Multiple distinct examples were thus drawn and analyzed.

The process of gathering the articles was conducted using stratified sampling, which means that certain criteria was used to select the sample articles. The criteria of choosing the articles does not in itself provide trustworthiness for the study, which is why there needs to be critical assessment regarding the process of choosing the articles. Choosing the articles thus needed to be theoretically related to the research question (Silverman 2005, 131). It would not have fulfilled the purpose of studying legitimation strategies in the context of sustainability in Chinese investments in Sub-Saharan Africa by simply choosing articles where the theme of “sustainability” and “Chinese investments in Africa” occurred. Legitimation strategies needed to be included for the sample to be theoretically relevant in terms of the focus of this study.

When selecting the sample articles, all the selected texts needed to be written in English due to language restrictions. This decreases the validity of the analysis regarding the Chinese articles, since they might offer a different view than what might be written in Chinese. Additionally, the writing in the articles might not be the native tongue of the journalists, which needs to be taken into account when analyzing the tone of the writing.

The articles that were opinion pieces or editorial texts were left out from the sample. This was done with the purpose of selecting articles that were intended to be objective: opinions, editorials and other texts with a certain angle are not meant to be objective by nature. A time frame was chosen for the articles to increase the validity of the study: if no time frame was chosen, it would have been possible to select articles from any time frame that include interesting findings. This would not have pictured an objective overview of the case. Finally, all the articles in the sample are provided in the *Appendix* part of this study, increasing the validity as well.

A minor problem that occurred during the data gathering process was that some of the most influential media sources, such as *The Economist*, have made a decision not to publish the name of the editor or the journalists of the articles. The reason for this, according to *The Economist* Group, which owns the newspaper, is that “*what is written is more important than who writes it*” (*The Economist*). This is a valid point from

discursive perspective but decreases the validity of those articles in the analysis to some extent. However, the content of those articles was relevant in terms of the discursive analysis, and they were thus chosen to be included for this study.

4.4.2 *Reliability*

With reliability, the consistency of a study can be evaluated. It is thus concerned how reliably the methods serve the purpose of examining the chosen phenomenon. For the purpose of gathering information regarding the differences of legitimation in different newspapers, as well as the frequency of legitimation strategies in general, the units of (de)legitimation from the articles were coded and calculated. Then, the results were collected in tables demonstrating the results. Few remarks need to be done to evaluate the reliability of this method. The objective of this practice was to not produce quantitative results, thus it did not follow *positivistic* research which considers knowledge to be found through strict and defined scientific methods (Silverman 2005, 222).

The calculations of the units are based on the philosophical approach that truth a constructed concept, and it is constructed through interpretations and inferences (Slevitch 2011). As Silverman (2005, 222) explains, the concern in qualitative study is not the standardized interpretation of the data. Another researcher might then end up with a different result when extracting the number of legitimation units in the articles. Quantification in this study was used as a supportive element, but the tool was qualitative in nature (Silverman 2005, 220).

However, a systematic approach to the analysis was selected and conducted. For instance, a specific criterion was selected for what counted as moral evaluation in the texts: if the unit compared, evaluated or took a stance that can be put in a moral framework, it was put in the category of moral evaluation. Simply stating actions that can be morally questionable did not get selected to the module, because they do not justify or oppose the investments as such. Comparing for instance the business practices of the Chinese companies to those of the Western companies were, on the other hand, included to moral evaluation, because the actions are mirrored against a certain moral framework. In this context, the framework is the Western idea of morality, and the position of the actions of Chinese companies compared to this framework. Hence, formulas and operative decisions needed to be made when analyzing the texts and extracting the units, and those formulas were kept systematically throughout the analysis.

4.4.3 *Generalizability*

Although generalizability of a qualitative study can be challenging to evaluate, and in some cases not even appropriate, certain remarks can be made regarding the generalizability of this study. Based on the resources for this study as well as the ability to represent the sustainability discourse around the Chinese investments in Sub-Saharan Africa, 31 articles proved to be sufficient amount of articles. It does not, however, provide grounds to generalize the findings based on quantitative variants of the sample. In this case, for instance, quantification was used only to compare the articles directionally. However, calculating for example which percentage of the articles had certain legitimating units and drawing conclusions based on that would not be representable and could not be generalized due to the limited sample size.

Having said that, certain generalization was possible to be made based on this sample size. The generalization was, however, related to the discursive themes that emerged from the sample, economic rationale, expert repeal, moral mirroring and personal experience. The themes will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, but here it needs to be mentioned that those tendencies are argued to be generalized to sustainability discourses more broadly. So, the sample size proved to be sufficient to draw inferences of the discourse that can be generalized to a larger sample. The generalization was also largely based on the *social order* of things. As Silverman (2005, 134) argues, the basic constructions of social orders are often arranged in such a fixed manner that no matter how small or big sample considered, those orders will appear. Looking at only few individual cases, the same social arrangements can be identified. That was the case of this study as well: the generalized themes were based on social structures and orders that emerged from the texts, which made them generalizable despite limited sample size.

5 RESULTS

For this thesis, altogether 31 articles from six different newspapers were read and analyzed. The objective was to find out which discursive strategies the articles used to either legitimize or delegitimize the Chinese investments in Sub-Saharan Africa. The content of the articles was analyzed through the legitimation framework of Van Leeuwen (2007). Additionally, it was examined whether the articles from the Western newspapers differed from those of the Chinese newspapers in terms of legitimation. Each legitimation module is discussed in-depth in the subchapters 5.1-5.4. Before presenting those modules, general results of the study need to be discussed first to incorporate the modules to the research questions.

The two tables below present how many legitimizing or delegitimizing units were identified in each newspaper. If no units were found, the character ‘-’ was marked to the table. In brackets after the name of the newspaper is the number of articles used in the sample from the respective newspaper.

	Rationalization	Authorization	Mythopoesis	Moral evaluation
China Daily (12)	21	30	1	5
South China Morning Post (5)	12	10	-	3
Washington Post (4)	5	4	-	6
New York Times (3)	5	4	1	1
The Guardian (3)	3	2	-	4
The Economist (4)	2	4	-	3
Total number of units	48	54	2	22

Table 3 Number of legitimizing units found in each newspaper

As can be seen from the table above, rationalization and authorization appeared the most commonly as legitimation strategies. Mythopoesis, on the other hand, was a relatively rarely used strategy. The table below shows similar finding regarding delegitimizing strategies: authorization and rationalization were used the most, whereas mythopoesis was used the least.

