



# KANDIDATUPPSATS



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## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explain why China put so much emphasizes on the Taiwan issue in their relations with the U.S. This will be explored by looking at what elements are affecting the commitment to the Taiwan question in Sino-American relations and how this can be explained by using ontological terms such as “rooted identity” and “significant others”. Two key elements has been identified to analyze this; victimization and legitimacy. To evaluate the subject two research questions will be used; how can legitimacy and victimization explain China’s commitment to the Taiwan question when it comes to Sino-American relations? What is the connection between legitimacy, victimization and the PRC’s rooted identity? Policy-statement and official documents will be used to sheed light on the Taiwan-questions affects on Sino-American relations from an ontological security theory perspective. The thesis will argue that the PRC’s early history has great effects on their commitment to this issue and that legitimacy and victimization is affecting China’s commitment to Taiwan to the extent that it cannot accept an independent Taiwan. Hence this issue will continue to have great impact on China’s foreign relations, especially with the U.S. However, despite strong rhetoric’s China does not necessarily need to achieve unification with Taiwan in the near future.

Key words; The Taiwan Question, Sino-American Relations, Ontological security, Rooted Identity, Key elements

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

The aim of this thesis is to shed light on the Taiwan question and explains why it is so important in China's foreign policy. The reader should get an understanding of what elements within China's identity is affecting their policy formation and relations with significant others. The aim is to explain how ontological security can affect policy formation in light of this issue.

The topic in this thesis is an important topic for several reasons. First and foremost, China is becoming more and more important player in the international arena, thus it is important to find out what factors influence their foreign policy. Secondly ontological security theory is a new interesting theory that can give new perspective on international politics and the reason why states acts the way they do and offer alternative explanations of policy implementation, which (in the authors opinion) is needed within the discipline. No matter your own opinion it is always important to see problems from another perspective, this way new angels of approaches will be visible and new interpretations, from other theoretical disciplines can be developed.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2 Problem formulations:

The idea of this thesis is to look at China and try to explain why they consider Taiwan as such an important question and how this affects their relation with the U.S. Since China puts a lot of weight on the importance of history I will look at historical factors to explain the reason for their foreign policy demands regarding Taiwan. China's relation with the U.S will be assessed by looking at the effects of the Taiwan issue on their relations.

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<sup>1</sup> This can be exemplified by the development of neo-realism after a new way of theoretical perspective surged after the end of the cold war, in which new elements were introduced to explain the changing environment in international politics. This is not to say the theories aren't sufficiently developed, rather it has more to do with my opinion that EVERYTHING can always be improved and if certain things are taken for granted you can easily get comfortable and not look at areas of improvement.

The U.S offer an interesting contrast since it is the major power of the world today and its influence is only threatened by a potentially increasingly stronger China within the foreseeable future. The relation between China and the U.S is of outmost importance for the security of the future in the world. Thus it is important to find out what is affecting their relations. It is also suitable as a comparison given the theoretical framework of the thesis. As can be seen from the theoretical chapter, relations and the kind of structures affecting identity within interaction between parties is of central importance for ontological security theory. When using this perspective to evaluate and demonstrate the importance of the Taiwan question when conducting foreign policy in the minds of the Chinese, what better example is there than the U.S, who not only have had a close historical relation to Taiwan, but is also the power that China still can't compete with, when it comes to influence in world politics, military strength and even to some extent economic development. Thus, during the analysis The U.S as a significant other<sup>2</sup> to China will be evaluated. Two key elements will be used for this evaluation; victimization and legitimacy.

The main research question will be

**How can legitimacy and victimization explain China's commitment to the Taiwan question when it comes to Sino-American relations?**

These elements have been established by looking at the history of the CCP (Chinese communist Party) to see how the early experience has shaped the minds of this party and created rooted elements that guides their foreign policy even today. Thus to answer the first research question, the thesis must first describe how the elements was developed from the beginning. Thus the sub-research question that will be answered by evaluating the century of humiliation will be;

**What is the connection between legitimacy, victimization and the PRC's rooted identity?**

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<sup>2</sup> Key Concept within Ontological security theory, se Key Concept for explanation.

## 1.4 Delimitations

This thesis is focusing on the Chinese perspective of the Taiwan issue to evaluate the Sino-American relations. This means that the American perspective has not been discussed. The U.S view on the Taiwan issue and their commitment to Taiwan is out of the scope of this thesis. An interesting contrast to this thesis would have been to see whether or not there are any elements within U.S foreign policy that is rooted in their identity and is affecting their link to Taiwan. One obvious such link is the economic system of Taiwan in contrast to China, a more recent link might be Human rights or democracy. The author encourages further research in this area.

That the Cold war has been left out from the analysis might be seen as a weakness since China choose the path of communism and the U.S was concerned about the affects of a shattered Asia in which the Soviet Union could potentially obtain great influence in the region and were concerned about communism in the world. However China did under Mao focus more on domestic issues and did officially declare that they would not focus on foreign policy, at least after their involvement in the Korean War. When Deng took power they started to focus more on foreign policy, but as their relations with The Soviet Union had deteriorated and the relations with the U.S improved with the start of diplomatic relations in 1979, ideology never became the cornerstone for the importance of the Taiwan issue from the perspective of China. In fact Deng soon took the position that China and Taiwan should unify under the guidelines of “one country two systems” meaning that Taiwan were to keep capitalism as a system. As will be seen in the analysis the historical relations with the KMT is more important in explaining the importance of the Taiwan question than ideology in the minds of the Chinese. This is why the cold war factor has been left out in this thesis. The cold war has certainly influenced the U.S commitment to Taiwan which in turn is affecting China’s feelings of victimization, but this link is secondary and therefore out of the scope of this thesis.

## 1.5 Previous research

The Taiwan question in relation to Sino-American relations has been discussed in several different researches, but as far as the author knows it has never been processed through an ontological security lens. This section will go through some of the research that has dealt with

the Taiwan question in Sino-American Relations and some research done through an ontological security perspective in connection to China.

Caroline Varin uses a similar line of approach as this thesis (Varin 2007). In the part about China she argue that China's foreign policy is connected to China's humiliation during the century of Humiliation and points out that China has been the victim of other countries lust for power. Because of their long history as a great empire she argues that this was devastating for their self-image. The humiliation has affected the national identity of the state which in turn has affected China's foreign policy. Humiliation in the author's opinion has contributed to a strong urge for revenge. The author then argues that this is connected to China foreign policy today and their depiction of themselves as strong and capable of resisting the evil west. The Taiwan issue is discussed as an integral part of Chinese identity and the policy towards Taiwan, even though bad for Chinese trade and reputation, is explained through this notion. Varin then argues that China has all the means necessary to take Taiwan by force, even with American intervention, but choose not to in purpose of using the image of victimhood to unite the country and use it for foreign policy goals (Varin 2007).

Paris E. Crenshaw's argues that Taiwan's political status is discussed as the most central question in China-U.S Relations, as both states national security are tied to the Taiwan issue (Crenshaw 2003). Crenshaw uses three case studies; the Quemoy crises of 1954-55, the Quemoy- Matsu crises of 1958 and the Taiwan Strait crises of 1995-96, to establish that the respective policy of China and the U.S, to a large extent, is following the principle of the ELR hypothesis in times of crisis. The ELR module explains strategies applied in times of crises. It argues that as long as the tactic applied was successful in a crises situation with another country, the same tactic will be applied in the next crises between the countries. On the other hand if one of the countries has to back down from the goals set up prior to the crises, they will use a more coercive tactic in the next crises. The findings is complemented by arguments from the deterrence theory, who argues that a state need to convince its aggressor that he is willing and able to enforce consequences if the other state is considered expansionistic. As the U.S since 1971 has used an ambivalent position on the Taiwan question, trying to keep both Taiwan and China comfortable the author argues that both China and the U.S has misinterpret the position of each other. Thus, while relations between Taiwan and China has improved since 1971 this has not decreased the risk that is connected to the complication of Taiwan's

political status and Crenshaw argues for more robust lines of diplomatic communication between China and the U.S so that further crises can be prevented (Crenshaw 2003).

