

CHINA IN AFRICAN NEWSROOMS:  
HARNESSING THE EFFECTS OF PRO-AND-COUNTER ATTITUDINAL CHINESE NEWS  
AGENDA IN THE ZAMBIAN MEDIA

by

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## ABSTRACT

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China in African newsrooms: Harnessing the effects of pro-and-counter attitudinal Chinese news agenda in the Zambian media

This study examines the influence of Chinese news content and journalistic performance in the Zambian media. It does so by measuring the quantity of Chinese news content in Zambia, the position it takes within the news content, and how it influences journalistic performance. The study hinges on two main questions explored through five research questions:

1. *To what degree and how is China's investment in Zambia reflected in ZNBC coverage of news?*
2. *Does ZNBC's coverage of China influence how other Zambian-based media organizations cover China?*

Using framing and agenda-setting theories, I was able to demonstrate that China's implicit and explicit investment in ZNBC has led to the dominance of the Chinese news agenda in the entire Zambian media environment. A time-series also indicate an increase in Chinese stories and agenda in the Zambian media. Most of these stories were routine and episodic, implying that they came from press releases or news events as opposed to investigative feature stories. Variations were observed within each media category with government-owned having more routine stories respectively followed by private, community, and religious media. Further, most news content were characterized by political issues, with less emphasis on stories pertaining to health, social, education, and agriculture. Most of all, China has moved from being the object of the news in the Zambian media to the subject. Data from 2012 suggests that China was mostly used as an object in the news. But by 2016, China had become the subject of the story.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Azad Essa, a senior journalist working for the Middle East Eye, (a media organization based between South Africa and the United States, and a former Al Jazeera reporter and columnist covering Sub-Saharan Africa) published an insightful article in an *Independent African media* (also known as IOL) about the persecution of more than one million Uighur Muslims in China's Xinjiang province. A day after, South Africa's second-largest media company that he had been writing for since 2016 decided to cancel his weekly column. Their justification for canceling was based on the argument that the new design of the papers meant that there was no longer space for his weekly venting. Azad believes that even before writing the column, he understood that it could rattle with the higher-ups, given the ownership structure and the subliminal influence that China had shown within the media. However, he expressed concern about how quickly that was done, and with no room for negotiations. "This is because I struck at the heart of China's propaganda in Africa", Essa argues in his subsequent 2018 article.

This statement is further supported in an article by the *Reporters San Frontiers* (RSF) or simply 'Reporters Without Borders' in which they observe that the pretext of the South African media, "in all likelihood, conceals the media's desire not to displease its Chinese investors; in reality, 20% of IOL is controlled by China-Africa Private Development Fund (CADFUND) and China International Television Corporation (CITVC)" (September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018). In a similar incidence, two Zambian journalists were detained and questioned for publishing involving the Anti-Corruption Commission in which the President's political advisor was accused of receiving \$200, 000 to sign secret contracts with China. These contracts were considered fraudulent in the sense that they did not uphold the required standards. The then government spokesperson, Amos

Chanda, justified the secrecy and failure to document and announce the loans as a “matter of national security”. President Edgar Lungu also defended his representations with the argument that, “the publication of the story about the Chinese loan was unprofessional and that the government would “think twice” before enacting the Freedom of Information Bill, which seeks to give journalists greater access to information”. (*Reuters*, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013). According to Essa, these and many other similar trends have led to most journalists and journalism, at large, to lack critical engagement and fail to ask the basic and relevant questions about effects of Chinese media in Africa. At most, the media has become China’s most ardent cheerleader (Essa, 2018).

Against such a stringent backdrop is China’s purported idea that they aim at “constructively reporting Africa”. The Director of the Africa Communication Research Centre at the Communication University of China, Zhang Yanqiu (2014), defines “constructive reporting of Africa” as a kind of reporting that seeks to paint a good image of the continent and help Africa to see itself as a possible global competitor. This definition is a challenge to the dominant narratives about Africa found in most Western ideologies and postcolonial underpinnings: perceived as ‘exotic Orientals’ (Said:1978) with only tourism and raw materials to offer; inept journalistic practices that reflect amalgamated Western and African oriented journalism training (Mfumbusa, 2008; Traber, 1989); and corrupt journalists who are dependent on *Brown Envelopes* – a practice characterized among African journalists involving the transfer of various types of rewards from sources to reporters in the name of aiding the thorough process of journalism practice (Kasoma, 2010; Skejerdal, 2010; Mpagaze & White, 2010) or subterfuge and entrapment (Ofori-Parku and Botwe, 2020); and thus “watchdogs in chains” that can only bark and barely act (Sturmer and Rioba, 2000). In other words, Western ideologies were often designed to present African journalists as simply ‘incompetent and corrupt’ (Asante: 1999).

## Statement of the Problem

Some scholars have argued that China's justification for investing into the African media does not align with its performance because it lacks agency and dual input of the local journalists. In one of his studies, Thussu (2006) observed that local journalists had expressed with concern that China Central Television (CCTV) operating in Africa and other Chinese media organizations were reluctant to air news that pertained to ethnicity. These arguments are consistent with Umejei's (2020) findings, and Banda's (2009) theoretical underpinnings of the role that China continues to play in the Sub-Saharan African media. A particular example was the visit of the Pope to Kenya in 2015. African journalists working in Chinese media organizations in Africa explained that they were not allowed to cover the Pope's visit. Most of them expressed displeasure that they could not cover the Pope when other international media organizations reported extensively on the visit of the Catholic pontiff to East Africa. Above all, most of their audience were Catholics who were hoping to get the news about the Pope from their daily news outlets. Unfortunately, many turned to local media outlets with limited resources to report such an eminent event. Thussu (2006) thus asks whether the Chinese media are telling the true African story to a global audience, or just a Chinese version of the African story to a Chinese audience (p.93).

In his book, *Africa's Media, Democracy, and the Politics of Belonging*, Nyamnjoh (2005) explains what it means to constructively report Africa. He asserts that "constructive reporting of Africa entails becoming a social actor or actress enmeshed in a particular context that has been and continues to be shaped by a history of connections and disconnections informed by interconnecting local and global hierarchies" (p.127). This statement implies that a journalistic narrative of Africa that is devoid of its ethnicity, culture, and religion cannot provide a true

representation of the African story (Mazrui, 1979). Mazrui's (1979) argument is further developed by Nyamnjoh's (2005) thesis that journalism that downplays the African personhood and belonging is hardly in tune with Africa's quest for equality and for expression, recognition, and representation. It is, therefore, relevant to ask whether Chinese media organizations, in their attempt and framing of the win-win and mutuality of the China-African relations, do reflect issues that pertain to the pursuit of an African media. Or are they simply employing the same Western strategies to downplay the African personhood and belongingness in their quest for an African narrative in the media? Particularly, is China constructively reporting Africa as it claims? If so, how does that "constructive" reporting look like?

### **Study Purpose**

China's resurgence to Africa has also begun to manifest media controls of content and the news agenda. Unlike traditional agenda setting where news agenda is transferred from one media to the audience, or from one media to the other, the case of Chinese news agenda is mostly perceived in terms of Chinese structures mounted within the African soil, thus creating the news agenda and frames for the African media. What this means is that the media in China might seem disconnected to Africa, yet its investment in the African media manifests its presence and influence of news agenda. Therefore, scholars that study Chinese news agenda in Africa do not analyze it from the media in China, but those organizations operating within the African continent. For this reason, studies that look at Chinese news agenda-setting in Africa are still scanty. One good example would be a recent study conducted by Madrid-Morales (2021) in which he assessed the influence of Chinese news agenda on the coverage of COVID-19 from 30 African countries. While his findings are telling about who controls the narrative, they also

reveal why Chinese news agenda was less prevalent in the analysis. This is because the Chinese media operating in China have little or no connection with the media, in Africa.

However, it is most likely that if the author used China's state or privately-owned media that have mounted their satellites in Africa, he would have found significance influence. In the case of Zambia and ZNBC where China owns 60 percent of the Zambian share, it is justified to assume that the presence of Chinese news agenda is significant. Therefore, this study began by testing the presence of Chinese news agenda using stories about China as the unity of analysis. After establishing that, it further analyzed variations across different media categories. As a point of emphasis, it is not assumed that the news agenda analyzed comes directly from China, but that it is embedded within the local media with most investment from China, and in this case, ZNBC.

In recent years, there has been a shift in programming and content allocation in most Zambian media outlets (Mundia, 2017; Chulu, 2017). First, ZNBC networks have seen a rise in Chinese content ranging from children's programs, such as cartoons, to adult content, mostly in form of soap operas that most people watch. If the content does not have a Chinese narrative in it, then it would not be sponsored by a Chinese company. As Mundia (2017) documents in his programming content of ZNBC's Radio one weekly scheduling, "although most programs had a local focus, the majority were Chinese sponsored" (p.22). The generic interpretation is that such programs, though beneficial to the local people, still advance Chinese media agenda in a soft and strategic way. China's Top Star, a Chinese network has equally expanded across the country offering various programs to the Zambians at a minimal cost beating other competitors including the local networks.

The government newspapers and other local newspapers have equally offered sections of the newspaper to produce content in Chinese language, and only for the Chinese people living in

Zambia, as shown in figure 1 below. Radio stations have also offered airtime to Chinese programming. Chinese children programs translated in English or local languages have also become popular even when the narratives and the artifacts used in the programs are completely Chinese and have nothing to do with the Zambian culture - i.e., the dragon that occupies most of the Chinese literature and culture has become a common concept among the Zambian children who are glued to Chinese programming. This does not rule out the gaming industry that is mostly controlled by China – meaning that the characters in the games are all Chinese, and barely an African or black person except in events where the character is a famous African American, i.e., Mike Tyson. Beyond, this, the education sector has start to push for the introduction of Chinese language in schools. Some primary and secondary schools have adopted Chinese as their second official language after the Zambian government entered into an agreement with the Confucius Institute of China to teach Chinese language as an examinable subject at all levels. In short, no sector seems to have been left without the effects of China.

**Figure 1:** Zambia's Times Newspaper Publishes in Mandarin



Source: Africanews, 2018

While this might seem like normal service to the Chinese and the Zambian community, the idea is far-fetched and raises questions among various pundits as to the long-term repercussions of China's presence in the Zambian newsroom. In other words, some scholars have asked the following rhetoric questions: Do they indeed constructively report Zambia as they claim or is the motive only aimed at advancing Chinese agenda? How much of the Zambian agenda has China created so far for the global media? Can Zambia really create a media agenda that resonates with the local people amidst China's ownership and influences of the news agenda? If so, what would that agenda look like amidst different kinds of media agenda emanating from China, the United Kingdom, Europe, South Africa, and now India?