	Rationalization	Authorization	Mythopoesis	Moral evaluation
China Daily (12)	-	3	-	4
South China Morning Post (5)	2	5	-	3
Washington Post (4)	4	5	-	1
New York Times (3)	11	3	1	3
The Guardian (3)	3	2	1	2
The Economist (4)	3	3	2	3
Total number of units	23	21	4	16

Table 4 Number of delegitimizing units found in each newspaper

Few remarks need to be noted when examining the tables. First, the number of articles analyzed from China Daily was substantially higher than other individual newspapers: the total number of articles was 12, while other newspapers had 3 to 5 articles. Thus, the legitimation units need to be proportioned accordingly. On the first glance, it may seem for instance that there is a significantly higher number of units in the modules of “rationalization” and “authorization” found in China Daily, but when put into perspective of the total number of articles, it is not proportionally much higher than in the rest of the newspapers.

Secondly, as was already discussed in Chapter 4.4 regarding the trustworthiness of the study, since the analysis was conducted using critical discourse analysis, the units calculated for the tables are not intended to be the representation of the objective truth. Rather, they represent the philosophical notion that the truth is a constructive concept

that is being affected by the subjective interpretations of one perceiving it. Multiple truths and realities then exist, (Slevitch 2011) and another researcher might end up with a different result when extracting the number of legitimation units in the articles. Quantification in this study was used as a supportive element, but the tool was qualitative in nature (Silverman 2005, 220). However, a systematic approach to the analysis was selected and conducted.

When comparing the two tables, it can be noticed that some newspapers, such as *The Economist*, were more balanced in both legitimation and delegitimation of the investments. Contrary, some had substantial variation between the two classes. *China Daily* and *South China Morning Post* articles, for instance, had much more legitimating units than delegitimizing. Mythopoesis occurred the least as a legitimation or delegitimation strategy, whereas authorization and rationalization were found the most.

When examining the general reporting style of the articles, it was noted that the tone of the content was very different in the Western newspapers and *South China Morning Post* than in *China Daily*. Broadly speaking, it can be stated that the reporting in the Western newspapers and *South China Morning Post* was much more narrative and analytical than in *China Daily*. Western newspapers focused more on bringing up sides from multiple different angles and analyzing the case from many perspectives. Certain newspapers, however, such as *New York Times*, are known for their in-depth and thorough special reporting. As some of those articles were part of the sample in this thesis, the difference in reporting style was remarkable when comparing *China Daily* to the rest of the newspapers. More critical elements were found in the Western newspapers and *SCMP* than in *China Daily*.

China Daily used much less delegitimizing strategies in their reporting than other newspapers. It was also harder to find direct criticizing of the investments from *China Daily* than in other newspapers. Delegitimizing elements had to often be read between the lines. For instance, it was reported that certain institutions or authors advise the Chinese companies to improve their sustainability practices in the developing African nations. This indicates that the sustainability is not on a desired level but does not directly criticize the Chinese companies or claim that issues occur. Western newspapers, on the other hand, were more straightforward when writing about the delegitimizing factors of the investments. This was the most remarkable difference found between the Western newspapers and the Chinese media in the sample articles.

As Van Leeuwen (2007) explains, the legitimation modules can occur simultaneously or separately when analyzing content. In this thesis as well, some modules overlapped with each other. Joutsenvirta & Vaara (2009) also state that this is common in critical discourse analysis. As an example, modules of authorization and rationalization occurred at the same time in certain cases. The combination of authorization and rationalization was the most commonly found discovery in this

context, although combinations of moral evaluation and authorization were found as well. The overlapping of modules will be demonstrated with an example in the subchapter 5.1: *Rationalization*.

Additionally, some topics appeared in the articles repeatedly that seemed to be a relevant part of the discussion of the legitimacy of Chinese investments, but due to their multidimensional nature could not be categorized to legitimize or delegitimize the investments. One of these topics is China's *no-strings-attached* policy tied to the investments. The policy is part of China's political position when investing abroad: in Africa's case, the stance is that China will not in any way interfere to the politics, governance or other public issues of the investments' host country. It can be argued that this gives China the opportunity to ignore for instance human rights issues or corruption in the host countries, as was explained in some articles. On the other hand, from China's perspective, the no-interference policy can be seen as positive public act: there is already an existing, slightly negative narrative regarding foreigners meddling to local politics in investment host countries. This connotation China is, at least on an overt level, avoiding with its non-interference principle.

Therefore, this specific issue could not be classified to either legitimizing or delegitimizing strategies. Additionally, the sample articles did not provide the grounds for categorizing the issue to any of the legitimation modules. Still, it was a recurring theme in the articles and clearly a vital part of the discussion and thus could not be completely disregarded from the analysis. An interesting finding regarding this was some articles explaining that China promotes the state-driven "China model" in the investment host countries, with a purpose of countering the liberal democratic capitalism the Western countries have been promoting. This would indicate that the no-interference-policy does not apply. Differing narrative was then identified in the sample articles in terms of China's political involvement in the host countries.

When analyzing the legitimation modules of Van Leeuwen (2007), additional thematic categories emerged from the articles. Those four themes were named *economic rationale*, *expert repeal*, *moral mirroring* and *personal experience*. They are patterns of legitimation that recurred in the articles and could be summarized under the four themes. They will be presented and discussed in subchapters 5.1-5.4.

5.1 Rationalization

Rationalization is a legitimation strategy which considers the end goals, objectives and purposes of the actions and mirrors them against these end results. It also refers to a commonly understood, natural order of truth. (Van Leeuwen 2007, 101.) Based on the articles read and analyzed for this study, it seems that the major form of rationalization

considering Chinese FDI in Africa are the economic effects for Africa. That is, the investments made by the Chinese companies are being (de)legitimated with the rational objective that they bring economic impacts to the continent. All of these legitimation concepts can be put under one theme, which can be called *economic rationale*. Multiple positive outcomes of the economic development have been presented, such as job creation, poverty reduction and income increases, infrastructural improvements etc.

The economic benefits are presented to be so-called “hard facts”, something that simply exist and something that should be pursued. Still, it is indicated that the Chinese investments have caused concerns despite their economic benefits. Nevertheless, in some articles, the investments were evaluated to be so beneficial that they were worth to pursue despite the possible issues tied to them. For instance, in one New York Times (2017) article, Djibouti’s minister of finance said the investments were crucial in terms of poverty reduction and infrastructure and thus worth the risks.