Mitzen has hypothesized that states need ontological security to function (Mitzen 2004). Starting from a realistic position she argues that states need a balance between ontological security and physical security. By using Security dilemmas as example she has argued that states do not necessarily seek to avoid security dilemmas, since the threat these poses are more comfortable than not knowing which threat to confront and which to ignore. She states that ontological security theory still needs to be confirmed through more research and that the theory might be used to analyze completely different elements of international relations as well, such as for example areas of cooperation (Mitzen 2004). She also uses the EU as an example on why identity is hard to change. She argues that the EU's identity as a civilizing power in Europe is not threatened by deepening security policies, because it is habits not capabilities that determine the identity of an actor. Thus the EU-members recognize each other as cooperative and can therefore trust each other. This trust is anchored in their routines. They have seen the other European powers as trustworthy for a period of time, thus it requires much for this notion to change (Mitzen 2004) Mitzen's research forms the basis for the theoretical perspective of this thesis.

## 1.6 Key concepts

Ontological security – The need of an actor to create realities as guidelines in decision-making. These realities are subjective as it is impossible to gather all information to make an informed decision at all times.

Rigid routine – A routine that the actor can't let go of, that is often leading to negative consequences for the actor.

Rooted elements – Used in this thesis to describe a phenomena that is affecting the state's foreign policy and has done so during a long period of time.

Rooted identity – Association with a specific group or entity, which is hard to change since it has been a part of your life/the existence of the entity for so long.

Significant others' – An actor that is important for the identity and perception of reality of another actor.

The Taiwan question – Term to describe the unsettled issue of Taiwan's status in the international arena. The controversy lies in whether or not it should be a part of mainland China or not.

White paper – A paper that explains the social or political position of an organization or government.

## 1.7 Background

### 1.7.1 China as a historical great power

To understand the Taiwan-issue and the importance of this issue in the minds of the Chinese, It is important to know the history of China and the reasoning of the state that this has led to.

China has always emphasized the importance of their history. In contrast to Europe their history is guided more by a sort of philosophical ideology rather than religion. Through Confucianism the Chinese has created an identity in which history plays a large role. This ideology valued the past and created a sort of conservative thinking in which old values was emphasized (Murphy 2009). This philosophical idea has been part of Chinese history for so long that it has affected the way the Chinese think even today. While Confucianism as an ideology has disappeared you can trace this thinking even to the present time.

The Chinese are very proud of their early history, in which they were the major power of the world. While Europe was still in their medieval period, full of war and backwardness, the Chinese developed a powerful rule with advanced technological entrepreneurship and a relative strong central rule<sup>3</sup> who considered themselves the Middle Kingdom (Mckay:2004). They set up tributary missions in which the recipient kingdom was to pay tribute to China. These tributes however was not a particularly profitable experience rather the opposite. By stating China's dominance and giving them some form of gift, the Chinese in return gave them something that was most often considered more valuable (Murphy 2009). Thus, these missions were conducted more to show the power of China than anything else and to be accepted as the major power in the relations with others'.

When the Europeans first arrived in China, they were considered as backwards and smelly barbarians (Schoppa 2011). The Europeans tried to conduct trade with China, but had little to offer. Eventually they started to sell opium and by the 19<sup>th</sup> century this trade had become so common that it started to be a serious health problem for the Chinese (Ibid). At the same time the European's were starting to develop their military power. While gunpowder was a

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<sup>3</sup> For the time being, China was divided into different provinces but was ruled under an emperor which had different degrees of power over the provinces depending on the strength of the emperor and time in history.

Chinese invention, the Europeans learned to use it more effectively and their military technology was becoming more and more advanced (Mckay 2004). The British gained a monopoly on the opium trade and China was the source of export. While Opium at first was not considered illegal by the Chinese government, this eventually changed as more and more people in China got addicted to Opium (Schoppa 2011). It got so far as to seriously hamper Chinese bureaucracy as the officials were high on Opium when working. But this did not stop the British trade, who continued to smuggle in Opium to China even after the ban (ibid). China responded in rage and confiscated a British ship's cargo and destroyed the Opium (ibid). The British kingdom responded by launching a war that ended in a humiliating defeat for China. This was the start of what in China is referred to as the Century of humiliation.

### 1.7.2 The century of Humiliation

At the end of the Opium war in 1842 China was forced to sign a treaty which seeded Hong Kong to the control of Great Britain (Schoppa 2011). The century of humiliation is referring to a series of so called unequal treaties<sup>4</sup> that China was forced to sign in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as to the invasions and coercion used by mainly France, Great Britain and Japan (But also to some extent the United States) directed against China and their allies to take advantage of the lucrative trade with China (Schoppa 2011). Throughout this century a strong anti-foreign sentiment, that was somewhat visible even before this time was reinforced. China had been a relative closed society and the Europeans had only been allowed to trade in the ports of Canton (Murphy 2009). They were not allowed to enter the city, learn Chinese, or contact any officials directly (Schoppa 2011). All contacts were to be conducted through a special merchant guild. These are only a few of the rules set up and they were all to be followed, if they weren't all trade was halted (Schoppa 2011). But the end of the opium war and the treaties signed there started a race for better conditions for the Europeans and coercion leading to the opening up of China on Europeans terms<sup>5</sup> to the great anger of the Chinese population, who felt as if they were a victim to the lack of moral shown by the Europeans (Schoppa 2011).

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2. The unequal treaties forced China to open up the country for settlement and trade, to give up control of part of their territory and forced them to pay indemnity that indebted them heavily.

<sup>5</sup> This refer to the coastal area of China. In central China most people still never saw any Europeans in their lifetime (Schoppa 2011)

In 1843 a new treaty was signed between Britain and China. It stated that the conditions in all treaties signed with China were to be applicable to all states (Schoppa 2011). Thus as more and more treaties were signed - based on a basis similar to that of the treaty system, with few advantages for China and many privileges for the western powers, China had to grant privileges to all European powers that was present in the area (Ibid). The Europeans used this to open up China on their conditions. Thus more and more ports were opened for trade and Europeans were allowed to settle in China for the first time (Murphy 2009). When the Europeans then settled, they interfered in the legal system. A treaty was signed that granted foreigners impunity in the Chinese legal system (Schoppa 2011). The background to this was that the European legal system and the Chinese legal system were so different, with the Chinese being based on moral conduct and witnessing rather than investigations and proof (Murphy 2009). The idea was that the Europeans were supposed to be convicted by their own government. But the reality was that foreigners and even foreign friendly Chinese people in many cases were free to break the law as they wanted (ibid).

At the same time Japan had developed western influences that corresponded with the military culture of Japan. Gradually a fierce culture that mixed Militarism and Nationalism had been built up, and with this Japan's desire for power accelerated (Murphy 2009).<sup>6</sup>

Japan had been considered as a little brother to China for a long period of time and both continued to influence each other. But Japan's policy towards China became more and more aggressive in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It started with the seizure of the Ryokyo Islands in 1874 and then continued with an invasion of Korea that was under tributary status to China in 1894 (Schoppa 2011). On August 1 1895 China and Japan declared war (ibid). While China had tried to modernize their army, they were incapable of organizing it and Japan could therefore win the war easily. During the peace negotiations China was not only forced to give up tributary status to Korea, but was also forced to cede Taiwan to Japan (Taiwandocuments.org).

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<sup>6</sup> Japan had a wide range of influences from Western Europe, including literature, a short period of democracy etc and it was far from obvious that the imperialistic tendencies were to prosper, but as the military had a large influence, these imperialistic tendencies was getting stronger and stronger during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The century of humiliation ended after the Second World War (Schoppa 2011).<sup>7</sup> The atrocities of the Japanese during this war might be seen as the biggest humiliation for China during the period of the century of humiliation. The harder the resistance from the Chinese, the grimmer the treatment when defeated. In the occupation of Nanking the surviving soldiers were buried alive and children were executed in front of their families (Schoppa 2011). But after engaging the U.S through the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japan's war fortune turned around and they were forced to withdraw from China (ibid). With the loss of the war Taiwan was ceded to China and according to many, this marked the end of the century of humiliation (ibid). However a civil war between The CCP (communists Central Party) and the KMT (Kuomintang) broke out after the war, and the KMT who lost this civil war fled to Taiwan and set up their rule there, claiming that they were the sole legitimate government of China. The coming sub-section gives insight in how this came to happened and how the connection between the KMT and the U.S is complicating Sino-American relations.