### **Framing the question**

Despite years of earnest research, a simple or definitive answer to the question of whether China's presence in sub-Saharan Africa is aiding the constructive reporting of Africa is still alluding to many scholars (Umejei, 2020; Wasserman & Madrid-Morales, 2018; Wekesa, 2017). While some researchers have found no substantial evidence that China's presence in the African media negatively impacts journalism practice (Madrid-Morales & Wasserman, 2018; Wasserman & Madrid-Morales, 2018; Nassanga & Makara, 2016; Gagliardone, 2013; 2013; Wasserman, 2013) others hanker on the notion that China's presence in sub-Saharan Africa shapes the African media agenda through soft powers (Umejei, 2020; Wekesa, 2017). The Manichean prism debates characterizing the discourse today pose as a hallmark for understanding the role and impact of China in the African media. Nonetheless, there are still gaps in literature on the implications of allowing China to have full access and control over African newsrooms, including those owned by the government. In Zambia, for example, Chinese media conglomerate StarTimes funded the rollout of a migration to a new digital TV signal, and now controls more than 60% of a joint digital venture with ZNBC (Government-owned media corporation),



called *TopStar*. The venture was also bankrolled by a \$232 million loan from Exim Bank, and has been criticized by media watchdogs for allegedly granting excessive influence over the media landscape to Beijing. Such situations pose question as to whether China is generous enough to forfeit its narrative under the expense of “constructively reporting Africa”. In other words, is a country like Zambia, enmeshed in Chinese debt and financial control capable of telling a Zambian narrative? If so, how would that look like?

Umejei’s (2020a, 2018b) studies attempts led to some hypothetical vision of a hybridized African media with global efficacy to compete at a global level. By so arguing, Umejei’s (2020) concept of media hybridity does not differ from Madrid-Morales and Wasserman’s (2018) argument that China has little or no substantial impact on African Journalism (note that these studies were substantiated through extensive interviews with journalists). Despite the rich findings and contributions made to the literature, I argue that the authors’ findings are unique to the areas studied. First, Madrid-Morales and Wasserman’s (2018) study were conducted in South Africa which is essentially different from most other sub-Saharan African countries. The reality is that studies about South African media systems are reflected as advanced, and sometimes equated to Western media systems. In other words, South Africa’s context is very different from most of the sub-Saharan media, and the challenges faced are rather responded too in a different way. Because of the prolonged apartheid, the media system in South Africa can more be equated to the British media system than those from other countries. Second, Umejei (2020 and 2018) and Madrid-Morales (2018)’s studies were conducted in Chinese-owned media operating in Africa. Although the findings are important, the context is rather different. Third, most of these studies were done in situations where China is simply assumed as having influence – meaning that it is where China’s engagement in the media is not clearly defined. What is observed is the generosity of China to the local media without China declaring its full intentions other than the

notion that China intends to constructively report Africa – Some critics continue to interrogate the real intentions of China and whether they are not a form of soft power strategies. This is different from the case of Zambia where China has implemented some of its intentions for its generosity.

These findings, therefore, provide an avenue or gaps in the literature that need to be pursued. Zambia's context becomes a fertile ground for filling the gaps in literature for the following reasons: Zambia is the most prominent debtor of Chinese loans in Africa with an unofficially disclosed amount estimated at 96% of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) as of 2020; and external debt rising by \$10.05 billion per annum. This trend has inevitably affected the Zambian media as well. In 2017, Chinese media conglomerate StarTimes funded the rollout of a migration to a new digital TV signal, and now controls more than 60% of a joint digital venture with ZNBC (Government-owned media corporation), called TopStar. The venture was also bankrolled by a \$232 million loan from Exim Bank, and has been criticized by media watchdogs for allegedly granting excessive influence over the media landscape to Beijing. This situation provides a backdrop for understanding China's nuanced impact, influence, and subsequent implications that have not yet been explored by previous studies. Further, situating the study in Zambia provides more robust possibilities for the generalization of the results. The reason behind this argument lays in the assumption that Zambia's media landscape is more representative of most media in sub-Saharan Africa than the South African media where most studies about China's influence have been done.

Overarchingly, this study took a key, yet overlooked phenomenon to examine the influence of Chinese news agenda in Zambian newsrooms and how it shapes journalistic performance and professionalism. The main purpose is to contribute to the broader framework of

“Constructive Journalism”, and the purported claim that China’s presence in Africa is to constructively report continent as opposed to the traditional western Manichean prisms.

Essentially, the study investigates the degrees to which China’s news agenda continue to shape the narratives and journalistic performance in the Zambian media. Second, the study examines how the media in Zambia, through the lenses of ZNBC, covers China across time, i.e., from the time China officially expressed its interest to partner with Zambia, through 2018. Two main questions characterized the undertakings:

1. To what degree and how is China’s investment in Zambia reflected in ZNBC coverage of news? Under this question, we explore two main things: The “degree”, to indicate the frequency of which the topic about China is featured in the Zambian media, and how those issues about China are covered.
2. Does ZNBC's coverage of China influence how other Zambian-based media organizations cover China?

### **Significance of the study**

The relevance of this study cannot be overemphasized given the major contributions it provides to both the theoretical and methodological frameworks. Theoretically, the study extends the literature by testing Chinese influence through three models: Framing, intermedia-agenda setting, and network agenda setting theories. And methodologically, it contributes to the literature by combining various methods of inquiry for the purpose of measuring the ‘hidden agenda’ of China’s intentions to invest in the Zambian newsrooms.

Theoretically, the study is first of its kind, to the best of my knowledge, to employ network agenda setting theory in sub-Saharan Africa, and on cases pertaining to China. Second, the study expands on the understanding and operationalization of network agenda setting theory

by testing the process not on the transfer of the networked influence from the media to the publics, as most research have done, but by treating one kind of media category as the recipient of the salience of influence. In other words, the study was able to treat one category of the media as the ‘public’ after establishing the central node within the network.

Some studies have used ‘intermedia agenda-setting to measure this process (Guo & Vargo, 2017). However, using NAS helped to examine more salient issued and their reciprocity, transitivity, heterogeneity, etc. in a way that intermedia agenda setting falls short. This attempt, by itself is a major contribution to the general theories of agenda-setting, and particularly NAS. Acknowledging the role of intermedia agenda setting, the study employed it, but only in the context of showing the transfer of issues/objects from one media to the other across time. To further analyze the effects, the study used the NAS model. The theory of framing was used in a more ordinary way as many scholars have done in the past.

Methodologically, the study combines NAS and network analysis to unveil the subliminal effects. It is the first of its kind to extensively and rigorously to quantitatively measure Chinese influence in Africa. The combination of content analysis through framing, NAS, and language, intent classification, and sentiment analyses has led to nuanced findings that most studies have only attempted to. Most existing studies about China in Africa have used qualitative analyses. While their findings inform the core arguments in the growing literature in Africa, the inability to measure subliminal messages in the media offered me the opportunity to contribute to the filling of the existing gaps.

### **Organization of the dissertation**

This dissertation consists of six chapters, with each documenting the specificities that inform the study. Chapter one introduces the problem and states the purpose of the study. It

begins with a scenario to provide the status quo of the media in Zambia and the role of Chinese frames and news agenda in the news content. The chapter extends to discuss the study's significance and contributions it makes to the development of theories of agenda-setting, the methodological approaches, as well as the growing literature on Chinese news agenda in Africa.

Chapter two provides the context while situating the study in Zambia. It gives a brief background of Zambia as a country and the development of the media. Further, it provides different media categories in Zambia on which this study resides. Particularly, I categorize the media as government (to indicate all media that are owned and sustained by the media corporation of Zambia – ZNBC); Private to indicate all media that are commercial and run by private individuals (although most of these are government members or elites from the opposition parties who have the financial power to run and sustain a news media); Community, to refer to the media that is literally owned and sustained by the community members themselves.

Such media are in form of radio stations that were developed in the 1990s to help train the local community with different skills that include but are not limited to health/HIV/AIDS, Agriculture, and civic education. Lastly, are Religious media owned by religious organizations such as Catholic and Pentecostal churches. Most such media claimed to only proclaim the gospel and do not involve themselves in politics discussions. However, the same cannot be said about the Catholic Church that has used its media platform to proclaim social justice. Their justification is that every human being is political, and you cannot talk about God without addressing the sufferings of the local people.

Chapter three provides the study's theoretical framework and literature review. It draws from various insights conducted both within the continent of Africa and outside to identify the

gaps and the need for filling them. There is scanty research especially in Zambia about the role of China on journalistic performance. Thus, the significance of this study cannot be overemphasized especially that it highlights different standpoints while scrutinizing their limitations. Also analyzed are broad frameworks of framing and agenda-setting theories. The epistemological underpinnings of the two theories are presented and later resting on intermedia and network agenda-setting as necessary theories to explain the phenomena. Chapter four explains how the who study was conducted and explicated. It draws insights from content, sentiment, and network analysis to show how certain techniques were used for each method to explain the phenomenon. Data on how the population was sampled, collected, and analyzed are presented. Further, I discuss and justify how issues pertaining to concepts measurements, construction, pretesting, etc., were addressed.

The fifth chapter presents the findings of the study. The study restated the research questions and then provided the results for each question. However, some questions were responded to thematically despite clearly highlighting the response given to each question. The chapter ends with the summary of the findings providing evidence and link to the literature and theory. Chapter six is the final chapter that discusses the findings. It begins by providing the summary of the findings while linking them to the research questions, the theories, and the literature review. Second, this chapter also provides the implications of these findings to journalists and the media in Zambia. It ends with the identification of the gaps in research and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### CONTEXT – SITUATING THE STUDY IN ZAMBIA

This chapter provides context of the state of the media in Zambia. The aim is to show the different media categories in Zambia, and how they are prone to the influence of Chinese news agenda. The chapter also provides a historical account of the bilateral relationships between Zambia and China that were mostly defined within political relations, and how they further spread to the media. Further, the chapter extends to discussing the concept of constructive journalism that China has used to cement the media relationships between Zambia and China. I define constructive journalism in the context of Zambia, and what it means to the journalists in their quest for a Zambian/African journalistic narrative.

#### **The nature of the Zambian media**

Not nearly enough studies have been done on the media in Zambia. More prominently, there is scanty research on Chinese influence of the media in Zambia even when it is the most affected in the continent of Africa. Most existing studies explore the theoretical underpinnings, thus leaving huge gaps on empirical research. Some scholars have attributed these gaps to the lack of transparency in the government data in the sense that most data are either erroneous or not made available to the public (Gondwe, 2021; Moyo and Chuma, 2010). Others have argued that the problem lies in journalists focusing on China and not interrogating their governments regarding the contracts they sign (Banda, 2009). Most of these arguments are rooted in the general nature of the media in Zambia categorized into four: Government-owned, Private/Commercial media, Community media, and Religious media.