Chinese investments are said to have helped Africa diversify its investment sources, and Chinese are said to require lower profits for their investments than the Western companies. In one China Daily (2013) article, Chinese companies are even said to outdo the Western companies in the continent because of the economic benefits they bring. Additionally, China Daily (2016) points out that China has had an active role in offering global finance and development when such collaboration has been hard to achieve due to the weak global economy. The economic advantages are thus emphasized in many forms in the sample articles, and as the executive director of African Economic Research Consortium, professor Lemma Senbet underlines in China Daily article, “China has been a transformational partner from the standpoint of Africa’s development” (China Daily 2016).

China has said to have shifted the agenda in Africa from aid policies to mutual economic activities, such as trade and business. Generally, referring to the investments as *economic cooperation* was more typical to China Daily than other newspapers within the sample articles. It was also pointed out in China Daily that the cooperation is happening between two equal partners. This kind of attitude was clearly harder to find from the articles of the Western media. South China Morning Post (2017) writes that China and the US, two biggest rivals in Africa, have been cooperating to promote economic cooperation in the continent. The investments are thus legitimated with the notion that they enhance the general Sino-African relationship and cooperation. Investments are then stated to have a more abstract, broader-level impact than simply economic benefits. They are even said to be the most relevant drivers for the cooperation between the two:

”At present, Chinese aid to Africa makes up only a very little part of our cooperation. ...Investment cooperation has been the main avenue of China-Africa

cooperation,” Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Friday. (Xiaokun and Qi 2016, China Daily).

As can be drawn from this example, the commercial cooperation is considered a more relevant tool for improving the Sino-African relationship than the traditional Chinese aid. It is presented as an efficient and appropriate mean for relationship building between the two countries. The legitimating elements in the rationalization module were often presented to be mutual benefits for both parties, as is the case in this example. This will be discussed more in-depth later in this chapter.

Contrast to the presented economic advantages enclosed to the investments, some articles pointed out that the investments may not result in expected economic benefits. For instance, *The Economist* (2017) writes that China might just be replicating the same mistakes the Western investors did in 1970. During that time, some massive investment projects were started in Africa, but the profits never realized the expected level. China is also said to have made multiple mistakes while operating in Africa during the last ten years, for the continent is a challenging and demanding place as an investment target. This delegitimizes the investments from the economic perspective.

It is also mentioned repeatedly in *The Economist’s* articles that China’s economic influence is overblown in the discussion, delegitimizing the economic rationale of the investments as well. The economic rationalization is then countered, because the presented given truth that the Chinese companies bring economic benefits to the continent is challenged. Additionally, the quality and functionality of the Chinese investment projects are criticized in some of the articles, making the rational justifications for the investments less valid. All these remarks delegitimize the investments in the framework of rationality.

The negative outcomes of the actions are said to bring bad publicity, which is why, according to some articles, the Chinese companies should not operate the way they currently do. For instance, *South China Morning Post* (2017) writes that China has gained a questionable reputation for its presence in oil-rich but highly corrupted, authoritarian countries. This falls under the category of rationalization, for the actions are delegitimized based on the *materiality motivation* of CSR presented in Chapter 2. The objective of good reputation in the society should guide company’s actions. This is much more profitable for the company, and thus rational. (Blowfield & Murray 2011, 13.)

As was explained earlier, some categories of legitimation overlap with each other. Overlapping of discourses generally is common in critical discourse analysis (Joutsenvirta & Vaara 2009). While the statement of Professor Senbet presented earlier falls under the category of rationalization, it simultaneously fulfills the purpose of legitimation by expert authorization. Professor Senbet is presented as an expert, giving

an authority voice to her views on China's presence in Africa. The most common combination of categories was rationalization and authorization.

In an Economist (2015) article, the economic rationale is being challenged using both expert authority and rationalization. The article quotes professor Deborah Brautigam from School of Advanced Studies in Washington DC, saying that the investment flow from China to Africa is highly exaggerated in numbers. Additionally, many of the investment and development projects have slowly wilted away. The rationalization of the investments by economic benefits is being countered, and in this case delegitimized both in the framework of authorization and rationalization.

Rationalizing the investments from economic perspective are also challenged in a New York Times (2015). According to one of its articles, China's presence has caused restlessness in Nigeria, because Chinese companies are taking the local companies out of business, causing joblessness among other things. Chinese companies are also said to have brought their own materials from home for construction projects instead of purchasing the local ones. Manufacturing industry is said to not be able to compete with the Chinese in Nigeria, causing unemployment as well. This is even linked to the spreading of Boko Haram: the organization has been successfully recruiting young men in some of the poorest regions in Nigeria, thanks to poverty and joblessness. Negative economic effects are thereby tied to the investments, delegitimizing them. These examples also unfold the social issues that derive from the negative economic impacts. On the other hand, the investments are in many articles explained to bring social development as well.

In some articles, the investments are legitimated with the common win-win situation for both parties involved. The general cooperation of China and Africa deriving from economic activities was mentioned earlier as an example of this. Additionally, knowledge transfer benefiting both sides is presented: the Chinese businesses are welcomed from African perspective as well because African countries want to learn from China. The Chinese side also emphasizes this: China could help Africa with its experience on economic development. China Daily reports that the investments would bring along know-how on sustainable business practices. The companies could replicate their domestic efforts in increasing environmental protection, global citizenship, and greener business models. For instance, technology that enables more environmentally friendly investments on transportation, water, healthcare and energy could be integrated to Africa's infrastructure with the Chinese businesses. Knowledge transfer is hence another aspect for legitimating the investments by rationality. An example of the win-win scenario of the investments for both Africa and China is also that Africa has a high demand for infrastructure and industrial development, which China can meet.

A common and multifaceted legitimation strategy found in the articles was comparing China's economic presence in Africa to that of Western companies'. As an

example, South China Morning Post uses rationalization in countering the accusations of China following the colonializing patterns of the Western companies. China is said to have a more comprehensive development agenda in Africa than the Western countries. The counsellor to the Djibouti's president is quoted as the following:

"You cannot trade without infrastructure," Douale said yesterday.

"The European countries didn't want to help the African countries develop their infrastructures and their economies, only the Chinese did," he added. (Zhou 2017, South China Morning Post).

The Chinese investments are thus legitimated with the rationale that they have a more sustainable and holistic economic development model than their Western counterparts: they were ready to participate in economic development along with the investments, unlike the Europeans. Another comparison was in South China Morning Post article, which quoted the chairman of the Djibouti Ports and Free Zone Authority. According to him, the accusation of neo-colonization by the Chinese companies are "simplistic and false". They have a more aggressive model of operations than the Western companies, but the chairman argues they are pay it back with the strong response to the need of infrastructure improvement in the continent. The statement implies that the Western companies are not providing infrastructure improvements to Africa, only Chinese are.