### 1.7.3 Taiwan, the American connection

The connection between the Taiwan-issue and tense relations between China and the United States goes back a long time in history. It started with the Civil war in China in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. To understand it, one must know the background to the rule set up in Taiwan later on and the role of the United States in this issue.

After a period of Warlordism<sup>8</sup> and humiliating treatment from the western powers in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, two parties were essential for the development of the modern state China; the Communist Central Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang (KMT). Both the KMT and CCP were parties that were critical of the conservatism of China at the time (Schoppa 2011). At the beginning, the two parties formed an alliance under the guidelines of the Soviet Union. They needed this alliance to battle the war lords that had taken power in different parts of China at the time. They also wanted to kick out the western imperialist that had forced China open during the century of humiliation (ibid). At this time the KMT was the

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<sup>7</sup> This is a contested notion, some argue it ended with the the declaration of the PRC in 1949, other say it won't end until Taiwan becomes a part of China again.

<sup>8</sup> Different parts of China were ruled by different War lords, who maintained control over the region by military power. In theory these areas were under the control of Empress Cixi, who ruled China from Beijing, but as the problems within China escalated, central power weakened (schoppa 2011).

strongest party and obtained the most influence. But the alliance was fragile. The KMT was much fragmented and different factions existed, some argued that the alliance was only a plot by the CCP to take over the KMT (Ibid). The suspicion towards the CCP and the rivalry between the two parties was only going to accelerate.

Within the KMT the army came to obtain a central place. In 1924 the party set up a military academy. The academy was led by Chiang Kei Sheik and the soldiers in training soon become fiercely loyal to him. This would be the ground for Chiang's power base after the death of former KMT-leader Sun Yat-Sen.

Sun Yat-Sen had been an integral part for the alliance to continue. After his death Chiang Kei Sheik gained more and more influence, and while he at first kept the alliance with The CCP in order to regain central control of China from the war lords it was clear that Chiang did not trust the communists. Chiang has often been considered paranoid and he suspected the communists of trying to get rid of him (Schoppa 2011), and the CCP was certainly trying to increase their power.

By addressing the country side and the peasants there the CCP had started to gain more and more influence within China. While the CCP had been important in order to regain control over China the tension between Chiang and the communist only grew. Chang Kei Sheik was worried about losing power. He's solution was to assassinate a high level CCP-leader during a dinner. This was the start of the so called white terror campaign in which thousands of Communists were killed (Williams 1989). The CCP had to flee to remote areas of China where they established so called communes from which guerilla warfare was conducted. One of the biggest of these was the Jiangxi commune (ibid). Chiang Kei Sheik still feared the communists and launched expedition after expedition against this commune. While the communists at first were successful in this warfare they were greatly outnumbered by Chiang Kei Sheik's massive army and eventually had to flee in what is called the Long march (Schoppa 2011). This almost led to the extension of CCP, but they were to rise again.

During the campaign against the Communists, Japan had started to prepare for a full-blown invasion of China by increasing their presence in the Northeast and even obtaining control of Manchuria, a province in the area (Williams 1989). Despite more and more aggressive policy

and rhetoric's, Chiang Kei Sheik continued to view the Communists as the greatest threat. But he was losing support for his action. Within China the Japanese were viewed with great suspicion along with most foreign powers (Schoppa 2011). One of Chiang Kei Sheiks military commanders was furious of the fact that he continued to battle Chinese in the North, while China was losing control of the east to the Japanese that was trying to increase their influence within this area. Eventually the commander completely lost faith in Chiang Kei Sheiks policies and kidnapped Chiang and held him prisoner (Williams 1989).

The CCP took advantage of the situation and met Chiang, while he was kept under house arrest by the commander, for negotiation regarding a continued alliance between the two parties under condition that Chiang changed his mind and change his policy toward Japan and start to resist the Japanese aggression. The exact conditions of these negotiations have not been relived, but it is clear that the CCP understood that they needed Chiang Kei Sheik's military mind as well as his armies to be able to defend themselves against Japan. Chiang Kei Sheik was thus released only by promising not to fight the communists (Schoppa 2011).

This did not by any circumstances mean that the two parties trusted each other. Chiang Kei Sheik continued to hold the CCP in check by placing 150 000 of his best men (of a total of 500 000 men) near the area in which the CCP were strongest to contain them and preventing the CCP to gain increasing influence within other parts of China (Schoppa 2011). However there was now a full scale war between Japan and China under the guidance of Chiang Kei Sheik. This also meant that China proclaimed that all treaties signed with Japan were no longer valid and under the declaration of War it was stated that Taiwan would be a part of China's borders. (Chinese government 1993) This was at a period in which the nation-state was in its early years. The last dynasty of China had fallen in 1911 (Murphy 2009) and a new era within Chinese history had emerged.

The United States was long not very interested in the war between China and Japan. This changed somewhat after the invasion of Pearl Harbor in October 1941. While prioritizing other areas the U.S did support any state that was fighting against the Axis-forces (Schoppa 2011). They also wanted China to retake the eastern part of China in order for them to be able to launch an attack against Mainland Japan from this area (ibid). The problem was that even if the commitment would have been stronger from the American side, it was difficult to reach

China with aid, since Japan effectively had striped of China's infrastructure<sup>9</sup> (ibid). Thus aid was limited and restricted to the KMT (ibid). The Communists played an important role in the defense of China, but China was hampered by the inability of KMT and CCP to work together effectively.

When the Japanese was finally forced to withdraw as a result of their lack of war fortune in other areas of the world and their eventual defeat in the war, the civil war between the CCP and the KMT escalated again (Schoppa 2011).

The end of the war started the cold war and the United States was worried about the situation in East Asia, with a defeated Japan, and China in Civil war, they feared that the potential for Soviet influence in the region was large. Thus they tried to act as mediator in the conflict between The CCP and The KMT (Schoppa 2011). However, they continued the finance of the KMT started during the Japanese war which of course complicated their role as mediators and they were not able to bring the sides together and they could not prevent a civil war (ibid).

The CCP fast got the upper hand in the civil war. The KMT had lost legitimacy during the war. Inflation, famine and inhumane war strategies, including flooding of rivers to prevent Japanese advancement had made people lose faith in the government. In 1949 Chiang Kei Sheik was finally defeated and the KMT was forced to flee to Taiwan, were they, and under the support of The United States were able to put up their own rule under the leadership of Chiang Kei Sheik (Chinese government 1993).

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<sup>9</sup> This problem was reinforced by war strategies from the KMT-led forces that destroyed their own infrastructure in efforts to try to halt the Japanese advance.

## 2. Theory

Ontological security theory is a further development from (among other fields) psychology to explain actor's stickiness when it comes to behavior. Originally developed to explain how certain individuals get stuck in a routinized identity that forms the individual's action, this theory's area of use has been applied to understand nation's action and their building of relations with other actors.

The idea is that since individuals can't possibly gather enough information to make a rational decision every time they have to make a decision, they form routines that become part of their identity (Mitzen 2006). These routines are not always rational, in fact they might even be self-destructive. An example of this can be a wife that does not leave her husband even if he is beating her. The reason for this is that the husband has become such a big part of her life that he has become a part of her identity. If she leaves the husband, she does not know who she is, and she does not know how the future will look like, she would attain ontological insecurity. Even if she probably is better off leaving the husband, she decides to stay. This kind of decisions form our lives, we face too many dangers to evaluate them all, thus we must create "action-structures" to decide what is dangerous to confront and which to ignore. These "action-structures" lead to ontological security. In other words ontological security theory argues that actors are affected by previous encounters and experience. In essence our action is affected by *routinized identity*. This means that we do not always act rationally. Rather sometimes our actions are corresponding to previous action. In order to understand the world we depict it through certain realities, which will guide our actions in life. These realities need not be true, but they are necessary for us to form our opinion. Without this depiction of reality a sense of uncertainty will lead to inaction (ibid). If we do not believe in something we do not know what is dangerous, which will lead to a lack of routinized identity. This is called Ontological Insecurity (Mitzen 2006). We need something to hold on to, to form our opinions and to make sense of the world, so we create realities that will guide us in our decisions.