The four media categories that have in a long time operated through traditional media are now converged into new media. Unlike Lawson-Borders (2003) that did not see radio and

satellite as integrated into the computer, table 1 below shows a complete integration of the four Zambian categories, and mostly nested on social media platforms. Radio and TV stations have equally leveraged social media for live broadcasts.

**Table 1:** *Zambian four media categories merge and their mediums*

<b>Government-owned media</b>	<b>Private media</b>	<b>Community media</b>	<b>Religious media</b>
Broadcast	Broadcast	Broadcast (Radio)	Broadcast
Print	Print	-	Print
Social media	Social media	Social media	Social media

**Note:** *Some community media might have print but broadcast is preferred due to literacy levels*

Like other parts of the world, print media consumption has considerably decreased, and most media are shifting to social media in the sense they create platforms from which to serve their audience. Nonetheless, the media categories have remained intact and their influence is still dominant. These media categories are defined in the following manner:

**1. Government/state-owned media**

Considered the government mouthpiece, the Zambian government-owned media traces its to the British colonial government (Moyo and Chuma, 2010). At that time (before Zambia’s independence in 1964), the main role of the media was to inform and entertain the colonialists (Gondwe, 2018; Hamasaka, 2008). Only a few Zambian citizens were able to afford a radio and use the media. And for such, the benefits were simply a side note in the sense that they were not the targeted audience. After independence in 1964, the now Zambian media became a government parastatal and played a similar role. However, one difference was seen in the focus on government propaganda (Moyo and Chuma, 2010). As Kasoma (2001) points out, any media that spoke against the government or the then President, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, ended up being



throttled. This is evident with the *National Mirror* tabloid that “refused to budge even after being denied advertisements from government and parastatal companies for criticizing President Kenneth Kaunda’s one-party regime and the evils that came with it” (Kasoma, 2001, p. 544). This form of suppression has continued with other media, therefore allowing the government-owned media to stand erect and prominent in the dissemination of information. The digital era has allowed for a broader expansion in the sense that ZNBC has opened various media platforms including those nested on social media networks like Facebook. Because of the assured funding, the government-owned media have become the most widespread and most consumed media in Zambia. Other media categories also take advantage of it to monitor news stories that they report to their local audiences as their own. Unestablished assertions have also been made to suggest that ZNBC media corporation pays prominent or popular individuals to host and officiate social media platforms, disguised as theirs, with the intentions of advancing the government agenda. The same assertion has been made about private media.

## **2. *Private media/Commercial media***

Private media is known by different names based on the levels of emphasis (Some call this kind of media as either independent or commercial). In this study private media refers to institutions of journalism whose reporting of news and views are perceived as not influenced by political, and especially government alignments in the sense that they are owned by private individuals and not the government (Kasoma, 2013). Although scholars can point to some earlier media as private (Kasoma, 2001), most researchers believe that private media in Zambia emerged during the neo-liberal era in the 1990s (Mulauzi, Bwalya, and Chisunka-Mwila, 2013; Phiri, 1999). After the 1991 elections the new government spearheaded by President Frederick Chiluba shifted from a centralized to a liberal free environment. This provided opportunities for

individuals and organizations to own and operate their own media. However, only the elite, and especially those involved in politics (opposition and government leaders) had the ability to own a private media. This is because, unlike in the West, most people in Zambia that are considered rich have ties with either the government or the opposition.

The private media were to fend for themselves by finding ways to sell their information and space for advertising. It was argued that most media, in their quest to survive the competition, resorted to sensational reporting. As Mulauzi, Bwalya, and Chisunka-Mwila (2013) had observed, “there was a general feeling among the private media practitioners that ethical reporting was dull, drab, uninteresting, and therefore, could not sell; that those who involved in it risked becoming bankrupt” (p.2). These challenges were further accompanied by the restrictive legal environments that became eminent just after a few years of media freedom. The POST newspaper, for example, received a strong backlash until its indefinite suspension in 2016. The closure is attributed to the failure of the paper to settle tax obligations – a motive that most people have described as a political strategy to silence the media that criticizes the government.

Against this stringent backdrop, the private media were motivated by profit and thus, were willing to align themselves with the government for incentives or any other organization that was willing to support them (Internews, 2009). In an event where China has openly come out with financial incentives for the media in Zambia, I assert that the private media will take advantage of the situation for their own profit. The fact that most private media ownership is linked to either government or political leaders is suspicious regarding the levels of influence that ZNBC’s news agenda might have on private media. Also, given their interest in making profit for survival, there is a high probability that most of them will succumb to Chinese incentives.

### 3. *Community media*

Among the many advantages that came with the neo-liberal media and the democratization of Zambian politics was the essential need for community media. Drawing from the already existing religious media impact and research conducted by Pano (2002) and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA Zambia, 2000), it was concluded that Zambia needed community media, and especially in form of radio. The belief was that such a medium would help educate people in rural areas on issues of HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, agriculture, human rights, civic matters, entrepreneurship, and many other basic community needs. To differentiate this from other media categories, community media were framed under the context of participatory communication theories. According to Marsha (2021) and Wigston (2001), for a medium to qualify as a community media, it had to aim at ‘empowering’ and reporting ‘culturally’ specific information that aligns with a particular community informed by their geographical and sociocultural (including linguistic) necessities (p. 31). Banda and Fourie (2004) summarize the criterion into four main features:

- a. should be fully controlled by a non-profit entity and carried on for non-profitable purposes
- b. should serve a particular community
- c. should encourage members of the community it serves, or persons associated with or promoting the interests of such community to participate in the selection and provision of programs to be broadcast during such broadcasting
- d. may be funded by donations, grants, sponsorships, advertising, membership fees, or by any combination of the aforementioned

Most importantly, a community media is said to create its own agenda in relation to the challenges that the community is facing, i.e., agricultural issues, diseases, reproductive health, education, etc. Kasoma (2001) argues that the need for community radio can better be appreciated against a backdrop of the technical and other shortcomings of national radio as provided by ZNBC, private/commercial radio, and Christian radio '(p. 29)'. Essentially, community media is perceived as less susceptible to outside influence. However, in the past, politicians have been given platforms for their campaigns, the governments have imposed certain messages to be broadcasted, and because of the lack of resources, some community media monitor ZNBC news to include in their programs. Against this backdrop, it can be argued that community media are also likely to be influenced by Chinese news agenda. First, they rely on donors even when they create their own agenda. Initially, donors like USAID were partial and did not seem to care about the news agenda – their intentions might have been different in the sense that they would sponsor the media while targeting minerals. However, China's direct interests in the media, poses some bigger questions. And the reliance on government and private media for news sources has also made community media susceptible to Chinese influence that seems to have a direct link to the government and private media.

#### ***4. Religious***

Religion in Zambia plays a major role in the affairs of the people and the government. This is because Zambia is predominantly Christian and that most politicians were trained in Christian schools. In the early 1990s, for example, the Catholic Church was perceived as exerting great influence on the government in the sense that they had the power to tell their members not to vote for a particular candidate if they did not approve of them (Chita and Mwale, 2017). In their article, the two authors note that a candidate that was not endorsed by the Catholic

Bishops of Zambia lost the elections. This is evidenced in the Kaunda and Chiluba case where the Church stood firm through their pastoral letters to challenge the government and discourage people from voting for them. Also, the Catholic Church is considered to have played a major role in deterring President Chiluba from running for the third term.

The religious media – one owned by a particular religious group, i.e., Catholic radio, televangelism, and now Muslim media are considered powerful tools not only for evangelization, but for creating an agenda believed to influence political decisions. According to Chita and Mwale (2017), religious media are least influenced by either the government or other donations. This is because of their mode of financing and sustaining their stations. Most of them have external sources of funding, and many others are sustained by the daily contributions of their members. The Catholic media, for example is usually managed by the clergy and nuns who are well educated in the field but do not directly receive a salary.

Because of their independence, religious media have become a symbol of authentic journalism practice but with a particular religious propaganda. Even in the face of Chinese investment, religious media researchers assert that Chinese news agenda has little or no influence on their media (Odeh and Glory, 2016). However, over time, religious media are now connecting with other secular media through symposia, media trainings offered by either BBC, USAID, or China. As a result, journalists working in these kinds of media share some ideology that could shape and influence their agenda. In this study, therefore, I argue that although the religious media do not receive direct financial support from China, their connections with other media categories inevitably compromise their position.

## **Chinese investment in Zambia – A historical account**

Zambia's contact with China is especially attributed to the Bandung conference convened in Indonesia on April 18-24, 1955. At that time, Zambia was called the Central Africa Federation (Zambia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe), with Zambia being Northern Rhodesia. The objective of Asia-African conference was to ideologically motivate and support African national liberation movements through direct aid (Yu and Longenecker, 1994). Initially, this was the catch for many African national movements of that time in their desire for political independence (Gondwe, 2018). China was considered as an "all-weather friend" by the three countries. However, the first Zambian President was deeply suspicious when the Chinese showed interest in assisting to build the railway. His suspicion stemmed from the Western assertions that communists only helped other countries to subvert existing regimes (Wang, 2008). This was substantiated by Chinese Premier Chou en Lai's statement that "Africa was ripe for revolution" (Wang, 2008). By the time Zambia got its independence, China's policies were fully manifest. As Flanary (1998) observes, the construction of the Tanzania-Zambia (TAZARA) railway line is one example of the diplomatic relations of China, Zambia, and Tanzania (p.27).

Another noted interaction of China and Zambia came after the postmillennial era instigated by the Tiananmen Square events of 1989 (Qichen, 2006). According to Qichen, the Tiananmen Square events compelled China to re-evaluate its foreign policies towards the developing world. While Tiananmen Square triggered a crisis that the West seemed to have casted a blind eye, Zambia and other African countries were openly supportive. As stated by the Chinese government, "It was our African friends who stood by us and extended a helping hand in the difficult times following the political turmoil in Beijing, when the Western countries-imposed sanctions on China" (Qichen, p. 200). The democratic mandate and the opening of

market economies in the 1990s made Zambia and other African countries a hub for Chinese investment. Fraser & Lungu (2007) observe that China began to concede that the macroeconomic situation in Zambia and the rest of Africa were taking a favorable turn, with resultant opportunities for Chinese commerce (p. 14). This argument was based on the hypothesis that African countries had adopted Chinese open-door bi and multi-lateral policies.