The presented economic benefits are stated in the articles as facts, as something that simply exist, which goes in line with the definition of rationalization as a form of legitimation. For instance, it has been pointed out as a given truth, without questioning, that if Africa as a continent seizes the opportunity, Chinese companies will bring multiple benefits to the region. It creates a rhetoric sense that the objective of Chinese companies should not be questioned; as long as the African continent needs Chinese FDI inflow the actions are rationalized and thus legit.

5.2 Authorization

Authorization legitimates actions by someone's or something's validation. That is, a question of 'why' is answered by someone, or something, saying so. The legitimation can be based on personal or impersonal authority, expert authority, role model authority, authority or tradition or authority of conformity. (Van Leeuwen 2007, 94.)

The impersonal authorization justifies actions not based on the fact that "Person X" says to do so, but because the rules, laws and other impersonal institutions guides to do so. (Van Leeuwen 2007, 96.) A common theme derived from the selected articles is the

economic aspects the Chinese investments bring along to Africa. Drawing from the definition of impersonal authority, economy can be considered one. It is indisputably a powerful institution that has impacts on multiple dimensions in the society. Thus, economy can be used as an authority that is strong enough to be referred in discursive legitimation, as was perceived in the articles analyzed for this study. Economy among other institutions has an authoritative status and has hence powerful rhetoric implications when used in discursive legitimation. Accordingly, economic benefits brought by the Chinese companies are not only legitimated based on rationalization but also on authorization in the respective articles.

Furthermore, rules, norms, laws and guidelines represent impersonal authorization (Van Leeuwen 2007, 96). This class of impersonal authority is used in the articles in the context of China following international rules and guidelines when investing. For instance, in one of the articles it was written that Chinese investments might have even more financial transparency than European or North American investments. Chinese companies are stated to obey global reporting guidelines, which gives legitimacy for the investments based on impersonal authorization. However, this statement was countered in the analyzed articles by stating that China invests in corrupted countries (much more than Western countries do), thus feeding the lack of transparency.

Expert authority was much used as a legitimation strategy both for and against the Chinese FDI in Africa in the articles. Examples of this are quoting China's Ministry of Commerce spokesman Shen Danyang, China's president Xi Jinping, former China's Vice Foreign Minister Zhai Jun, Uganda's ambassador to China, Crispus Kiyonga, or Ethiopian president Mulatu Teshome. For instance, Teshome emphasises the importance of China's financial inflow to Africa from development perspective. According to him, old colonial manners are changing, and China shifted the international aid agenda from humanitarian aid to economic cooperation:

"The old colonial masters, or the Western powers, shaped international aid architecture in the 1980s and 1990s, which was very much a humanitarian aid agenda. The Chinese have changed it to one that is based on economic interdependence through trade and investment," he said. (Moody & Chao 2014, China Daily).

Moreover, different academic experts, such as researchers and scholars, are referred. Some experts are reported to note the common claims in the media made against Chinese companies to be incorrect, denying the unsustainable actions conducted by the Chinese companies in Africa. This is for instance presented to be the view of an American researcher, Professor Deborah Brautigam. According to her, the Western

media falsifies the truth, and most of the news reporting coming from China regarding the sustainability questions are accurate:

"In fact, most of the Chinese media reporting has been quite accurate," she said. "There was only one piece by the Chinese media I remember that was not true." (Yue 2015, China Daily).

The investments in this example are legitimated by using an expert authority to counter the accusations of the sustainability neglects in the Western newspapers. An interesting remark is that the opinions of Prof. Brautigam regarding the accuracy of the reporting of Chinese media were presented in China Daily, the widest circulation English-language newspaper owned by the Communist Party of China. The same article refers to a professor of Chapman University in California and Renmin University in China, Wenshan Jia, saying that in the Western media, there can often be found ideological biases towards anything that China does globally. Additionally, according to him, China has not invested adequately on media in Africa to provide more wholesome reporting, i.e. China's side of the story is not being fully reported.

On the other hand, there was also expert authority reference to American narrative on the phenomenon in Washington Post (2015). The American reporting was claimed to be one-sided and incomplete. Hence, expert authority references were found both in Western and Chinese media claiming that the reporting of China's presence in Africa is inadequate. Based on the sample articles, it cannot be argued that only the Chinese media claims the Western reporting to be inadequate. However, the accuracy of Chinese reporting was not defended in any Western articles, only in China Daily.

South China Morning Post (2017) interviews director of China Institute of Bucknell University, Zhiquan Zhu, as an expert figure. According to him, public opinion polls are indicating that China is seen in a positive light in Africa. He also underlines that China has improved its business practices:

"In fact, over the past decade, China has been addressing some of the legitimate concerns raised by some Africans, such as protecting the environment and creating jobs locally," he said. "China's investment in Africa has become more sophisticated now." (Jiangtao 2017, South China Morning Post).

Hence, what can be interpreted from his message is that issues possibly have occurred, but China has taken a step forward to improve the situation. As in the examples above, a recurring discursive cycle can be found in many of the articles analyzed: the articles first note that issues of CSR and sustainability have emerged, as well as criticism for the investments. Then, an expert authority is referred to counter

those remarks. As a further example, a South China Morning Post (2017) article presents that the Chinese projects have received criticism from the West. Thereafter, a Chinese diplomat is referred repealing such accusations. After that, the article explains how China is also said to have helped in efforts to improve public health facilities, such as building hospitals and other infrastructure required. The arguments of poor business practices are thus countered directly in the sample articles, with reference often to an expert authority denying the accusations. This appeared theme is named *expert repeal*, referring to the voice of the experts in repealing the claims of unsustainable business practices.

Still, expert authority appears in the articles also when discussing the need for more sustainable business practices. Some of the China Daily articles express that although Chinese companies are doing well in terms of African economic development, more attention to corporate social responsibility would be desirable, according to the experts. This could also benefit the Chinese businesses too as they enhance the public image of the businesses and attract investors and ultimately improve the profitability.