While the original emphasis was on individuals, Mitzen has argued that this can be seen in group's action as well. She particularly argues that state's act according to ontological security. Policies are a continuation of the past and rooted in the identity of the decision-makers (Mitzen:2006). After all a group's actions are affected by their collective identity and

within a nation the constructed realities and dangerous of individuals is often similar. The fact that a state does not fully know how another actor will proceed and what dangerous to process, makes them insecure. To cope with this they construct realities which will be used as guidelines in their relations (ibid)

The state needs this “reality”, because it leads to the identity of the state. By acting through ontological security the state ensure the need for stability as a continuous actor in time (Mitzen 2006). This can be illustrated by an example; one nation might build up another as an enemy and view them with suspicion. The enemification<sup>10</sup> of this actor becomes part of their identity and this will affect relationship for a long period of time, because this construction becomes rooted and every time a decision has to be made in relation to this nation, they will be reminded of previous encounters and are therefore not able to make the most rational decision at all times. Instead of taking in all the information available to make an informed decision in the matter (which is impossible) the state act according to a structure that has been developed in previous encounters with this actor.

In a world full of information the individual need some form of stability in order to obtain self-understanding. This in turn will lead to personal continuity which is needed to reach the individuals full capacity in decision making. As this process continues it will eventually affect identity. In other words; as we keep acting in a certain manner in certain situations we will eventually routinize our behavior, our behavior then becomes part of our identity. This need of stability does not mean that self-understanding will always stay the same; rather it is difficult to change and it will help you to make decisions. The difference between a healthy ontological security and one that is destructive is the ability to circumscribe these routed behavioral patterns when new information is available (Mitzen 2006). According to Mitzen all individuals are attached to their routines, but the extent they are attached to them differ. There is a difference between those who have flexible routines and those who have rigid routines (ibid). With a healthy level of trust an individual can be critical towards their routines and change behaviors in situations where they might be damaging. To ignore the routines is not easy and might even lead to temporary ontological insecurity, but the individual know that it

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<sup>10</sup> A concept this thesis has borrowed from the Enemification theory which means that state builds up another state as an enemy and this view is then incorporated as part of the identity of the state. Hence State A, views State B as their enemy and every action state B takes is viewed with suspicion from State A.

can create new routines in the future and trust the stability of the surrounding environment while these routines are established (ibid). On the other hand if you lack this basic trust in the surrounding environment, you become too afraid to let go of these routines and therefore continue to act according to them. This leads to a destructive circle in which it becomes more and more difficult to change these routines as you become more invested in them (Mitzen;2006) (Korolowski:2008). These individuals fear the deep uncertainty of letting go of these routines, even if they know they produce a physical or psychological threat to one self. In this case the routines are rigid which is unhealthy for the individual (ibid).

In the author's opinion, the state is even more clinched to their environment. A state cannot change borders easily because it is the borders that define the state. It is the borders who tell us that Malmö is Swedish and Copenhagen is Danish and it would be very hard for the Swedish government to change this condition. Likewise, the state cannot simply change their line of argument, since the legitimacy of their power is based upon them. Hence a continuous environment is needed. If the state rapidly changes their policy or the guidelines for conducting policy they risk losing legitimacy of their power. Letting go of routines is not an easy task for the state and the state must trust its environment to keep legitimacy. Hence the routines for decision-making and relation-building are stuck in early encounters and historic development.

One might ask themselves why the individual then acts according to routines. Since acting according to ontological security is a sub-conscious decision, it is very hard for the individual to differentiate and understand the difference between a rigid and a flexible routine. What reason is there for individuals to act according to ontological security? As discussed before, Ontological security depicts a reality that prevents inaction, without it one is uncertain of which dangerous to confront and which to ignore (Mitzen 2006). In the case of the beaten wife, she fears the uncertainty of potential dangerous in the future if she decides to leave her husband. Within her situation today she knows very well what dangerous she faces. If she leaves her husband she has to evaluate new threats, arguing from a rational point of view these dangerous will probably be fewer, but since her husband is such a big part of her social life, his action has been a part of the dangers she is facing for such a long time, it has become part of her identity to face these threats. This reality is a deep structure that is hard to change. The ontological security theory argues that as you need to experience yourself as a whole continuous person in time, to become secure in whom you are, you tend to keep acting

according to a certain frame (Mitzen 2006). People need routines to create cognitive and behavioral certainty. Without it the actor has no idea what to expect, she can't relate ends to means, thus she becomes insecure in her identity. The fear of chaos is greater than the fear of the routines established (Ibid).

While the collective identity gives more perspectives on dangerous, this does not create a full picture, several flawed diamonds does not make one perfect and if we look at the same place, with similar defections, it becomes hard to imagine the perfect diamond as we constantly see the same form of defections, the defections are started to be taken for granted. The same problem as can be seen with individuals can therefore be applied to the state and the decision-makers within it. They need to have some form of continuation to make sense of the world and therefore some policies are hard to change. The decision-makers can't process all information but they have to come to a decision, therefore they unconsciously take influences from previous politicians and other influences within the society they grew up in and use a similar line of conduct to make policy. Their advisors and co-workers have similar experiences and role-models. Likewise, the administration of the state is built on a system developed over time and formed from the people in power. The way to conduct administration becomes rooted in the identity of the state. This way of explaining ontological security is a bit different than Mitzen who argues that the ontological security is more of a defense mechanism that justifies action connected to the identity of the State), for example The U.S as a responsible intervening country (Mitzen 2004).

The individual is also affected by perceptions' from others. Consider this example; you make a few jokes the first day at school. The class response is to announce you the joker of the class and ask you continuously to make a joke. As you are constantly reminded about this attribute you make more jokes and you start to consider yourself as funny. This perception is something you take with you even after you finish school, thus being a joker has become part of your identity. Relationship is within the centre of ontological security theory. Individual's identity is formed through these relations and they reach ontological security by "routinizing their relations with significant others" (Mitzen 2006:p342). When we build our rooted identity we tend to associate with other groups of people. For example; can I relate to this theory, written by these scholars when writing my thesis? This leads us to look at the issue we are investigating from this perspective and will thus likely find an outcome that these scholars would have found. This will reinforce our perception that this theory is the best available to

explain world phenomena and the theory will be a part of our rooted identity. Without relating to others' it is very difficult to form your opinion; hence relationship with significant other's will have great affects on what you consider is important and what is considered to be irrelevant (ibid).

The relations between states are similar. If a state is constantly reminded about how they behave and how irrational they are, they will act accordingly according to the ontological security theory (Mitzen:2006). Similarly, what dangerous the state is facing and what they consider as important when it comes to policy will naturally take influences from earlier ideologies and general thinking within the nation. Mitzen talks about how states become attached to conflict. If a relationship between two states has been rough throughout history, the people in power will miss opportunities for cooperation, even if cooperation is more rational at the time (ibid). The picture of what is dangerous is flawed by perceptions about the other actor, which is assumed to act in a less cooperative way because of the historical baggage between the states and hence the opportunity of cooperation is lost in a hostile policy response (ibid)

Ontological security theory within the discipline of international relation is still in the process and different elements have been suggested by different scholars, many argues that modernity should have a larger role within Mitzen's application of ontological security within International Relations (See for example Krolkowski 2008), but this misses an important aspect of the theory, namely the stickiness of behavior of states. The state is affected by its history and reasoning of policy implementation can be traced back further than through the notion of modernity. As individuals are affected by relations and rooted behavior, change in culture is slow and history therefore has an important role to explain the line of argument when it comes to policy implementation. Therefore Mitzen's argument about the stickiness of state behavior is still relevant. Thus in this thesis Jennifer Mitzen's original thoughts with some reflection has been used to processes the research questions. Ontological security theory is in the early stage and one of the main purposes of this thesis is to see whether or not Mitzen's version of ontological security, with some alteration, can be applied to the consequences of the Taiwan issue on Sino-American relations.