Therefore, bilateral visits of state officials became relevant and frequent. Such relations have even been extended to local citizenry from both countries. Fraser & Lungu's (2007) study suggest a steady, but fast-growing number of both Zambians and Chinese nationals travelling to the two countries for especially business purposes. This has become a reality as more than 80 thousand Chinese individuals have moved to Zambia (World Population review 2020). The foundation of the Zambia-China relations provided a framework for a broad strategic partnership between the two countries. This relationship is perceived as grounded on China's five principles of Sino-Africa relations: Equality and sovereignty; common development and mutual benefit; consultation on international issues; friendship; and cooperation in advancing in a new international, political, and economic order (Alden, Large, & Soares De Oliveira, p. 263). Based on these principles, new forms of what is considered as "mutual benefit" have recorded a success.

Notably, the two countries started the joint management of Mulungushi Textile Mill in 1996, which was built with Chinese aid in 1982, thus increasing its profits considerably. Further, the Bank of China has opened its branches across Zambia, and equally purchased the Zambia National Commercial Bank. In the same year, the China Investment and Trade Developing Center (CITDC) was set up in Zambia. In 1998, China National Nonferrous Metals Industry Construction Co. (Group) bought the Zambian Chambishi Copper Mine for US\$ 20 million. The

mine started operation in July 2000 (Kuo, 2015). Bilateral trade volume between the two countries in 2002 reached US\$ 83.247 million, of which Chinese export reached US\$ 46.056 million, and import US\$ 37.191 million. Currently, Chinese investment in Zambia stands at \$3.8 billion (Kanenga, 2016). Today, the Chinese government has invested beyond including government national security and armed forces, and the media (Lusaka Times: Dec 18, 2017).

### **Chinese investment and the Media in Zambia**

For over a decade, Chinese leaders have repeatedly expressed in public the desire for China to invest in the global media and contribute to the flows of information. During his speech celebrating the 5th anniversary of the foundation of CCTV in 2008, Li Changchun, the former member of the Politburo Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in charge of overseeing the media, reflected on the need of Chinese media to become more international. Li's speech identified three deficiencies and made recommendations to amend them. First, he acknowledged the lack of influence of China in mainstream international media and asked for real efforts to revert the situation; second, he encouraged the development of a true "going out policy" for the mass media, including CCTV's international division, what is now called CGTN; and third, he signaled the need for further professionalization of the media industry to for the sake of competition.

The purpose of this move was the generalized perception that foreign public opinion was failing to "understand" the rise of China and that this was because non-Chinese media recurrently portrayed the country in a negative light (Mingjiang Li, 2008). Important political keywords under President Hu Jintao, such as "peaceful rise" (*heping jueqi*), later on substituted by "peaceful development" (*heping fazhan*), the desire of China to build a "harmonious society" (*hexie shehui*), and the concepts of "Chinese dream" (*Zhongguo meng*) and "moderately



prosperous society” (*xiaokang heshui*) which became more prominent during the first term of President Xi, have consistently clashed with non-Chinese media depictions of systemic corruption, violations of human rights, growing income gaps and high military spending (Peng, 2004; Stone & Xiao, 2007; Warlaumont, 2006).

The most notable perceived media hostility toward China occurred in 2008, shortly before the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Beijing. Overtly, many international media focused their reporting on civil unrest in Tibet and the international demonstrations against China (Y. Huang & Fahmy, 2011; Manzenreiter, 2010; D. L. Yang, 2008). This was relatively unique given the concurrency of events and the expected appraisal of China’s achievements (Zheng, 2021; Polumbaum, 2003) that led to the celebration of a very successful event. Such perceptions have continued to spur across the media platforms as observed in the prominence of the Hong Kong protests. Essentially, several critiques have emerged to challenge the Chinese mainstream media as failing to highlight the true picture of the protests. In 2006, during the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of diplomatic relations with Africa, China organized the ‘third ministerial conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing, which was attended by 41 African heads of state.

The most tangible outcome of the meeting was the FOCAC Beijing action plan and declaration, a document that is still regularly cited by Chinese and African governments (Wekesa, 2017; Fernando, 2014; Du Plessis, 2014). The text includes a subsection on Sino-African media cooperation which calls for “news media to play a positive role in enhancing mutual understanding and friendship” and encourages “more report[ing] and coverage by the news media of the other side”. The text explicitly mentions actions to facilitate “each other’s news agencies in sending resident and non-resident correspondents for news reporting”. There

are also mentions to China's commitment to train African media personnel and the agreement to pursue exchanges of press authorities and correspondents from Africa to China (FOCAC, 2006).

The stress on media exchanges and cooperation in China's foreign policy was exclusive to Sino-African relations for some time before Beijing began including similar references to other multilateral forums, such as China-CELAC Forum in Latin America (2015) or the China-Arab Cooperation Forum (2009). In the past 8 years, China has offered scholarships to a lot of practicing journalists in Africa for short and long-term trainings. Further, centers to discuss China in African media have been opened through China's financial support and several symposia continue to proliferate, raising major concerns to the American government. Further proof of the interest that Beijing has in developing deeper media relations with African countries is the bi-annual celebration of the Forum of China-Africa Media Cooperation which began in 2012. Over 200 high-level officials from African countries attended the Second Forum in 2014 and were personally greeted by Liu Qibao, member of the Central Politburo of the CCP and, at the time, Head of the Publicity (or Propaganda) Department of the CCP (Xinhua, 2014). The interests that Africans have shown in China's foreign policy and public diplomatic activities is important to reiterate for various reasons.

First, not only does China have vested economic interests in the continent, but it also finds a much more favorable public opinion than anywhere else in the world (Pew Research, 2014). Second, political leaders in most African countries have shown little interest in diplomatic riffs, making the continent a fertile ground on which China can experiment with foreign policy instruments (Madrid-Morales, 2018). When it comes to public diplomacy, Africa is China's sandbox and testing ground. Beijing feels at ease in Africa because it has found a politically welcoming environment; it has avoided the kind of controversies with civil society faced in other

developing nations; it has, so far, matched the narrative of “win-win relations” at the core of China’s foreign policy jargon with tangible actions; and, more importantly, it has been able to experiment with new forms of outreach and engagement. Africa is a continent of many “first times” in China’s public diplomacy: the first cultural centers, the first FM radio station, the first overseas broadcasting center, etc.

Once established that Africa occupies a central position in China’s public diplomacy efforts, including international broadcasting and other mediated forms of communication, the next question should be, how does China’s *current* mediated engagement with Africa materialize? Note the stress on current, as China’s media presence in Africa has been going on for several decades. For example, Xinhua set up the first permanent bureau in Sub-Saharan Africa in Guinea Conakry in 1959 (Xin, 2009) and copies of Chinese publications such as *Peking Review* were available across the continent even earlier (Ungör, 2009). However, the nature of Sino-African media relations back then and today is substantially different. In the 1950s and 1960s, China was engaged in an ideological confrontation, much of which took place in the news media. Today, the nature of media relations is more diverse. One can argue that China is pushing its media to internationalize in Africa in two directions: to assist in developing media infrastructure for yet unknown reasons, and to take an active role in the crafting of a media narrative for Chinese development across the globe.

### **Public perception of Chinese investment in Zambia**

Little or no research has been done on Zambians’ perceptions of Chinese investment, especially in Zambia. However, patching narratives from various media outlets provide insights into how the Zambian people perceive the general Sino-China relationship. Put together, the common narratives suggest a schism between those who support Chinese investments verses

those that see the investment as a galvanized strategy. While some individuals, including some parts of the government seem to be directly benefiting (i.e., the armed forces of Zambia whose houses have been generously constructed by China), others continue to face the wrath of Chinese labor policies and misguided human rights violations. Others have gone beyond to question whether the generosity rendered to the armed forces is not simply a ‘soft power strategy’ as described by Nye (2004).

However, public opinion of the Chinese in Zambia seems to have fluctuated intensely over the past 20 years. From the time the then-opposition leader, Micheal Chilufya Sata, began to link Chinese presence in Zambia to xenophobia and poor labor relations, the people of Zambia became more skeptical. Since then, the Zambian public’s view of the Chinese has been dominated by their perceived labor relations and their role in the Zambian economy. Disputes over minimum wage and labor conditions in the mining sector have turned violent on multiple occasions. Examples of such include the 2010, 2011, 2013, 2017, and 2019 protests by laborers over poor conditions. While these labor issues are not directly linked to the Zambian media, the type of reporting exhibited poses several questions. For example, despite the intensity of such stories (i.e., a Chinese manager shooting 11 workers who were protesting in 2010) and the international attention that the stories had attracted (BBC and WSJ reported the stories), the Zambian media showed little or interest in reporting them.

Anecdotal evidence is found in some small media outlets and blogs that most journalism professionals consider as ‘fake’ or uncredible. Other media that seemed to have reported such stories include those owned by Churches and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as Transparent International. Such a conundrum presents the dissected and varying opinions among the Zambian population as well as the media. Nonetheless, while initial reaction to the Chinese

could be described as trepidation growing into outright hostility, Zambians have since become accustomed to their presence in the shops and mines, and now tend to view them largely as economic partners.

### **China and the constructive reporting of Africa**

China's presence in Zambia, and Africa as a whole, has continued to elicit widespread debates among scholars on its impact and role in rebranding national images and that of the media (Mano, 2016; Gagliardone, et. al., 2012; Farah & Mosher, 2010). While many argue that China is pushing its propaganda in Africa through the media (Xin, 2009), others support the proposition that Chinese media policies are directed towards "constructive reporting" (Bailard, 2016) that seek to re-brand national images with positivity. Essentially, the idea of constructive reporting of Africa stems from the notion that most western media had only two perspectives of representing Africa: Negative or positive, good, or bad, and black or white while ignoring the middle ground (Gagliardone, 2013).

The middle ground, according to Yanqiu & Matingwina (2013) is understood in terms of five key themes, namely, positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meanings, and accomplishment (p. 96). Accordingly, the authors assert that in constructive reporting positive emotions the efforts made by the audience within the middle ground are acknowledged – therefore denoting the media as a platform for social aspiration; the engagement principle which seeks to engage the "hero narratives" of the locals regardless of the degree of contribution; relationships in the sense that the media and the people involved as seen to share a mutual narrative; meaning to refer to the local understanding of the everyday lives of the people and interpreting them in their contexts, and accomplishments to emphasize what has been achieved instead of what has been lost (p. 97). For example, a story about famine in Africa is mostly

reported negatively, therefore, ignoring the efforts that most people on grassroots might be putting on.