Areas of improvement mentioned in articles are for instance attention to labor standards, transparency, global governance, youth employment, and other social issues in general. This, in its essence, does not legitimize or delegitimize Chinese investments in Africa, but underlines that change in business practices would be highly encouraged. On the other hand, one of the articles explaining the need for CSR improvement also expressed that the discussion should nevertheless not be taken as far as talking about “neo-colonialism”:

”Mohammed Mwamadzingo, senior economist and desk officer for Africa, ILO Bureau for Workers Activities, said "China's neo-colonialism in Africa" is a false accusation, and inconsistent with Chinese tradition and culture. "Such an accusation does not reflect the reality of friendly, equal-footed and mutually beneficial cooperation," he said.” (Dan 2014, China Daily).

Thus, although issues of CSR are identified and said to be in place, an expert authority says neo-colonialism to be an overstatement. In addition, the understanding that the relationship is equal and mutual is expressed in the same extract, which creates and interesting contradiction. Delegitimizing the investments using expert authority was also common in the sample articles, and in fact term “neo-colonialism” occurred often in this context. As an example, former governor of Nigerian central bank refers to the investments as “a new form of imperialism” in The Economist (2015).

Different studies, think tanks and other intellectual institutions are referred as expert authority as well in the articles. They fall under the category of expert authorization, because they offer an answer to the ‘why’ question by simply being referred to. No

further explanation or clarification is needed, for the studies etc. are a strong enough authority as such to prove the validity of the issue. (Van Leeuwen 2007, 95.) As an example, a Chinese study conducted by Professor Liu Qinghai in Zhejiang Normal University is referred to indicate that Chinese companies operating in Africa have made substantial progress in terms of responsibility.

"A recent survey conducted by Chinese researchers found that Chinese private enterprises in Africa, though not fully motivated of fulfilling corporate social responsibility, have made tremendous progress, and to some extent beating their Western counterparts." (China Daily 2013).

According to the study, most of the Chinese companies in Africa for instance pay salary above the legal minimum wage. They are also said to perform better than the Western companies. The study functions as a proper validating reference to legitimate the investments. The conclusion of the study drawn by Professor Liu is that although the Chinese enterprises do not have the best reputation in the continent, they do not have the worst possible stigma attached to them either. The professor's voice is being used as an additional expert authority to validate the case.

South China Morning Post (2017) writes that while the Chinese investments have an enormous economic impact on the African continent, fears and worries about China's presence do occur. For instance, the article refers to a survey conducted by McKinsey & Company, which found that Chinese companies are more likely to break labor regulations than other foreign companies operating in the continent. Other parties, such as human rights groups, have pointed out the insufficient working conditions of the employees of Chinese businesses. These all fulfill the criteria of expert authority: the McKinsey & Company report can be considered the word of an institution conducting credible research, whereas the comments regarding the working conditions come from a direction of organizations specialized in human rights.

Another example of referring to studies as expert authority is from Washington Post (2015) article discussing certain common topics of responsibility in the China-Africa conversation. The article quotes for instance the studies of Brookings Institution and Extractive Industries Transparency Institute (EITI) to indicate that China is like the Western companies in its investment patterns: it is neither less transparent nor is it investing more to natural resources. This reveals the common narrative in the media that China is only looking after Africa's natural resources. Additionally, as can be seen from some of the previous examples, China's behavior is often being evaluated against that of the Western companies. This will be discussed more in the section *moral evaluation*.

5.3 Mythopoesis

Mythopoesis is a legitimation category that legitimizes or delegitimizes actions based on the power of storytelling. Symbolic elements are often included to mythopoesis. The outcomes of the narratives define whether the action is legit or not. (Van Leeuwen 2007.) As an example, China Daily writes about China's President Xi Jinping's letter to the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Summit:

“Xi sent a congratulatory letter to the meeting on Friday, saying that in the past six months, China and Africa have worked together to overcome the negative effects of the sluggish world economy and that they have made tangible achievements in implementing the agreements at the summit.” (Xiaokun and Qi 2016, China Daily).

In this extract, the positive achievements of the economic cooperation are highlighted, even sensationalized, in a rhetoric framework that has story-like elements. The rhetoric story starts from China and Africa having worked together for the past six months, and eventually managing to survive the weak global economy's impacts. Although short in nature and not necessarily meant to create a story, these types of “mini stories” embed a lot of meaning and are persuasive strategies in building a certain kind of impression of the events or a phenomenon. Like in this case, China's presence in Africa is legitimated by telling about the positive achievements the cooperation of the two has brought.

Mythopoesis was commonly used in the articles in meta context; it has been expressed that stories and tales occur for and against Chinese investments in Africa, and whether those stories are true or not, they do reveal that a certain attitude towards the investments exist. In other words, only the existence of such stories exemplify that the presence of Chinese companies creates controversy and differing opinions. Such an example can be drawn from The Economist (2015) article:

“Across Africa, radio call-in programmes are buzzing with tales of Africans, usually men, bemoaning the loss of their spouses and partners to rich Chinese men. “He looks short and ugly like a pygmy but I guess he has money,” complained one lovelorn man on a recent Kenyan show. True or imagined, such stories say much about the perceived economic power of Chinese businessmen in Africa, and of the growing backlash against them.” (The Economist 2015)

This extract uses mythopoesis both to create a story-like rhetoric of the issue, but also to highlight that even the existence of such stories proves that there are attitudes towards China's presence in the continent. The existence of the vivid narrative of

China's presence in Africa was mentioned in the articles many times in multiple contexts, such as regarding political involvement. Oftentimes, the narrative was said to have a negative connotation to it among locals.

The Economist generally uses a lot of mythopoesis in its reporting of China's presence in Africa. To describe the unfulfilled promises of economic development in Uganda that was supposed to follow the investments, the newspaper uses the following mythopoetic rhetoric:

“On the western edge of Lake Victoria in Uganda, a hundred miles south of Kampala and an hour or so’s drive up a progressively narrower dirt track, is the site of what was meant to be one of the biggest Chinese commercial investments in Africa. A rust-flecked sign marks the entrance to “Sseesamirembe City”, part of the “Lake Victoria Free Trade Zone”. It does not mark much. Teenage boys wheel bicycles laden with water containers past mud huts and scrubby matoke (banana) fields.” (The Economist 2015).

Using such storytelling is a powerful tool to highlight the severity and even the dramatic elements of the issue. As Van Leeuwen (2007) explains, mythopoesis often offers a certain outcome for the stories. This outcome determines whether the action is legit or not. In this case, the investments were once much hyped, but they later dried out. This outcome then delegitimizes the investments.