### 3. Methodology

Since it is difficult to find official statistics from China, which is needed to conduct a good quantitative analysis, a qualitative approach to research is better suitable to conduct research explaining China's foreign policy phenomena. This thesis is trying to explain why one issue (Taiwan) is important to explain the relations between two states (China and the U.S), thus it does not attempt to generalize, rather it tries to explain this specific issue, as in the case of the qualitative method (Marsh:2010). This is very different from quantitative method who is trying to explain a specific variable by looking at many examples. The idea is to find out whether or not there are structures rooted in the identity of China that is affecting the Taiwan-issue and their influence on foreign policy towards the U.S. To do this deep historic understanding of China's political development in general and the Taiwan issue specifically is needed and that is not possible if you do pay special attention to China, Taiwan and China's policy toward the U.S, to attain this knowledge you need to use a qualitative approach.

The qualitative approach focuses on in depth understanding within a specific area. This is obtained through conducting interviews with experts or assessing original documents and provides detailed text-based answers with a historical perspective (Mars:2010), since I do not have knowledge of the Chinese language I will use translations offered by The U.S congressional research service. These documents are also chosen as they are documents that the U.S finds important in the relation with China and they can therefore answer how the Taiwan-question is affecting Sino-American relations. The use of documents translated by the Congressional research service might be seen as a limitation since the information translated is chosen by the congressional research service and might potentially be translated incorrectly or specifically picked out by the congress to highlight statement of American interests but since these documents are highly sensitive, an incorrect translation would likely lead to a political disaster. Hence they are considered to be properly translated and since they are direct translation of written documents and political statements, no new information can be added in the report. This is okay according to the qualitative method, because these sources are not reflecting the position of an actor (ibid). These documents are also complemented by available documents in English at the Chinese official website for foreign relations. The documents used will be white papers on the Taiwan issue, hence paper that explains China's political position on the Taiwan question. These documents are important for the thesis since

they use a type of language when dealing with the Taiwan-question that is important for the analysis of the research question. They will provide details on the commitment China place on the Taiwan question and they give lots of information about how they interpret American policy towards Taiwan. The Idea is to show lots of quotations to capture the wordings used to highlight China's interest and how they feel about American policy towards Taiwan.

The structure of qualitative analysis is also suitable since qualitative research method try to find out the causes of effects, meaning that you look at a specific area (in this case why the Taiwan question is so important for China) and work backwards through history in order to explain it (Marsh:2010). This will be done by looking at the rhetoric's of statements and documents from present time back to the establishment of Chiang Kei Sheiks Republic of Taiwan. The idea with the thesis is to tell a story by using the official documents and statements from high-level politicians; this is typical for qualitative analysis, it argues that the use of material is inevitable biased, but that the researcher must be careful not to be judgmental in its research and therefore the use of sources need to be properly explained and reasons for why these kind of sources are used most be given (Ibid). One of the main purposes of this section is to do just that.

When conducting a qualitative analysis there are different ways of conducting data. This thesis will have an adaptive data collection. This means that the collection of data is based on in depth analysis and detailed description of a phenomena. To capture the way China evaluate the Taiwan-question I will use direct quotations from leaders within China, a method often associated with adaptive data collection who uses this kind of quotations to capture unique perspectives and experiences. This technique is also open for new ways of discovering depending on the findings during research (Marsh 2010). This is how the key elements legitimacy and victimization has been established. The research done before writing this thesis has identified these elements as important in the early history of China. This is also how ontological theory has been used in the thesis. The elements have been evaluated by looking at their affects on today's policy towards Taiwan and the response by the U.S policy towards Taiwan. The idea is to see if these elements are rooted in the identity of China and how that affects their commitment to Taiwan in foreign policy.

## 4. Analysis:

The century of humiliation is deeply engraved in the identity of the Chinese state. They felt as if they were the victim of western aggression and it therefore has great implication for their foreign policy, China even have a holiday called the National humiliation day (The China Watch 2012). From the facts established in the background section this section will establish two key elements, victimization and legitimacy that will be used throughout the analysis section to explain China's relationship with the U.S in view of the Taiwan issue. This first subsection will establish the ties between legitimacy and victimizing to the century of humiliation. The following section will then be exploring how these two key elements have continued to affect China's foreign policy, how the Taiwan issue has become a central issue in relation to these elements and how that has affected the Chinese relationship with the U.S from an ontological security perspective.

### 4.1 Century of humiliation, Victimization and Legitimacy

Within China people were furious about the situation during the century of humiliation and the government was blamed for agreeing to these conditions, along with the western powers (Schoppa 2011). From the perspective of the Chinese, China was the victim of the aggressive European's, but the government should have done more to prevent this situation from happening, they were losing their mandate of heaven and by that their right to govern China (Murphy 2009). The reality was grim though, the Manchu rulers had no real choice but to agree to the treaties. The Europeans were superior when it came to military technology and every war against Western powers<sup>11</sup> during the century of humiliation ended in defeat and more abuse from the West (Schoppa 2011). China's sentiments as a major power of the world had been crushed. But China's long history of splendor had been engraved in the identity of the Chinese. They saw themselves as a major power. In order to process the new reality, they needed to explain it through a notion that fitted their identity. Thus they argued that they had been treated unfairly by the western powers and that these powers were evil penetrating China's society (see for example Chinese government 1993). They established an identity of

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<sup>11</sup> Western powers in this case is referring to European countries and Japan

victimization. The anti-foreign sentiment would become a cornerstone for the abolishment of the dynasty-system and the development of the “modern” state<sup>12</sup> (Schoppa 2011).

The century of humiliation helped construct the identity of the Chinese nation-state; the PRC used this Victimization to establish their legitimacy of ruling China. From the start of the establishment of the PRC the Chinese government built up an image of China as a victim that had fallen and needed to become strong again and it was the PRC that was going to make sure this happen. As a consequence of this, the victimization during the century of humiliation became engraved in the legitimacy of ruling China and hence the atrocities that China encountered during this time have had great implication for China’s foreign policy goals. China cannot change their image of victimization in the near future. To do this, they have to gradually limit their identity as a victim in the international arena and this way change the grounds for their legitimacy for ruling China. As long as the identity of victimhood is working for China, it is unlikely they will do this, and as China continuous to use this sense of victimization, their sense of reality will be more and more tinged by it. Hence the feelings of victimization are rooted in China’s identity and thus their ontological security makes victimization and legitimacy an integral part of their policy.

To explain victimization and legitimacy as integral parts of China’s foreign policy formation, the implications of the century of humiliation must be analyzed. China viewed themselves as a **victim** to the atrocities of the imperialist of Great Britain, France and Japan, who got the Chinese addicted to Opium (Great Britain) (Schoppa 2011), who used coercion and violence to obtain influence in Taiwan (France and then Japan), who killed and humiliated China in War (all three of them but mainly Japan during the Second World War) (ibid) and who seriously indebted them through indemnities and loans with bad conditions (Murphy 2009). If you use the terminology of ontological security one can argue that China built up a relationship of significant others’ in which Japan, France and Great Britain were considered as aggressors and China was the victim in these relations.

The humiliation was not the only consequence of the century of humiliation. China’s **legitimacy** was severely threatened by the loss of territory when it came to Hong Kong and Macau. They had also lost their close connection to Taiwan through the abolishment of the

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<sup>12</sup> Modern State is referring to the development of the political system of today’s China.

tributary status. While China's first reaction to the century of humiliation was to focus on the mainland and domestic policy to strengthen China, they had not forgotten about the loss of these territories. When they started to open up to the outside world in the beginning of the 70's they sought to regain these areas (Zhao 2004)

The humiliation of all this defeats can be connected to the mindset of the Chinese. They considered themselves the middle Kingdom. When the Europeans arrived they were considered as smelly Barbarians with little to offer (Schoppa 2011). When they started to open up China on their grounds, and against the interest of China, it was the government fault that China was losing ground and it is often said that China was too conservative and too squared within their thoughts to be able to successfully adapt to the situation and change to meet the new threat (ibid). When addressing the issue it was important for many to do this in a Chinese way, even when adopting influences from West, they were careful to ensure that they were adopted in a Chinese context and these changes were always contested (Schoppa 2011). In essence many still saw China as superior and when they had to give after to the Europeans this led to great humiliation in the minds of the Chinese. This explains why China put so much emphasis on regaining territory lost during the century of humiliation, as these areas are arguably part of their legitimacy as a major power.