As a result, people look up to Western societies for help instead of emulating some of the efforts that their local people are doing. In short, "constructive journalism is solution-based journalism where reporters use various themes to understand problems, engage the people affected and officials to discuss possible solutions, and finally celebrate the achievements to inspire others in a similar situation" (Yanqui & Matingwina, p. 97). A further understanding of 'constructive reporting' resides within the Scandinavian framework that draws from Galtung and Ruge, (1965)'s seminal works entitled "The structure of foreign news". In their analyses of how news is transferred across the continents, Galtung and Ruge (1965) observed that news values were simply characterized by "frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite people, reference to persons and reference to something negative" (p. 71), therefore ignoring the core values intended to tell a newsworthy story.

In attempting to rectify this problem, scholars such as Harcup and O'Neil (2001) draw from concepts of 'action', 'peace', and 'public' journalism to suggest solution-oriented journalism. But this is not to suggest that constructive journalism is tantamount to 'happy news', 'uncritical', or a static domain (McIntyre and Gyldensted, 2018, p. 46). Instead, constructive journalism resides within a larger paradigm of constant research informed by rigorous methodological approaches and application. Typical examples would include studies conducted by Yanqui and Matingwina (2013) in their attempt to assess whether CCTV employed constructive journalism in covering Africa. Other studies such as those by McIntyre & Sobel (2017)'s constructive reporting in Rwanda; Xiang & Zhang's (2020) constructive approaches to manufacturing

consent, and McIntyre and Gyldensted's (2014) lens on constructive reporting as a positive psychology technique, etc., pose as a hallmark for understanding the phenomenon.

### **Indicators of constructive reporting in Zambia**

Although there is a dearth of research documenting the nature of constructive reporting in Zambia and Africa at large, several factors can be attributed to the variables indicating its presence. As a starting point, it is important to note that unlike traditional news reporting, constructive journalism requires that journalists play an active role in the construction of new the reality (McQuail, 2013). Such roles entail journalism independence in thought and practice as opposed to what Chomsky and Herman (2002) referred to as the “democratic postulate” to imply the contention that the media are independent and are committed to discovering and reporting the truth” (p. xi). Therefore, the most basic indicators of constructive reporting are seen in journalists who actively, independently, and objectively play the role of selecting issues for the media (i.e., generating media agenda), selecting sources and angles of the story, thereby giving visibility, and meaning to events that affect the local people (Waisboard, 2013). According to McIntyre et al., (2018), the very nature of taking an active role allows for journalists to establish a more engaging and involving way of news reporting, therefore, taking responsibility of the impact of the news.

Other indicators include the focus on thematic as opposed to episodic (routine kind of reporting). The focus on thematic reporting allows for a diverse of sources and perspective, in-depth information, solution centered on social/local problems (meaning the source should be the person affected), reporting local perspectives) In other words, the news should be constructed around people’s daily lives. Further, specific variables have been used to operationalize the concept of constructive journalism. In their article, for example, Zhang and Matingwina (2016)

used the hero, accomplishment, and meaning as their independent variables to compare how BBC Africa and *China Daily* reported the Ebola case in Africa. Based on three variables measured through tone and the slant of the story, the authors were able to argue for the presence or absence of constructive journalism. Some critiques have perceived these variables as simply measuring frames in the news. Others have gone further to equate this kind of journalism to solution and peace journalism (Bhowmik and Beyene, 2021), therefore, pointing to themes like truth, people, and solution-oriented features as the main variables. These variables were introduced by Galtung (2003) in his quest to measure peace journalism.

In this study, examples of constructive reporting would be a story by the Lusaka times entitled, “Zambia-China, An intricate relationship”. This story dated September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018 provides a detailed narrative of the relationship that exists between China and Zambia while highlighting the implications to the people of Zambia as well as China. In this story, the journalist shows independence by their ability to point out both the strengths and weaknesses, the diverse of sources, highlighting the strengths of the relationship, and most of all, orienting the story towards the local people. Other studies have shown that China has provided a platform for African to speak their points of views by virtue of investing in the African media and mounting their own satellites (Yu-Shan Wu, 2012). This is consistent with Yanqui’s (2014) argument that what CCTV Africa is trying to do is not just to report itself differently against the Western media but also to construct its relations with African countries and people as well.

Despite feeble attempts to locate constructive journalism in Zambia, and Africa at large, translating the theoretical underpinnings into practice continues to elude several researchers and journalists. First, there is an old problem pointed out by Tomaselli (2003) of deifying African values, and thus failing to fully embrace them amidst the global village. In the recent past years,



we have seen the world joining together in terms of values and practice and it has become almost impossible to separate one value from the other. As Umejei (2020) notes, there has been hybridity of values in journalism practice. In most African countries, the African values have become submerged into Christian values, therefore, making it hard to separate what is African, Christian, and/or Western. That is why most scholars believe that what we have as African values are simply an amalgamation of Western values. Second, there is a question of whether constructive journalism is transformative. If indeed it is, as most scholars have asserted, to what degree can the same strategies be used to perpetuate soft powers? Xiang & Zhang's (2020) study conducted in Kenya notes that "the 'constructiveness' of CCTV-Africa is marked with the 'non-interference diplomatic strategy of China in Africa which minimalizes the political involvement of China in local conflicts by reducing investigation on causes and emphasizing solutions. Simultaneously, it also produces an "apolitical context which encourages economic development in African societies to cater to the grander politics of China in Africa" (p.171).

While these findings are affirmative, the fact that the study was conducted indicates the possibility that constructive journalism can be used to manufacture consent. In an effort, for example, to constructively report Zambia, China now owns more than 60% of the shares in the national media and has signed a contract in which it will collect revenue for more than 25 years. As a result, the media agenda has shifted from talking about the local people to making China the center and subject of the story. This shift does not reflect the values of constructive journalism or African journalistic narratives. Further, Xiang & Zhang (2020), were also able to show that the neo-liberal and apolitical discourses displayed by CCTV-Africa seemed to embrace a market economy while maintaining their heritage of communist rhetoric in the public

affair (p. 184). Under such a circumstance, how and to what extent can China constructively report Africa and help the African media tell its narrative?

The concept of constructive journalism is an affront to the dominant Western narratives that inform how journalists and journalism practice in Africa is perceived. For a long time, the western media was oriented towards negative reporting of Africa. Western ideologies were often designed to present African journalists as simply 'incompetent and corrupt' (Asante: 1999). As a result, African national images were dented with impoverishment, disease, and hopelessness (Okigbo,1995: p. 108). This presentation of Africa led to a negative image perception among the audience from the west, Africa, and the whole world. Yanqiu (2015) asserts that unlike the Chinese media, the Western media policies have always advanced a “watchdog” approach of reporting. This approach, according to Yanqui (2015) is only interested at exposing what is perceived as the truth without considering the ramifications, or even the reparations (p. 27).

By so doing, the Western media approach has in many circumstances instigated unnecessary conflicts. According to Yanqui, the Chinese media seeks to promote what she calls “constructive journalism”; defining it as a form of reporting that aims at seeking a solution to the problem (Greenslade, 2015) and not merely exposing it without suggesting solutions. For Yanqui, while the Western media focuses on exposing the perceived truth without considering the ramifications and remedies to the truth they have exposed, the Chinese media is especially interested in asking the question, “how can we help” (p.22). Citing Marshall (2010), Greenslade (2015) asserts that “When you look at western media, a lot of the time their strategy is to be combative. But what we want to say is that ‘this is the issue, this is the challenge, and this is how it’s being solved’ rather than getting people to argue.” Marshall (2010) and Greenslade (2015)

argue that China is more interested in helping Africa rise as a superpower with less consideration of the past mistakes and weaknesses.

Similar sentiments were echoed by the former Chinese Ambassador to Kenya, Liu Guangyuan, at a seminar on China-Africa media cooperation in Nairobi in 2013. According to the ambassador, “The fact is that only a small number of countries monopolize the international media discourse. In this ongoing conspiracy, both the images of China and those of Africa have suffered gross distortions - It is unacceptable to continue to portray Africa as a continent overtaken by poverty, war, and turmoil. It is also unethical to force a bad image on China-Africa relations” (Umejei, 2017). These and many related arguments provide hope for the intentions of China to invest in Africa, other questions of framing, agenda setting, and ultimately ‘constructive reporting’ Africa continue to elude most African scholars.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

Because of the understudied nature of, and the theoretical gaps in the relationship between China and the media in sub-Saharan Africa, one cannot rigidly insist that a single theory stands the best chance of explaining the implications of China investing in the Africa – let alone the influence that Chinese news agenda might have on the African media system. The novelty of the field calls for the observation of several phenomena as a prerequisite. It is this ‘unknown’ newness of the field that makes a theory-building approach potentially productive. A myriad of literature on the Sino-Africa relationship continue to grow, yet most of them focus on the political and economic implications. In other words, until recently, little or no research was dedicated to China’s implication on the African media. Particularly, there is still a dearth of research on China’s investment as it relates to the media agenda, journalism training, and journalism practice. Recently, some African scholars have attempted to explore the impact of Chinese influence on journalists operating in Chinese media outlets.

Seminal studies on China and the media in Africa have explored the implications of Chinese media operating in Africa (Umejei, 2020, 2018; 2017; Madrid-Morales, 2018, 2016; Thussu, 2018), as well as the perceptions of journalists on the Sino-China relationship. Madrid-Morales (2018) explored the flows of information from the two giant media outlets in China: The China Global Television Network (CGTN) and CCTV news. Using theories of media flows and contra-flows, Madrid-Morales (2018) was able to provide evidence of the transfer of influence from Chinese media to the Africa by observing the characteristics of the Chinese news agenda in the African media. On the other hand, Umejei (2020) took an individual level analysis to examine Chinese media operating in Africa. Through extensive interviews, Umejei (2020) was

able to show that Chinese media operating in Africa had two kinds of gatekeepers: Those comprised by Chinese nationals and gatekeeping every news item that mentioned China - “Upstairs gatekeepers” verses those assigned to gatekeep everything but news mentioning China in them – “Downstairs gatekeeper” (p.55). Based on these and many other findings, Umejei indicated that the Sino-African relationship, as it related to the media, was not symmetrical. At most, the Chinese media management operating in Africa controlled the news content, and their policies did not seem to support their idea of “constructively reporting Africa”.

This is confirmed in cases where journalists, for example, would not be allowed to report on certain issues even when they are considered important by most of their audience. What is ironic, however, is that despite Umejei’s (2020) findings, his future predictions are of a hybridized African media comprising Western, Chinese, and African journalistic values. According to Umejei (2020) this will be the beginning of an African global media to compete with the global, transnational, and geo-cultural flows of information as indicated in Daya Thussu’s (2007) typology of media flows. His argument counteracts the persistent Manichean discourses about the Sino-Africa relationship to accommodate and present China’s claim that it is here to help Africa. While I am not particularly arguing against these findings, I assert that Umejei’s (2020) conclusions calls for more research that extends beyond the in-depth interviews of journalists on grassroots to include the measuring of subliminal messages underlying Chinese news agenda.