Most of the mythopoesis found in the articles was build on a story of a character: commonly, the story of a local worker or a Chinese migrant worker is being narrated around the case of China's presence in Africa. An example of this is an extract from the New York Times (2017):

“In Beijing, where he worked before coming here, Teng lived under the gray blanket of coal-generated pollution that hangs over much of eastern China. Now he is working for the future — his own and his country’s — under an endless African sky of cobalt blue. “I never imagined,” he says, “I would end up halfway around the world.” (Larmer 2017, New York Times).

The personal stories represent something bigger in the articles: they represent the implications of the investments from a standpoint of an individual. This emerged theme is named *personal experience*. It makes an abstract phenomenon more identifiable and thus rhetorically more appealing. The stories personate the case: they humanize it and make it more relatable, thus legitimating the investments. Interestingly, no delegitimizing personal stories were found from the sample articles.

5.4 Moral evaluation

In moral evaluation, actions are mirrored against a moral framework and legitimized or delegitimized based on how well they comply with that framework. As became clear in the sample articles, when evaluating the morality of the actions, there needs to be a framework to evaluate the actions against. Simply stating that something is wrong is not considered moral evaluation: it needs to be justified based on a mutual understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Comparing the actions to some moral framework is also moral evaluation. (Van Leeuwen 2007.) South China Morning Post (2017) presents a viewpoint that what China does in Africa is something others should seek to achieve as well, indicating that morally speaking the Chinese way is the right way to do things:

“We hope that more countries will make earnest efforts to help Africa with infrastructure development as China does, and work with China to help Africa realise independent and sustainable growth,” Lin said in 2015.” (Jiangtao 2017, South China Morning Post).

Lin Songtian is a Chinese top diplomat working at China’s foreign ministry, with African affairs as a specialty. As his quote indicates, China is seen as an example in sustainable practices, making it morally more competent than the rest. The same article explains that China’s fight against Ebola in Africa has been globally celebrated.

The moral potential of Chinese investments is also often mirrored against the framework of morality of the Western companies. For instance, Washington Post (2017) concludes that the Chinese companies are not less environmentally ignorant than the Western companies, legitimating the investments from the standpoint that morally speaking they are not worse off than the Western companies. The context of Western companies versus Chinese companies in terms of sustainability appears multiple times in the articles analyzed, highlighting the moral battle of the two.

The moral framework of comparing the two also appears in one of The Guardian’s (2015) articles too, legitimizing the investments. In Van Leeuwen’s legitimation framework, it overlaps with using expert authority, because China’s foreign minister Wang Yi is being quoted:

“In China’s exchanges and cooperation with Africa, we want to see mutual benefit and win-win results. I want to make clear one point, that is, China will never follow the track of western colonists and all cooperation with Africa will never come at the expense of the ecology, environment or long-term interests of Africa.” (Smith, 2015, The Guardian).

He is then countering the accusations that China is following the footsteps of colonializing Western countries in the continent, again comparing the moral patterns of the two. Also, legitimation of the investments is strengthened with the promise that the cooperation will be sustainable. According to The Guardian, such clear public comparisons are rare, although the debate over the sustainability of the two players has been vivid. However, as we have seen from the examples presented previously, some level of comparison can be drawn from the article sample collection.

In the same The Guardian (2015) article, the discussion of moral debate between China and the West continues with a case of classified US government's diplomatic cable that leaked out to public:

“Only in a diplomatic cable, published via WikiLeaks in 2010 and not intended for public consumption, did a US official admit: “China is a very aggressive and pernicious economic competitor with no morals. China is not in Africa for altruistic reasons. China is in Africa for China primarily.” (Smith 2015, The Guardian).

Additionally, comparing them to one another indicates that one of them is considered morally more competent than the other. Another example of this is from the Economist (2015) article. It argues that it seems that the Chinese companies in the continent are currently struggling with the same issues as the Western companies are known to have dealt with, mirroring once again the moral competency of the two. The theme of comparing the actions to the practice of Western companies can be named *moral mirroring*.

A theme derived from China Daily articles was to present the sustainability issues in a context that someone or some institution encourages the Chinese companies to improve their sustainability practices. While it can be interpreted between the lines from this message that sustainability and responsibility issues occur, it was rarely, if ever, stated directly in China Daily articles. Still, the form of the message indicates that those issues occur, which delegitimizes the investments from the perspective of sustainability. This, however, required that the text indicated the beginning position of the investments.

As an example, if it said in the article that the Chinese companies should abide by labor laws, this does not explain the beginning position enough to make a call whether it legitimates or delegitimizes the investments. However, if it was written that the companies should *improve* their sustainability practices, this was judged as delegitimizing the investments: the word “improve” refers that something has been wrong previously, and it needs to be corrected. Additionally, stating that the Chinese companies should do something *more*, such as hire more local workers, also indicates that the practices are not sustainable enough, and need to be improved. This is moral

evaluation, because it reveals a specific moral framework: the inadequate business practices are compared to a moral understanding of what is sustainable enough and what is not.

In one of the articles, the sustainability issues are explained with the fact that the economic cooperation has been so rapid that measures to improve the situation have not quite had the chance to catch up. Majority of the articles focused on presenting the magnitude, significance and complexity of the Chinese investments, creating the impression that while sustainability issues have emerged as well, there is a relevant explanation to them. When being interviewed by China Daily, Zhang Hongming, an African studies researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, put the matter as following:

"Moreover, Sino-Africa cooperation has developed so fast that it greatly exceeded the expectation of both sides and followup measures in some areas lag behind, Zhang said.

"For example, some Chinese companies didn't fully perform their corporate social responsibility when making investments in Africa. Also, the laws and regulations in African countries are not sound enough and might risk some business interests," he added." (Jingxi & Yunbi 2014, China Daily).

This type of moral legitimation was found in multiple China Daily articles. It is expressed that although issues of sustainability occur, there is a valid excuse for them, and they are even reasoned. Another example of this regards the salaries of the workers hired by Chinese companies, which are said to be low, but still higher than the host countries' lawfully required minimum law. Thus, it is expressed that there are certain issues, but there is an explanation to either justify or relieve them.

An interesting finding in one China Daily (2013) article was the reporting of China's Vice Foreign Minister Zhai Jun had pointing out that the Chinese government has always spoke for the Chinese companies' contribution to the local development of the investment host countries. This delivers a message that even if there was a problem with the social responsibility of the businesses operating in Africa, the Chinese government is a strong advocate for responsible business. While this not directly legitimate or delegitimize China's investments, it shows the involvement and role of China's government in business actions, and eventually the fact that the Chinese government and politics cannot be excluded from the discussion of the sustainability of Chinese investments in Africa.