Today China has regained the control of Hong Kong, in 1997 (BBC 2012) and Macau, in 1999 (Cohen 2008). The only area that they are still missing that they considered was lost during the century of humiliation is Taiwan. Considering the fact that Taiwan was a direct threat to the survival of the PRC, since they argued that they were the sole legitimate government of China (Chinese government 2000), it is not surprising why China view the Taiwan issue as such an important issue. Taiwan as a part of China was not only a source of legitimacy for the PRC in order to survive in the aftermath of the cold war; it was also a part of the PRC's border-identity. From the start of the establishment of the PRC in 1949, they have argued that Taiwan is a part of China (Chinese government 1993)). As discussed in the theory section it is very hard to change the border-identity of a state, since this is actually a part of what is defining the state. Thus the ontological security of the state, or the perception of reality China has, is that Taiwan is a part of China. As the ontological security theory argues it is very hard to change your perceptions of reality, because you need this perception in order to understand the world and ensure the continuity of the state as a continuous actor in time. To change the perception that Taiwan is a part of China, would mean that the PRC is

changing a fundamental cornerstone for their legitimacy of ruling China, as Taiwan, in their established reality, is a part of China. This has been the case since the establishment of the PRC, thus it is part of their rooted identity. In other words; when they created the PRC and set up the basis for their rule, they said that Taiwan was a part of China and under their domain. If they accept Taiwan as a sovereign entity, they have shown weakness and incapability of holding on to their words and their influence over their people. Thus it is a threat to their legitimacy of ruling China as a whole. It is under these conditions that legitimacy and victimization has been built up in China. The following section will explain how this has come to impact the relationship with The U.S and the implication for their foreign policy.

#### 4.2 Legitimacy and Victimization in view of the Taiwan-issue and Sino-American relations

It is hard to imagine how big a part the Taiwan question has come to be in terms of legitimacy for the Chinese government. At several different occasions the Taiwan question in relation to Sino-American relations has been emphasized;

*The Taiwan question has always been the single most important issue at the core of China-U.S relations.*

*(Chinese Embassy Ireland 2013)*

*The Taiwan question is the most crucial and most sensitive issue in the relations between the U.S and China.*

*(The One-China principle, Chinese government white paper 2000)*

When it comes to the victimization of China, The U.S close relations with Taiwan has rooted China's relationship with The U.S. The U.S, just as Japan has come to be central in China's relationship with other states. Using the terminology of the ontological security theory they have become a significant other to China who argues that they are treating them unfairly. Interestingly China views the U.S as responsible for the ensuring civil war after World War II.

*The Kuomintang ... relying on U.S support... launched an all-out anti-popular civil war.*

(Taiwan Paper, Chinese Government White paper 1993)

Thus despite the American efforts as acting as mediators after World War II, the PRC completely rejects the efforts of The U.S at trying to prevent the civil war and the U.S, along with the KMT are blamed for the Civil war and as a consequence the split of China (Chinese government 1993). Hence, China is using their identity as victim in relation to foreign powers in order to legitimize their claim on Taiwan as a part of mainland China. Their foreign policy towards the U.S is therefore full of references to unfair treatment and the establishment of China's right to conduct whatever policies they see fit in a question that they consider is not of any others business but China's (see Chinese government 1993 and 2000).

After the Civil war the communists established the PRC (People's Republic of China) and declared themselves the sole legitimate government of China (Chinese government 2000). However at the same time Chiang Kei Sheik and the KMT fled to Taiwan and established the ROC (Republic of China), from here the KMT argued that they were the sole legitimate government of China. The history between the KMT and the communist were the White terror campaign had established the KMT as the most important significant others' in the PRC relations with other actors had created a rivalry with the KMT which become an integral part of the PRC's identity. The Taiwan issue has therefore been essential for the survival of the PRC and school books has even started to imprint that Taiwan is the last piece that needs to be settled for China to end the century of humiliation (Biggar 2012). Every actor which has a connection to the KMT is therefore naturally seen as an enemy to the PRC.

Under the continued support of the U.S after the civil war, the ROC got China's spot in the UN. This would not have been possible without U.S lobbying (Winkler 2012). This meant that The UN indirectly saw Taiwan as the sole legitimate government of China and that the U.S had so easily maneuvered the interest of PRC, meant that their image as a major power was severely damaged. The place in the UN also meant that ROC got China's place in the UNSC (United Nation Security Council), which gave them great power in the international arena. Early history thus made the Taiwan-issue of central importance for the legitimacy of the Chinese government. This development would not have been possible if the U.S had not lobbied for Taiwan to gain China's spot in the UN and supported them militarily so that the ROC could focus on economic reform instead of worrying about civil war with the PRC. Thus China early came to view The U.S with suspicion. Their action in combination with earlier

treatment from the West fueled China's identity as a victim, and they came to be very skeptical of all American involvement in the Taiwan question.

It was not until 1971 that China overtook ROC's place in the UNSC (Shirley 2011). The year later the U.S, in a joint statement with the PRC acknowledged the "One China Policy" and stated that The U.S government did not challenge that position. In the same statement they wrote;

*With this prospect in mind, it affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all military installations from Taiwan. In the meantime, it will progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension in the area diminishes.*

*U.S Congressional report, written by Shirley A. Kan, June 3 2011, P 32)*

This was the first step for enablement of diplomatic ties between China and The U.S. At this time they had not yet accepted the legitimacy of the PRC as the sole legitimate government of China, they had merely acknowledged the PRC position on "One China" (there is but one China and Taiwan is a part of China) (Shirley 2011). The official relationship could not start until Mao's death and the new leadership of Deng Xiaoping in 1978, who was to change the focus of China and open it up more to the outside world (Schoppa 2011). As of the first of January 1979 the U.S accepted the PRC as the sole legitimate government of China (Chinese government 1993).

This might have been the end of China's feelings of victimization in the relationship with the U.S. However the U.S would not let go of its connection to Taiwan, which would fuel the sense of victimization once again. Because of the historical baggage between China and the U.S the ontological security of China saw the American actions as hostile, thus it did not take much for them to view the U.S action as unfair. The ontological security argues that the action of the U.S in this case does not have to be decisive for how an actor views them. Equally important is the image that China has of the U.S. If they view the U.S with suspicion they will misinterpret or exaggerate the threat. Since China has felt as a victim for a long period of time, it is not surprising that these feelings were hard to let go, it did not take much of a provocation for the Chinese to be reminded of previous feelings of victimization. One can argue that victimization is stuck in China's rooted identity. The United States had since the

proclamation of the PRC as the sole legitimate government had a close relation to their biggest threat to power, the KMT. They had formed a military alliance with Taiwan in 1954, preventing the PRC from gaining full control of what they considered as China (Chinese government 1993). As a significant other in China relation, their actions would be closely and critically monitored, especially in connection to Taiwan and the KMT who ruled there.

The U.S still did not abide completely to the “One China Policy”. They still just *Acknowledged* the position that “There is but one China and Taiwan is a part of China” (Shirley 2011). To show the Taiwanese that they had not abandoned them they signed the TRA (Taiwan Relation Act) the same year (1979) (ibid). It explained the U.S commitment to Taiwan and three issues were of central importance in the TRA. First of all; the U.S stated that their diplomatic ties with the PRC rested upon the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means and that any attempts of coercion or force used by the PRC against Taiwan would be of grave concern to the U.S. (Shirley 2011). Secondly; The U.S would continue to provide Taiwan with arms of defensive character to resist any attempts of using coercion or military power to change the economic system of Taiwan or jeopardize its security. The quantity of these defense articles would be determined by the need of Taiwan to maintain sufficient self-defense capability (Shirley 2011). Thirdly it stated that all laws of the U.S that refer or relate to foreign countries, nations, states, governments or similar entities shall be applied to Taiwan (Shirley 2011).