Further, Madrid-Morales & Wasserman (2018) and Wasserman & Madrid-Morales (2018) studies take a moderately macro-level analysis of some media in South Africa to discuss the impact that China has on local journalists and journalistic values. Their arguments are consistent with Yanqiu & Matingwina (2016) and Yanqiu (2014) who insist that China’s

presence in Africa is not to colonize the media but create a nuanced journalistic paradigm of “constructive journalism” (p. 96). According to Yanqiu & Matingwina, Africa, including its journalists have been inundated with anachronistic perceptions, which the presence of China is planning to revert. These arguments are, however, inconsistent with most empirical studies like those of Wekesa (2017; 2016), Bailard (2016), and Gagliardone & Geall (2014; 2013) who through cross-national correlation studies had shown that China’s post-2006 media expansion in Africa produced the desired effects on African public opinion in favor of China.

While these studies provide major contributions to the literature, their existence opens new gaps and avenues to explore the unprecedented interest that China has shown, not only in mounting their own media outlets, but by heavily investing and buying out local media, including those that are government owned. In 2017, for example, Chinese media conglomerate StarTimes funded the rollout of a migration to a new digital TV signal, and now controls more than 60% of a joint digital venture with ZNBC (Government-owned media corporation), called TopStar. The venture was also bankrolled by a \$232 million loan from Exim Bank, and has been criticized by media watchdogs for allegedly granting excessive influence over the media landscape to Beijing (Jalloh, 2019). This situation provides a backdrop for understanding China’s nuanced impact, influence, and subsequent implications that have not yet been explored by previous studies.

Essentially, there are still gaps in empirical research documenting how China is shaping or reshaping the African narrative. It is with no doubt that the West has always had a great influence on the sub-Saharan media agenda. However, the efforts of the African scholars that emerged in the wake of the democratic media in the 1990s, cannot be overlooked. The quest for an African media ethics (Kasoma, 1996; Mfumbusa, 2010); the call for an African oriented

journalism (Franklin & Mensing, 2010; Berger, 2008; Banda, et. al, 2007); the desire to contextualize the African culture into within media practice (Mabweazara, 2015; Nyamnjuh, 2005; Tomaselli, 2003); and many other efforts are a manifest a push towards an African narrative in the Media. Thus, the influence that China has introduced, despite the claim for helping Africa to create its own narrative, undermines the quest for Africa to create its only narrative.

### **The nature of an African journalistic narrative**

To understand the concept of an African media narrative, one should start by asking what “constructive reporting” of Africa means. There is still a dearth of research on this concept, but the general definition draws from ideas that “professional journalists should remain detached observers at all times, limiting themselves to (merely) report on social reality and to intervene by no means” (Mast, et., al, 2019, p. 494). This perspective is culminated in the notion of engaging the affected audience in the creation, production of news stories, and the seeking of possible solutions. In other words, for the understanding and propagation of the local narrative in an objective way as opposed to the Manichean approaches. Subsequently, this conceptualization is translated into a local, and thus African narrative.

Research on how an ‘African media narrative’ should look like is situated within a larger framework of western verses African cultural values. The schism exists between scholars that see African journalism as infiltrated, amalgamated, and thus, impossible to tell an African story verses those that see Western values as simply an appendment to the required normative journalistic values. Essentially, most scholars that are against the merging of Western values in African journalism practice trace the deficiencies among journalists to “normative failures”, defined as an inability to evolve an adequate normative order out of the confluence between

African and Western values (Mfumbusa, 2008; Nyamnjoh, 2005; Menkiti, 2001). Accordingly, these, and other scholars perceive African values as communitarian, and putting the society interests before those of individuals, as opposed to what they claim as Western values that anchor on what Bertrand (1993) referred to as “jungle individualism”. The argument is that Western values hold personal freedom key to journalistic reporting and narratives.

However, this thinking has received criticism even among African scholars, including Tomaselli (2003) who observes the tendency among African scholars to deify African values. Tomaselli (2003) argues that the African scholars have largely failed to translate their theoretical underpinnings into practice. In other words, the author argues that while the thought is insightful, the scholars have failed to show how such African values can be enlisted to improve media performance. Accordingly, the call for an African ethics by Kasoma (1995) does not seem to be different from the principles of virtue ethics (essentially established under Western discourses), which in practice are hard to implement and dependent on individual stable and habitual dispositions.

Second, the other group of scholars does not see the inclusion of Western values into the African media as a problem. Instead, they perceive the failure to fully embrace Western values as the foundation for problems in African media performance. As Mfumbusa (2008) and Menkiti (2017) had argued, “since technology evolves in a value context, adopting media technology as the African countries have done, without internalizing the attendant western values limit its usefulness” (Mfumbusa, p. 142). Because of this, most scholars end up grappling with defining what ought or what ought not be African journalism practice. As a result, journalism is perceived in terms of what Nyamnjoh (2005) refers to as the ‘politics of belonging’ – the tendency of



encouraging “favoritism rather than meritocracy in parceling out jobs and assignments in the media industry undermining quality and editorial autonomy in the process” (Mfumbusa, p. 142).

Nonetheless, Nyamnjoh (2005) still believe that an African narrative and story can be told even amidst the conflicting debates. First, a narrative should include, and not in any way be devoid of the local ethnic values. This means that what most local people consider as important should characterize the news as opposed to the stories that simply focus on government leaders and other public figures. Djokotoe (2004) calls this “Issue-Based” journalism, which is opposed to a kind of journalism characterized by ‘big names’, character assassination, and thus lacking in-depth content. For Nyamnjoh (2005), this can only be achieved if journalists and all other media practitioners chose to become social actors or actresses enmeshed in a particular context that has been and continues to be shaped by a history of connections and disconnections informed by the interconnecting of the local and global hierarchies. In other words, the media and its journalists must always endeavor to ask the question of how they are empowering the local people through their narratives. It is then that the media, regardless of whether it is Western, African, or now Chinese can claim that it is telling an African story in a constructive way.

Despite the seemingly exhaustive debates, many gaps are continuously exposed in the literature. This is because of the continued interests that China is exhibiting in Africa. Some of these gaps are glaring and, therefore, offer great opportunities for original contributions. Particularly, the extended interests of China in local newsrooms provides avenues for original contributions to the theory and literature. An inquiry into China’s explicit interests in African newsrooms would indeed intersect with the existing debates discussed above. As noted, debates about the global flows seem to be substantiated with supported hypotheses that the African media now possess Chinese characteristics (Calitz, 2019; Madrid-Morales, 2018). Second, that

China's owned media in Africa control the agenda and journalists (Umejei, 2020); and third, that interviewed journalists in South Africa do not see China as influencing their journalistic values (Wasserman & Madrid-Morales, 2018). But approaches would also allow for discovering subliminal influences and their possible implications. For example, how is China's presence in the African newsroom affecting the agenda of the local newsrooms? And how are the affected local media re-affecting other local media and public opinion and discourses?

Over time, how does the Zambian media frame information about China? What are the main issues characterizing the Sino-Africa debates in the African newsrooms? What tone is dominant in the debates about the Sino-Africa relationship? These areas remain unexplored, therefore, providing a better avenue for contributing to the literature and theory at large. It would, therefore, be an important re-orientation to attempt to do a three-way analysis in which the sub-Saharan African media, Chinese media agenda, and the shaping of public opinion and discourse are captured in networked ways rather than in isolation – and this study attempts to do just that by testing the effects of Chinese media messages through the frames in agenda-setting theories.

### **What influences the news agenda in Zambia?**

Several studies have attempted to analyze the media and its influence on its publics for more than a century. Such studies have provided strong evidence that the media does not only tells the public how to think, but what to think about (Cohen, 1963; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Entman, 1993). For example, in their Chapel Hill study, McCombs and Shaw (1972) were able to demonstrate a strong correlation coefficient ( $r > .9$ ) between what the audience thought was the most important issue in the 1968 presidential elections and what the local and national news media reported as most important. Based on their findings, McCombs and Shaw concluded that

“the news played an integral part in the shaping of political realities; and that the amount of time spent on an issue and the information relayed in a news story, along with the story’s position, determined the consumption levels and how much one placed importance on an issue”.

In this and many other studies, a consistent observation has been made to suggest that the media prefers less substantial, tactic stories over more in-depth policy coverage, and it bears a slightly negative tone (Graber, 1976; Just, Crigler, & Buhr, 1999; Patterson, 2002). Most importantly, the topic and tone of the story has great impact on public opinion (Graber, 1988; Ross, 1992; Golan & Wanta, 2001). In his study, for example, Simpande (2019) carried out an analysis of the state-owned Zambia Daily Mail and private-owned New Vision and Daily Nation’s coverage of the 2016 presidential elections and found out that voter participation was concomitantly influenced by the media in question. This is consisted with Banda’s (2016) findings that voter participation is influenced by the electronic and print media (Banda, 2016, p.49). The implications of these findings are that media coverage is often the primary source of information for citizens of Zambia. Therefore, the role of the media in covering information that is relevant to society, particularly the Zambia-China relationship is a critical element in the process of understanding whether China is indeed seeking to ‘constructively report Zambia. The obligation of the media to provide accurate and enough information to voters is paramount.

### **Framing and Agenda setting theories – The relationship**

The theories of framing and agenda-setting are probably the most popular analytical concepts of media and communication studies. The two concepts are usually described with an artistic analogy to indicate their values. As Tewksbury and Scheufele (2009) had earlier pointed out, “Artists know that the frame placed around a painting can affect how viewers interpret and react to the painting itself” (p. 17). This resonates with what journalism and the media employ

when describing the events – they carefully and sometimes subconsciously choose images and words that have the power to influence the “what and how” the public ought to think about, and more importantly influence how the public interpretate and evaluate issues and policies. Simply put, to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a media text, to promote a definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendations for the events in question (Entman, 2007, 1993). As Entman (1993) asserts, frames are close to concepts such as categories, scripts, or stereotypes that connote mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals’ information processing. This implies that the idea of framing is about mental codes of experience in relation to a particular organized mode of cognitive perception and response to complex situations. In other words, framing theory denote clusters of ideas that enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify, and label experiences.

Because of its popularity, the theory of framing has become rife with different conceptualizations. Several studies have employed different approaches to the conceptualization of frames and framing, with some emphasizing the “principles of organization, selection, emphasis, and representation, while others embarking on the notion of the “structured understanding of the way certain aspect of the world function” (Cacciatore, Scheufele, & Iyengar, 2015). These approaches underscore the schism that exists between those that focus on the debates of what exactly constitutes framing (Entman, 2010) verses those who argue that framing overlaps or is embedded within the theories of priming and agenda-setting (De Vreese, 2005; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; McCombs & Ghanem, 2001). According to Cacciatore, Scheufele, and Iyengar (2015) these debates and the authentic definition of the theory of framing could only be understand in the context of its historicity and the underlying assumption of each stage.