6 CONCLUSIONS

In this study, different legitimation strategies were examined regarding the discussion around the sustainability of Chinese investments in Sub-Saharan Africa. With the research questions, answers were sought to what legitimation strategies identified by Van Leeuwen (2007) were used in the analyzed sample articles. Additionally, it was researched whether there was a difference in legitimation strategies considering the Western articles and Chinese articles. The research questions were the following:

1. *What legitimation strategies are used in newspaper articles published between the years 2013-2018 to (de)legitimize the Chinese investments in Sub-Saharan Africa?*
2. *How does the (de)legitimation differ in the articles between Chinese newspapers and Westerns newspapers?*

To answer the research questions, altogether 31 articles were read and analyzed from six different well-known newspapers: China Daily, South China Morning Post, Washington Post, New York Times, The Economist and The Guardian. China Daily and South China Morning were chosen to represent the Chinese media, and the rest represented the Western media. The articles were carefully read and analyzed, and the content was projected against the legitimation framework of Van Leeuwen (2007). In his model, the legitimation strategies can be divided into four categories: *rationalization, authorization, moral evaluation and mythopoesis*.

The categorization serves as a ground for legitimation in a discursive analysis: the arguments made against or for legitimation can be broke down into different modules. Each of these modules can take place simultaneously or separately. (Van Leeuwen 2007.) The findings of the study supported the conclusion that the discourse itself largely shapes our understanding of sustainability. It produces meanings and strengthens the already existing structures around the concept. Because discourse creates social meanings, discussions about sustainability and corporate social responsibility are highly involved in creating the understanding of what the concepts constitute of. The legitimation strategies showed that what is considered sustainable and what is not is largely dependent on the ongoing discourse.

The sample articles offered a colorful overview of China's presence in Africa. A difference in general reporting style was found between China Daily and the Western newspapers and SCMP. The Western newspapers and SCMP were much more analytical in their reporting than China Daily, which proved to be offering more one-sided reporting. Based on this, it can be concluded that China Daily criticized the investments less from the perspective of CSR. However, the Western newspapers and

SCMP did not have significantly more criticizing elements: what was notable was that they presented the phenomenon in a more multidimensional light.

The Chinese papers, China Daily and South China Morning Post used more rationalization and authorization as legitimizing strategies than the Western papers. The explanation in China Daily's case can be found in the nature of its reporting. The reporting is very straightforward and does not use much for instance elements of storytelling. Rationalization and authorization thus suit well in its reporting as rhetoric tools. China Daily also used much less delegitimizing elements in their reporting than other newspapers. Hence, it cannot be argued that the articles representing *Chinese media* in this study were more positive towards the investments than the Western media. The articles from SCMP offered various viewpoints and diverse analyzes regarding the case, and the reporting was more balanced than in China Daily. As was explained in Chapter 4.3 *The procedure: data collection and analysis*, China Daily is a newspaper owned by the Communist Party of China and China's State Council Information Office. SCMP, on the other hand, is privately owned. This can certainly be argued to have an impact on the content of the papers. Thus, in conclusion, there was diversity in (de)legitimation in the reporting within the Chinese media, and thus it cannot be concluded that the Chinese media as a whole had a differing perspective to the case.

China's investments in Africa were often pictured as a win-win situation for both parties. They also represented cooperation between the two. The narrative seems to have shifted from China's aid efforts to mutually beneficial economic cooperation. This, as such, is positive development, since it does no longer picture Africa as a passive receiver of foreign aid that lacks the capability to develop its own vibrant economy. From the African side, the investments seemed very welcome as well in the sample articles, despite the understanding that they carry certain risks. In the sample articles, the view of *Sino-skeptic* school underlining the business to happening between two unequal partners (Adem 2010, 335-336) was then challenged in the sample articles.

The most common theme that derived from the legitimation strategies was *economic rationale*. This means that the investments are legitimized by referring to economic benefits the investments bring to developing African nations, such as job creation, poverty reduction and infrastructure improvements. These remarks represent the *Sino-optimistic* view (Adem 2010, 335-336) presented in Chapter 3. The economic rationale was often presented as a fact: its importance seemed to be mutually understood and accepted and needed no further clarification or justification. This created an impression that the economic benefits are a heavy argument for the investments, even beside the concept sustainability. Despite the vivid discussion of the sustainability issues, the investments are still something to pursue due to the economic advantages. The economic rationale was justified both by rationalization and impersonal authority in Van Leeuwen's (2007) framework.

However, the articles provided grounds to draw a conclusion that the economic rationale is not only used when discussing the positive economic impacts. In the sample articles, versatile views contradicting the economic advantages appeared as well. For instance, it was claimed that the economic benefits of the investments are exaggerated in the discussion. A significant part of the investments has faded away with time, not bringing the promised prosperity to the continent. Additionally, the Chinese companies have said to have taken the locals out of business, thus causing unemployment which is linked to various social issues. This revealed the economic rationale's multidimensionality in terms of sustainability: the investments can also be judged unsustainable from the economic perspective and thus not beneficial. Economic rationale can then be used to both legitimize and delegitimize the investments.

Some articles wrote that China has gained a questionable reputation from its bad business practices in China. In the context of rationality, this goes in line with the theory of Blowfield and Murray (2011) regarding objectives for CSR. Perceptions and reputation of a company should guide its actions towards more sustainable business practices. Drawing from this, the bad reputation earned by the Chinese companies decreases the rationality of the investments. Ultimately, the bad reputation can lead to decreased profit. This finding thus ties together the concepts of rationality and CSR motivation, and based on this it can be concluded that following sustainable business practices is rational and makes the investments more legit.

Using authorization to legitimize the investments was slightly more common in Chinese media than in Western media. Contrary, Western media used authorization more to delegitimize the investments. The most common authoritative figures found from the sample articles were *expert authority* and *impersonal authority*. These included for instance different experts, authoritative governmental figures, expert institutions (such as the economy, laws or think tanks), and academic studies. From the authorization category, an interesting discursive cycle was found to repeat in sample articles: first, it is mentioned that criticism toward China's sustainability practices in Africa occur. Then, those claims are repealed using the voice an expert authority.

This finding indicates that the discussion itself is a relevant part of the phenomenon that needs to be addressed. The discussion has a significant enough role to be (de)legitimated as such. Instead of using the expert authority to (de)legitimize the investments directly, the articles often focused on tackling the discussion around it. Expertise was then used to tackle the claims of unsustainable practices. This theme was named *expert repeal*. The finding illustrates the substance of discursive perspective in sustainability: it reveals how the discourses participate in shaping the perception of the concept and ultimately how the practices are being formed and strengthened by the discourses (Paltridge 2012).