This was of great concern to the Chinese. The fact that the U.S was telling them how to deal with an affair that they considered was an internal affair of China was seen as an infringement to their sovereignty (Chinese government 2000) and therefore their legitimacy as a ruling government. The providing of arms was seen as a violation of the condition set for established in the joint communiqué in 1972 (Chinese government 1993). A part of the 1979 agreement was that The U.S had to abrogate the defense treaty signed with Taiwan in 1954 and sever diplomatic relations with Taiwan (ibid). From the Chinese perspective the Taiwan Relation Act contravened the two communiqués that had been vital for the establishment of diplomatic relations. If this was not bad enough, The U.S explicitly stated that Taiwan was to be considered as a state of its own within American jurisdiction (Shirley 2011). So from the perspective of the Chinese they were a victim to the American who did not honor the agreements in the two joint communiqués from 72 and 79 (China government 1993) and they

did not respect the legitimacy of China's borders as they still treated Taiwan as a state in their jurisdiction.

In 1982 the two parties therefore wrote a third joint communiqué which the American's stated

*That it does not seek to carry out a long-term policy of arms-sale to Taiwan, that its arms sales to Taiwan will not exceed, either in qualitative or quantitative terms, the level of those supplied in recent years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China, and that it intends to reduce gradually its sales of arms to Taiwan, leading over a period of time to a final resolution.*

*(U.S Congressional report, written by Shirley A. Kan, July 2011, P40)*

Like all statements by the U.S in the Taiwan issue, there are some areas left aside in their communication. This joint communiqué did not give any time-frame for the reduction of arms sales to Taiwan and like previous statements it was followed by assurances to Taiwan. President Reagan assured that the position of the U.S government was conditioned on the premises that the differences between the PRC and Taiwan was to be solved peacefully (Shirley 2011). China continues to view the action of the U.S with suspicion, they believe that the Taiwan-issue is to be solved by China and do not want interference in the matter. Whether or not they use force to ensure the unification of the motherland<sup>13</sup>, is not for anybody to decide but themselves (Chinese government 1993 and 2000). They prefer a peaceful unification but do not guarantee it. That the U.S and other powers are interfering in the situation has prevented unification to occur and therefore China consider themselves a victim in this issue.

*All countries and **especially big powers** shouldering major responsibility for world peace, are obligated to strictly abide by the guidelines laid down by the five permanent members of the UNSC to restrict the proliferation of conventional weapons so as to contribute to maintaining and promoting regional peace and security However... certain powers have seen fit to renege on their undertakings under international agreements and to flout the Chinese government repeated strong representation by making arms sales to Taiwan.*

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<sup>13</sup> A term they continuously use in official communication regarding the unification of Taiwan and China, (Chinese government 1993, 2000 and U:S congress report 2011)

The fact that U.S arms sales delivery to Taiwan has been higher than the 1982 levels in all but four years (Arms control association 2012) gives China some legitimacy in arguing that The U.S is not honoring their commitment in the joint communiqués. In 1982 the U.S sold weapons to a total value of 382 million dollars to Taiwan (ibid). In 2010 that number had increased to 713 million dollars and at its highest the U.S delivered weapons to a total value of 2.44 billion dollars in 1999 (ibid).

The U.S justified this increase in arms sale by referring to the TRA (Taiwan Relation Act) signed in 1979 which states that the level of arms sale of defensive articles to Taiwan should be determined by the level needed to ensure sufficient capability of self-defense, this act dismisses the joint communiqués (Shirley 2011). This obviously does not ease China's feelings of victimization in the relations with The U.S. It is frustrating for China that the joint communiqués is not followed in this issue, because of the questions central importance for the legitimacy of the Chinese government.

The U.S on the other hand has a commitment to Taiwan as well and they won't abandon their links to Taiwan as a complete change in policy would lead to decreased credibility in the international arena. They have their political and ideological reasons for their link with Taiwan as well, but they are out of the scope of thesis. Thus the relationship between China is rooted in the Taiwan issue. Neither of the two sides trusts each other in the question and thus the conflict is rooted in the identity of the states.

The Taiwan issue has already been established as important for the legitimacy of China as a state. It has also been established that they view themselves as a victim in the international arena, especially towards the U.S as a consequence of their commitment to the KMT. But it is also important as a question for legitimacy in the international arena. China wants to be accepted by the U.S and they want the world to view them as a major power. China do not question the U.S position in the world. They see The U.S as the biggest power in the world today. To be accepted as a major power, it is essential for China to be treated with respect by the U.S. In order for China to increase their leverage in the international arena and be viewed upon with less suspicion it is important for them to solve the Taiwan issue, or at least act in a

way that increase their reputation. This would strengthen China's aspirations as a major power, which their legitimacy is based on.

Therefore the most important issue is not to achieve unification, it is more important to keep the status quo rather than risking losing the commitment to Taiwan altogether. Deng Xiaoping's statement in 1984 shows this clearly;

*Achieving national unification is the nation's wish, if not unified in 100 years, then unified in 1000 years in how we resolve this problem, I think it would only be through "one, country, two systems.*

*(U.S congress report 2011, written by Shirley A.Kan, P 43)*

Deng did not set up any time frame for the unification; he only stated that unification was something to strive for in the future. He also opened up the question of the extent of autonomy for Taiwan after unification. By one country two systems Deng referred to the difference in economic systems between Taiwan and Mainland China, and argued that Taiwan should keep their capitalistic system in case of unification, while the Mainland kept its social system (Shirley 2011).

*After reunification, Taiwan will become a special administrative region. It will be distinguished from other provinces or regions of China by its high degree of Autonomy. It will have its own administrative and legislative powers, an independent judiciary and the right of adjudication on the island. It will run its own party, political, military, economic and financial affairs. It may conclude commercial and cultural agreements with foreign countries and enjoy certain rights in foreign affairs. It may keep its military forces and the mainland will not dispatch troops or administrative personnel on the island.*

*(Chinese white paper on the Taiwan question and Unification of China. 1993, section III)*

This indicates the willingness from the Chinese side to compromise. The wordings in this statement are actually very close to reality today. Taiwan has all these freedoms and the only freedom that is separating them from independence is two things; first of all international recognition. As can be seen from this statement and many others' China is not willing to give them this and is preventing it by adopting their "one-China policy which is a condition for

diplomatic ties with China (Chinese government 2000). Since China is such an important economic player today, very few countries have refused to agree to this principle. The other thing they lack is the possibility of joining international organizations that require international recognition as a state (Biggar 2012).

Hence the position on Taiwan is not established to change the fact-situation, rather it is an attempt to strengthen the legitimacy of the government and obtain the border identity of China. Taiwan as part of China is engraved in the PRC's rooted identity. They have always claimed that Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao is Chinese and this has been part of their legitimacy for ruling China. As the border-identity of a state is such a big part of their legitimacy of power, claiming that an area is part of China can be considered a rigid routine. To realize the unification of China, therefore can be seen as realizing their identity and would strengthen their aspiration as a major power significantly. To let go of these aspirations however is a threat to the regime, and therefore even if the political- and economic situation in Taiwan and China has separated their identity somewhat, they can't possibly accept Taiwan as a sovereign state.

This need of legitimacy rather than the fact control of Taiwan is further strengthened by moves towards international recognition and independence the latest 20 years. It started when KMT Prime Minister Lee Teng Hui took power in 1990, when he deviated from the "One-China policy" arguing that China had two governments and that "Taiwan is already a state with independent sovereignty (Chinese government 2000). In 1993 Taiwan also tried to seek international recognition by trying to get included in the UN once again (ibid). In 1999 Lee even wrote a book entitled "China's road to democracy in which he advocated the division of China into seven regions, each with full autonomy and called the relations between China and Taiwan "state-to state relations" (ibid).