## **Tracing the theory of Framing**

In 1979 the *Econometrica* journal published an insightful article entitled “Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk”. In this article, Kahneman and Tversky (1979) provided evidence to the idea that individual decisions were systematically affected by the way in which problems are presented. Specifically, the authors argued that “individuals tend to be risk averse to problems framed in the positive direction “i.e., concerning gains” and to be risk seeking toward problems framed in the negative direction “i.e., concerning losses” (Bazerman, 1984). Since then, the article has chronicled a series of studies, and is widely considered among the pioneering theories of media effects. The central thrust held by the pioneering studies were that framing affects the formation of paradigms in organizational behavior (Entman, 1993). This psychological approach to framing is considered the first among the three other disciplines differentiated through their levels of analysis (Scheufele, 2009), namely, Psychological, sociological, and communication approaches.

The psychological approach is attributed to Kahneman and Tversky’s (1979) study which attempted to explain the common and systematic deviations that consumers make outside their rationality. In other words, the attempt was made to examine how certain situations are framed to target an individual or a group. Accordingly, Kahneman and Tversky (1979) developed what they called the “prospect theory” to refer to the idea that “(a) rewards and losses are evaluated relative to a neutral reference point; (b) potential outcomes are expressed as gains (e.g., jobs and plants saved) or losses (e.g., jobs and plants lost) relative to this fixed, neutral reference point; and (c) the resultant change in the asset position is assessed by an S-shaped value function” (p.282). Essentially, the two authors argued that the way the problem is framed, or presented, can dramatically change the perceived neutral point of the question. The logic behind this argument

is deeply rooted in the classical utility theory in economics, which explains how people rank their orders of their preferences.

Further, Kahneman and Tversky's (1979) "prospect theory" expanded this understanding to include how organizations 'frame' certain situations to lure individuals or groups into making them as the most important issues in their choices of preference. Their subsequent studies have been able to demonstrate these findings with empirical evidence. For example, their 1981 "Asian disease" study was able to demonstrate that the "human choice is contingent on the description of choice problem, or how information is contextualized, rather than the expected utility of those options" (Cacciatore, Scheufele, & Iyengar, p. 10). Central to this understanding is the idea that how a given piece of information is presented to the audience, varies from what is being communicated.

The second approach takes a sociological tradition to emphasize the idea that frames are more than a mere presentation of logically equivalent information (Kahneman, 2003), to include situations where the selection of one set of events can be deemed as frames over other sets. Cacciatore, Scheufele, & Iyengar (2015) argue that this approach often manipulates *what* the public receives rather than *how* equivalent information is presented. Scholars that take this approach attribute the theory to Goffman (1974) who defined framing as strategies of interpretive schemas applied by individuals to classify and interpret the information that they encounter in their everyday lives. This definition is consistent with Gamson and Modigliani (1987) who perceived frames as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to the unfolding strip of events" (p. 143). The exploration of the sociological approach has allowed an expansion in scope and opened a leeway to studies that employ things like thematic framing,

which involves placing an issue in a general context, and episodic framing, which treats an issue more singularly and without the context of its thematic-based counterpart (Iyengar, 2005).

Third, and most dominant in the field of media and communication studies is the concept that framing overlaps the theories of priming and agenda-setting. The debates around this understanding are rooted in Minsky's (1975) perception of a frame as a cognitive template or data structure that organizes information in the mind. Common approaches under this tradition include Entman's (1993) study in which he merged ideas of selection and salience to explain media effects. As he argued, frames "highlight some bits of information about an item that is the subject of communication, thereby elevating them in salience" (p. 53).

This is consistent with studies of agenda-setting that tend to position framing as a product of accessibility and priming, and not applicability. As noted in almost all levels of agenda-setting theories that have made linkages of the three theories, the major characteristic is salience, which according to McCombs and Ghanem (2001) also stands as a key feature of framing. (Note: accessibility and applicability are two general principles of knowledge activation and use (Higgins 1996). The accessibility principle states that exposure to information related to a construct leads to higher accessibility of the construct and increases the likelihood of its use. On the other hand, the applicability principle refers to the degree of matching between features of the activated construct and the attended features of the stimulus (Higgins 1996)

Cacciatore, Scheufele, & Iyengar's (2015) rejection of the overlap between accessibility and applicability is based on the ideas that agenda-setting and framing operate differently. This means that when the two are perceived as overlapping, it becomes hard to distinct the effects of the two media effects theories, thus making them either irrelevant or difficult to operationalize and explain a phenomenon. Cacciatore, Scheufele, & Iyengar's (2015) criticism are important for

understanding the distinction of the three theories. Yet in the context of this study, and particularly due to that I am measuring frequency and degree centrality informed by media effects, the differences are pinnacle. Nonetheless, framing and agenda-setting are treated as complimenting each other while highlighting the variations in the way they are operationalized.

### **Framing and the news media**

Framing in the media is considered as a strategic way in which information is presented to its audience (Entman, 1993; 2007). Subsequently D'Angelo (2017) redefines media framing as “a written, spoken, graphical, or visual message modality that a communicator, by means of a technological channel, uses to contextualize a topic, such as a person, event, episode, or issue, within a text”. The two statements assert that the media, deliberately or cognitively, chooses to focus their attention on events and place them in a contextual meaning. This definition, by nature and from a media perspective, is limiting in the sense that it calls for standardized operational definition of frame/ing, and thus delimits conceptual definitions as the case of Matthes and Kohring's 2008 which study sought to provide alternatives for improving the validity and reliability measures for testing media frames. While acknowledging the value of their study, I argue, in line with D'Angelo, et. al. (2019) that there is need to focus on devising multiple ways that would aid in the clarification of operational definitions of context in media messages produced by news framing social actors.

The idea behind this argument is that there is no single framework that can exhaustively articulate how the context operates in relation to all the actors and location of news frames (D'Angelo & Shaw, 2018). According to D'Angelo, et. al. (2019), “conceptually defining frame/ing in terms of attitudes has allowed researchers to see the value-laden phrases that issue advocates and news commentators use to build an argument as contexts through which *issue*



*frames* sway individuals' opinions, even as values in cognition anchor their political preferences" (p. 15). This implies that we can distinguish arguments from issue frames and opinions from audience frames if we focused on the context of the news frames and systematized the values underneath, while highlighting the most important issues. A typical example of this approach would be that of Nisbet's (2010) typology of the eight frames that focused on identifying strategies by which journalists processed source information into news frames. Another important thing to note is that news frames are usually presented with words and visuals. While these are important variables for analyzing news frames, there is need to go beyond the variables mentioned above to include multimodal analyses. This approach would include the analysis of the congruence between the visual and verbal in the interplay of issue frames and audience preference. By so doing, researchers will be provided with "conceptual clearance to refine research on frame content and framing effects" (D'Angelo, et. al., p. 16).

A typical example would be a study conducted by Powell, et al. (2015) who investigated framing effects of opposing frames on individuals' preferences. In this study, the authors examined issues on obligation versus risk and congruent versus incongruent visuals. The value of approach is that it introduces approaches in news frames intended to augment cognitive and constructionist theoretical frameworks capable of capturing the multifaceted dimensions of selectivity within the networked information environment. Closely related to this approach is Aruguete and Calvo (2018)'s study that was able to demonstrate that "social media users framed social events by affecting the frequency of words, images, and embedded links that circulate among connected peers" (p. 481). These findings are consistent with Cacciatore et al. (2016)'s findings that preference-based reinforcement will be one of the main mechanisms of news framing effects.

Given the arguments above, it can be deduced that the theory of framing is multifaceted. However, the understanding of news frames lies in approaches that contextualize the issue items without being driven by definitional frameworks. As Cacciatore et al. (2016) would argue, the digital, networked news environment calls for innovative ways to conceptualize framing, systematize operational definitions of frames, and study framing effects that are related to the ongoing reviews already evident in the literature. Scholars such as D'Angelo, (2019), Entman & Usher (2018), and Qin (2015), have attempted to offer nuanced and innovative approaches associated to the arguments above. However, one approach that remains unexplored is the augmentation of the theory of framing and agenda setting. While the two theories appear in most of the research in media and political communication studies, little has been done to provide the link that could unite the two. Most studies focus on the difference that the similarities of the two methods, therefore, creating a schism between the two schools of thought.

Nonetheless, one thing that has been consisted in most studies is the overlap between the theory of framing and agenda setting. In their support for the overlap, McCombs and Ghanem (2001) argue that while framing examines the influences shaping the media agenda, agenda-setting focuses on the impact of those frames on the public. Accordingly, the two authors argue that "The convergence of these two research traditions will yield greater unity in our knowledge of how the media's pictures of the world are constructed and, in turn, how the public responds to those pictures." (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001, p.68). For the most part, this has been the hallmark for most theoretical constructs that employ framing, priming, or agenda-setting. Generally, how the media cover news events can affect how receivers of that news come to understand the events. Recipients of a news story build their opinion based on how the news

story was framed and their own individual frames. Therefore, the audience interpret, and process information based on the tone of the news story (Scheufele,1999, p. 107).

### **Agenda-setting and the news**

Agenda-setting theory as an overlap is rooted in the notion that “the prominence of elements in the news influences the prominence of those elements among the public” (Carol & McCombs, 2003, p. 36). This argument continues to be supported by the ever-growing literature on the theory since the first publication in 1972. Over the years, new levels have emerged to extend the theory beyond the hierarchical effects of “what to think about issues (level 1) (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Weaver et al, 2004, p. 259”, “how to think about the issue (level 2) (Golan and Wanta, 2001, p. 258”, to the “how to link these objects and attributes with one another (Guo, et al. 2014, p. 345)”. What has remained consistent in these transitions is the unity of analysis, which for the most part has been an object – public issue. These objects are described every time a news media reports on issues pertaining to the public. Because of various intervening variables, journalists can only present a few angles of an object in the news, referred to as attributes (Simpande, 2019). These attributes vary considerably in terms of their salience (Weaver et. al. 2004, p. 259). The amount of repeated attention to a story or event can have the most powerful influence on the public.