In *moral evaluation* category, the most crucial conclusion was that the Western companies were often used as a comparison tool for moral framework. This theme was named *moral mirroring*. The actions of the Chinese companies in Africa were evaluated based on how they projected against the actions of the Western companies. The outcome of that comparison judged them to be either morally competent or incompetent. This finding was notable in both Western and Chinese media. In this context, it gives an impression that both the Western media and Chinese media considers the Western companies to be more morally capable, something to be pursued. It can be a consequence of the Western influence: Western values, norms and perceptions, are so widely spread throughout the history (for instance with colonialism in Africa), that today they are given a lot of weight, even in the discussion of sustainable business practices. The Western companies are also possibly a natural comparison, since there is an economic competition between China and the West in Africa. More broadly, there is a fierce competition in the stage of global economy between China and the United States, which is why comparison of these two appears often in the media.

In the category of *mythopoesis*, it was discovered that the narrative focused much around individuals and their personal stories around the phenomenon. This finding was thematically categorized under the name *personal experience*. The experiences of individuals made the phenomenon more personally approachable, as the stories humanized the implications of investments. Additionally, as Van Leeuwen (2007) defines mythopoesis, the stories have an outcome which defines how legit an action is. In China Daily, a story-like rhetoric was sometimes used to sensationalize the investments with a positive outcome. Contrary, in Western newspapers, certain saga-like stories were told to delegitimize the investments with a negative outcome of the stories.

These four themes, economic rationale, expert denial, moral mirroring and personal experience contextualize legitimation in the discourse of sustainability. Ultimately, they tied the concept of sustainability to the construction of reality and its perceptions. They all embedded elements which can argue to be generalized in the discussions regarding investments that are socially challenged based on their sustainability. First of all, legitimizing or delegitimizing the investments based on different economic factors is a tool that has both weight and broad significance: most of the FDIs include some kind of implications to the economy, and those implications have significant consequences to the host country. The economic implications are then aligned with the sustainability issues around the discussion, highlighting for instance the economic advantages the investments bring in an attempt to shift the focus to the positive effects of the investments. The economy is a powerful authoritative institution which can be assumed to have a notable meaning in the investment sustainability debates.

Expert repeal can be used as an instrument to counter the negative claims regarding the sustainability of the investments referring to expert authority. Since the experts are trusted to be able to assess the situation competently, it is an effective tool in creating impressions on the state of the investments and convinces the discussion to move to desirable direction. It underlines how the power structures are represented in the media and how the media shapes these structures (Fairclough 1995, 5), as was discussed in Chapter 4.2 The experts have the power to shift the discussion to certain direction, thus constructing and shaping the worldview, ideologies and perceptions of the public. This, subsequently, can be used to reproduce power. It can then be argued that due to its effectiveness this discourse cycle appears more commonly in legitimation discourses regarding sustainability.

In moral mirroring, some case or party is considered a measurement tool against which the actions are compared. It is an efficient tool in (de)legitimizing the investments: the comparison target is known enough for its practices to function as a comparison. This can be assumed to happen in legitimation discourses more generally, and specifically in sustainability discourses: if there is discourse happening, there is most likely many sides that contribute to the discourse. There is then most likely action involved from those sides. That action can then be evaluated and compared morally.

Finally, personal experience personalizes the stories of the investments' implications. To appeal for the reader audience's emotions, personalizing and humanizing the stories is a competent tool to shape the perceptions to one direction or another. It happens in personal relationships and in more broad discourses; it even functions as an effective tool in marketing. It can thus be argued that using personal experience occurs in sustainability discourses more generally.

All these four categories emerged from the articles can then be argued to apply in other sustainability debates as well. They are broad categories and include lots of different nuances and aspects. A suggestion for future research could be to study the legitimation within one of these categories individually by applying it to some specific sustainability case. It would be interesting to analyze more specifically how the discourse is shaped within just one of the categories emerged from this study.

The study revealed the complex nature of the concepts in discourses. For instance, discussing "China in Africa" as one phenomenon in Africa proved to be challenging in the sample articles. The presence of Chinese in Sub-Saharan Africa is so diverse that it can be difficult, if not impossible, to put it under one concept. There are state-owned companies, private multinationals, private SMEs etc. However, the discourse generally revolves around that one broad concept, "China in Africa". Perhaps the discourse itself needs to shift from examining one broad phenomenon to discussing the subcategories as individual phenomena.

When it comes to managerial implications of this thesis, the study reminded that knowledge is largely based on the constructive processes of reality. Thus, when discussing the state of China's sustainability in developing African countries, it needs to be remembered that multiple truths and realities exist, and media has a remarkable role in shaping those realities by producing discourse. For instance, there seemed to be no consensus in the newspapers on to what extent do the Chinese need to improve their sustainability in their business practices. The consensus was not in some cases found even within the same media houses. This conclusion helps understand the complex nature of sustainability: the concepts are largely based on the already existing constructions of values and worldviews, and the discussion produced around it shifts the perception of the concepts to one direction or another.

China, for instance, can be classified as a developing country itself. The understanding of sustainability can be perceived very differently from one continent to another. Cultural factors, level of development, ethical ideologies and other location-specific factors affect the perceptions of concepts. Thus, the practices do not always transfer properly from one location to another in terms of sustainability, which can cause dissatisfaction, unease, and even judgment of the investments.

Thus, in order to validate their investments, companies and their executives need to be aware of the various discourses defining sustainability. Without this knowledge, the reputation of the business can suffer even if the company aspires to follow theoretical sustainability guidelines. The theoretical objectives are not always enough, if the discourses around the investments do not align with those objectives. An investment can be condemned unsustainable if the business practices are not in line with the sustainability concepts constructed in public discussion. Finally, by analyzing the common legitimation strategies used to validate the investments enables a more objective overview of the host country's side of the story. In this case, the constructed perceptions of sustainability can be assessed from the perspective of Sub-Saharan Africa. This way, a more comprehensive understanding of the sustainability of the investments can be achieved. There is always more than one side to the story, and revealing the meaning-making processes behind those stories allows solutions that considers better the outlook of all parties involved. Ultimately, this understanding can help integrating the developing Sub-Saharan countries to the world economy more efficiently, and, essentially, more sustainably.

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APPENDIX

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