While The U.S has not supported any move of Taiwan towards independence and argued that the issue must be solved by dialogue between the PRC and ROC (Shirley 2011), they have still been criticized by China. Lee Teng Hui is considered a troublemaker and the fact that he was allowed to visit The U.S in 1995 was seen as an infringement to the three joint communiqués and a prejudice to China's sovereignty (Chinese government 2000). The relationship with the U.S is characterized by victimization, therefore they continue to view

U.S action with suspicion even if it might not be warranted in this case. As a message to Taiwan before the Taiwanese elections and to the U.S to back off and stop committing themselves to Taiwan, China therefore responded by conducting several missiles testing's in the Taiwan Strait, which ultimately led to the Taiwan Strait crises, in which the U.S sent two air craft carriers to Taiwan to show that their commitment to Taiwan would not stop (Global security 2013). The fact that the visit was blown out of proportion in this matter clearly shows how victimization affects China's relations with the U.S and how ontological security affect their foreign policy. U.S action when it comes to the Taiwan question is part of the established dangerous of China and is thus closely connected to their ontological security. As they continue to view themselves as a victim, their perception of reality is that American's are treating them unfairly and can't follow the agreements set up in regards to their most important and sensitive issues. This frustrates them into trying to conduct coercion to decrease American commitment to Taiwan. The response by the U.S however only led to increased commitment, in this case their perception of reality led to a response that had bad consequences for them. Hence they did not have enough information to take the optimal decision, rather their action corresponded to their perception of reality and they took an irrational decision that increased American commitment to Taiwan. The ontological security of China led to negative consequences for their military security.

The moves towards Taiwanese independence indicated a new situation for China, were the threat of Taiwanese independence was built up rather than the threat of legitimacy as ruling mainland China. This threat was strengthened when The DPP took power in Taiwan 2001. The empowerment of the DPP in the early 21th century amplified the alarm at increasing tendencies in Taiwan of discussing the potential of independence (Shirley 2011) Ironically China prefers the early KMT position that the KMT is the sole legitimate government of China (Chinese government 2000) over the DPP's position that made several moves towards independence, among other things urging for a referendum in the question (ibid). The KMT position would seem as a bigger threat to the legitimacy of the Chinese government. But Taiwan as a part of China is so engraved in the identity of the state and the nation state that an independent Taiwan is a threat to the survival of China as a state. Thus the KMT's position that they are the sole legitimate government of China, is less intimidating than a position arguing for independence of Taiwan. 95 % of the Chinese population would support an invasion in case of a move towards independence is made (Biggar 2012). If Taiwan were to become independent it is very hard, if not impossible for China to explain to its people why

they wouldn't invade Taiwan. With the backing of The U.S this is a war they might very well lose and it would certainly not be good for the image of China, but as they have made the Taiwan issue such a central question, inaction in case of separation would seriously undermine their legitimacy to the extent that it would risk losing power in China. It would most likely lead to massive demonstrations and riots within China and it would certainly picture China as weak, considering that they have always left open the possibility of using force against Taiwan (Shirley 2011). The PRC is so invested in the notion that Taiwan is a part of China, that it has affected public opinion to the extent that any move towards a change of policy will be dangerous. This is also a reason why they are so against U.S interference in the question, as they know the dangerous of a potential move towards independence in Taiwan. Thus they are more comfortable with facing the old enemy of the KMT, rather than the new voices heard arguing for the incompatibility of the new democratic system in Taiwan and unification or the urge for independence. The new threat of independence is also a new voice and a new enemy of the PRC that is causing them ontological insecurity as they have not encountered this type of threat before, which makes it harder to predict potential disasters.

It is in this context they signed the Anti-secession law in 2005. The law says that China may adopt non-peaceful means and other measures to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity if “the separatist forces of Taiwan independence use any name or any means to cause the fact of Taiwan’s separation from China” (Shirley 2011). This only reinforces the commitment to the Taiwan issue and the incompatibility of Taiwan’s independence with PRC’s legitimacy.

While The U.S has explicitly stated that they are not supporting Taiwan independence and that any such moves are not contributing to Taiwan’s autonomy, that it is just counterproductive for the security of the area (Shirley 2011), China has still blamed the U.S for this development. Their feelings of victimization are rooted in the relation with the U.S. The PRC has argued that the new voices of democracy and incompatibility of a unification is in fact a plot implanted by foreign powers in the minds of the Taiwanese to prevent, in their words, the noble cause of unification (Chinese government 2000) . They have even argued that the excuse of different political system, as a barricade to unification is undemocratic, since it prevents 1 billion Chinese from achieving unification (Chinese government 2000). This is just another example of how the Chinese government is using victimization to justify their policy

and the U.S has been explicitly targeted in their white papers on the Taiwan question in this issue in several instances and seldom in a positive manner.

Victimization and legitimacy are therefore closely related. In order to achieve legitimacy the Chinese government is using victimization. They need to keep holding on to the idea that Taiwan is a part of China, but they do not necessarily need to achieve unification. By building on their feelings of victimization in the relation to the U.S they are not just justifying their action against Taiwan, but also act to justify their position as a major actor, which action's should not be questioned. The image of a victim is built on the idea that they are not fully accepted as a major power within the international arena and that they do not receive enough respect in issue-areas of importance to them, like the Taiwan question. Thus legitimacy and victimization explains how they have build up the Taiwan-question as rooted in their identity, making it impossible to let go of this issue, any interference in the issue will be seen as an insult to China and a threat to their legitimate claim as a major power. The close connection between The U.S and Taiwan is therefore the most serious problem for the Sino-American relationship and will continue to be a challenge for the future. They cannot afford to let go of this issue, since it is so closely connected to their ontological security.

## **5.1 Concluding Remarks**

This paper has argued that victimization and legitimacy is central in understanding the importance China puts on the Taiwan question in their relationship with The U.S. Through history China has built up an image that argues that they have been treated unfairly. PRC empowerment is built upon this image. They have gained power by playing on the despair of the Chinese people during the century of humiliation. Their legitimacy as a major power is based on strengthening China to rise as a strong state once again. Thus victimization and legitimacy has become rooted in the identity of the PRC.

To achieve a stronger China, they have focused on regaining territory they considered lost in the century of humiliation. They have now regaining Macau and Hong Kong, the only piece that is missing is Taiwan. Taiwan is extra important because it was here their long time enemy KMT set up their rule and the fact that the KMT was the government that was accepted as the

sole legitimate government of China after World War II by the International community further strengthened the importance of this question for the legitimacy of the state.

The U.S plays a central role in this issue, since they have always supported the KMT. They have become an important significant other in the relation with China and they have taken the spot of foreign aggressors that has built up the PRC as a victim in their identity. From the start of the establishment of the PRC China has argued that Taiwan is a part of China. The fact that the U.S has ignored this and in the minds of the Chinese prevented unification, makes the U.S commitment to Taiwan a threat to the legitimacy of China as a major power. If the biggest power of the world is interfering in their most sensitive question, how can they then be accepted as a major power? This is how the Taiwan question has become an integral part of the PRC's ontological security. They always argued that Taiwan is a part of China. In their perception Taiwan is just a province of China and the policies adopted since the establishment of the PRC has strengthened this notion to the extent that they can't let go of it. It is important for China to receive respect in this issue from the most influential power in the world today. Without recognition from significant others' they do not have a legitimate claim on Taiwan as a part of China and as this has been established as the most sensitive and important question in Sino-American relations from the Chinese perspective. The consequences of this is that they do not receive the respect they need to be perceived as a major power in the international arena and therefore, they will continue to try to get the U.S to get closer to China's position on Taiwan.

This does not mean that they demand that the U.S accept Taiwan as a part of China in the near future. China has probably realized that the difference between Taiwan and China makes unification unlikely in the near future, but as they have invested their legitimacy and their identity as a victim in this question they can't possibly accept an independent Taiwan. That would be a threat to their identity and to their legitimacy of ruling China. Hence the issue is rooted in their identity and Taiwan will continue to be a very important question in China's foreign relations.

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