McCombs (1997) described agenda-setting as the “transmission of salience, not the determination of opinions pro and con about a particular issue” (p. 433). McCombs went on to say that although news media do not intentionally or deliberately set the agenda for the newscast, the topics that are chosen to be the focus in a news story can affect the opinions of the audience (McCombs, 1997, p. 433). Although McCombs’s (1997) research is mainly related to political issues, he presented insight on how the public comes to an agreement on which issues are the

most important and prominent. McCombs (1997) did mention that there are limitations to the impact that the media has on the public. He stated that, “The news media help to achieve consensus, they do not alone determine what the consensus will be” (McCombs, 1997, p. 437). For example, a story could be a prominent piece on the media’s agenda but if it does not resonate with the public, that story will not be published. “There are agenda-setting effects of news coverage, but these effects do not inevitably flow from news coverage” (McCombs, 1997, p. 437.) The news media and the public have a significant influence on the progression of agenda setting.

In short, agenda-setting of the media does have a direct impact on the cognition of the public. The audience can decide their viewpoint of a new story; however, the way in which the media report a story can influence the audience whether the people are aware of it or not (Shaw, 1979, p. 97). Shaw (1979) also mentioned that cumulation, as a media trait, is important to be aware of when studying the agenda-setting theory. Cumulation is the persistent usage in the press of a topic, trend, or theme (Shaw, 1979, p. 102). “Because of the repeated publicity given to them by the media, the favored topics tend to dominate the attention of the audience” (Shaw, 1979, p. 102). Therefore, the cognition of a topic is more prominent in an individual’s mind when that topic is repeated over a long period of time in the media. To sum up these two theories, De Vreese (2005) explained that, “a frame is an emphasis in salience of different aspects of a topic.

While agenda-setting theory deals with the salience of issues, framing is concerned with the presentation of issues” (p. 53). In the case of the Zambia – China relationship, this would imply that when stories are framed, and the agenda set by the media, there will be a correlation between positive stories and a and how the audience perceive China, giving some credence to

both theories. Likewise, when negative stories about China coincide with an increasingly negative public perception, the popularity of China in the Zambian media will equally decrease. Overall, media framing and the agenda-setting theories of communication both provide an insight to how the media can influence their audience. The focus of the study was therefore to find out how the state-owned in Zambia cover the Zambia – China relationship that most people are skeptical about. As a first step, the study the study measured the salience of influence and media effects by examining the tone, fairness, and prominence/dominance of the stories in the ZNBC news.

### **Difference between framing and agenda setting**

Differentiating framing from agenda-setting theory continues to allude most scholars. This is especially true with agenda-setting level II that measure the process of how to think about issues (Golan and Wanta, 2001). Essentially most scholars have defined framing in a more similar manner, with founding scholars like McCombs (2004) situating framing within a broader paradigm of agenda-setting. However, scholars like Tankard (2001) observed significant variations between the two theories arguing that framing is: "central in organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration" (p. 3). This statement asserts that, unlike agenda-setting theory that focuses on the "manifest content of the news stories" (McCombs and Valenzuela, 2007), framing goes beyond to examine content that agenda-setting theory excludes. As D'angelo (2002) had pointed out in response to Entman's (1993) analysis of framing, while agenda-setting focuses on efforts by the media to determine the news agenda for the audience, framing goes a step further to measure not only the issue, but the content of that issue. If we used a photo as an example, agenda setting would involve the kind of photo one chooses to present to

the audience while framing would refer to how that photo is strategically positioned for the audience.

The above arguments are consistent with Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) comparisons. In one of their seminal articles, the two authors provide a clear distinction of the two theories arguing that unlike framing, agenda-setting focuses on the idea that there is a strong correlation between the emphasis that mass media place on issues and how the audience perceive them as important. For them, framing assumes that a particular characterization of the news reports influences how the audience understand the information (p. 11). By and large, this principle goes beyond making issues salient to the audience but presenting them in a way that shapes their perception of issues. Another important thing to note is that unlike agenda-setting theories, framing is closely related to cognitive schemas. That is why framing is best understood in the experimental studies conducted by Kahneman and Tversky (1979) in which the two authors “examined how different presentations of essentially identical decision-making scenarios influence people’s choices and their evaluation of various options presented to them” (Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007).

### **Framing, agenda-setting, and the media in Zambia**

Research on framing and agenda-setting of the media in Zambia is still scanty. Despite the flurry of debates about the privatization of the state-owned media (ZNBC), little or no attention has been given to the impact of the Zambia-China relationship. A few studies that have been done with framing and agenda-setting, and they tend to employ the conventional structures of the theories. Notably, these include Simpande, 2019 who explored the role of the media during the elections, the MISA (2011 and 2016) documents that reviewed the press coverage of elections in Africa, Chishala’s (2008) analysis of the prominence of election stories, and other

informal documents related to the topic. Research suggests that only two studies have attempted to explore Chinese influence on Zambia: Wekesa's (2013) comparative study of the need for rigorous theoretical frames for studying Africa-China relationship, and Lim's (2012) comparative analysis of the coverage of the anti-Chinese sentiments in Zambian, Chinese and African media. While these studies vary in perspective, their units of analysis remain the same. All the studies employing agenda-setting and/or framing theories have prominence, dominant tone, and fairness to their measures.

### ***1. Prominence Level***

Generally, prominence in the news refers to the "level of importance attached to stories determined by the type of story i.e., hard news, placement of item, number of stories and the availability of story enhancement i.e., pictures used" (Simpande, 2019, p. 7). The idea of prominence has been extensively employed to various studies, providing consistent and statistically significant results. Particularly, the placement of stories as a variable has become a criterion variable for defining/measuring prominence. For example, in one of their studies, Yeboah-Banin (2019) examined the way the Ghanaian media framed news about China's development assistance and trade activities in Ghana. In their study, the authors explored the relationship between story placement and tone in the sample. Findings indicate that China was generally framed positively in the sampled news. Essentially, the study found out that the Ghanaian media was largely biased towards China and confrontational in its reports, while the private newspaper used a more conciliatory tone and was more balanced (not biased) on its coverage of the conflict using various sources for its stories. Regarding placement, the stories were given relatively high prominence since several of them dominated the front page in the newspapers.

In a Zambian study, Chishala (2008) explored the importance of story placement. By analyzing three newspapers, the author found out that a total of 67 stories about the run up to the elections appeared on the front pages of the three daily newspapers sampled. The Times of Zambia had the largest number of stories on its front page 36 per cent (36/67) followed by the Zambia Daily Mail 33 per cent (22/67) while the Post Newspaper had the least number of stories about the elections on its front page 31 per cent (21/67). And in a way, Simpande (2019) also measured the levels of prominence using the variable of story placement as well as story enhancement, political party, and how the figure in the story is covered. In short, central to the idea of prominence is the understanding of how a news item is presented.

Like newspaper content analysis, the prominence of a story online is determined by the levels of enhancement (Yeboah-Banin, et. al. 2019). Using the same method as that of Khan (2003), for example, Yeboah-Banin, et. al. (2019) did a quantitative content analysis of photos and the captions carried in the Ghanaian media. The authors collected 88 photos from the four newspaper websites and put them into different framing categories. The study found that the four newspaper websites gave considerably more visual coverage to China, implying that China gained more prominence in the overall coverage than. The study also found that quite a significant amount of the total coverage was favorable towards China.

In one of his studies regarding the coverage of the 2008 Zambian tripartite elections, Chishala (2008) observes that there was a predisposition in his media sample to deliberately pick quotes on what could be classified as “controversial topics or issues”. According to Chishala (2008), the findings indicated a clear divide between the state-owned and the privately-owned media in terms of the nature and tone of the stories published. It was evident that the private media in this case, *The Post Newspaper* was very critical of the Movement for Multiparty



Democracy (MMD) candidate Mr. Rupiah Banda, and that most of the stories published about the MMD and Mr. Banda were negative. Quantitatively one would get the impression that the MMD was well covered but qualitatively that was not the case. The public media both the print and electronic media published a lot of stories in favor of the MMD and Mr. Banda. In terms of tonal bias all the stories were positive in favor of the MMD. The coverage in the Post Newspaper on the other hand was favorable to the opposition especially the Patriotic Front (PF) Leader Mr. Michael Sata who received uncritical coverage. This was in sharp contrast to the coverage accorded to Mr. Rupiah Banda of the MMD. Most stories about the MMD in the Post were negative and some were meant to bring shame to the then acting president (Chishala 2008, p.28).

Furthermore, Chishala explains that quantitative analysis showed that the public media especially the print media did not highlight the activities of the opposition parties in as far as pictures were concerned. Most pictures published were about the ruling party and the few pictures about the opposition parties were mainly file pictures and many of them were portrait pictures. The Times of Zambia published 9 pictures about the MMD out of the total of 11 pictures; the Daily Mail had 10 pictures about the MMD out of the total of 19 pictures while ZNBC aired a total of 22 stories with pictures and 16 belonged to the MMD. Chishala's studies indicate that on the 20th of October the paper published pictures of crowds that attended public rallies addressed by the four presidential candidates at different venues though Mr. Banda had two pictures on the same page. Likewise, this study used story enhancement as criterion for determining the prominence of the story. Enhancement was measured by counting the number of pictures, illustrations, and other strategies used to enhance the story. Here, I also sought to establish whether any differences attend to the prominence with which positive and negative stories about China's commercial and development assistance interests in the Zambia are treated.

This was done by exploring the relationship between story enhancement and tone in the sample. Further, I measured prominence by examining whether stories about the Zambia-China relationship on ZNBC were decreasing or increasing across time. Therefore, I ask the following questions:

*RQ1. What are the most important issues of the Zambian media in the coverage of the Zambia-China relationship?*

**Rationale:** Opinions and discourse in this case are observed not from the audience who are people, but from the local media that have turned into recipients of Chinese news agenda.

## **2. Tone Dominance**

Measuring tone in framing and agenda-setting theories has become a normative standard. Several studies have employed this approach and yielded robust results. A few to note, for example, are Busher (2006)'s content analysis of the 194 articles from *The New York Times* to determine how Hillary Clinton was framed after her decision to run for the 2000 U.S. Senate seat from New York senate election; Simpande's (2019) analysis of tone during the 2016 elections in Zambia, and most recently, Jacobs' (2020) documentation of the results of a longitudinal content analysis of television news about LGBT people in terms of visibility, active representation, tone and framing in Flanders (1986–2017). In all these accounts, tone was treated as a valence through which story discourses are measured. The discourse of the story is assessed on whether the general tone was positive (friendly/encouraging/exhortation/conciliatory), negative (hostile, confrontational, adversarial) or neutral (neither positive or negative but merely informative or explanatory). Similarly, this study uses news stories published on state-owned media outlets to analyze the dominance of tone in reporting the Zambia-China relationship. Thus, RQ2:

**RQ2:** *How did the stories from the Zambian media show China's dominant tone in the Zambia-China relationship?*

### **3. Story fairness**

Story fairness simply refer to the level of neutrality with which the newspaper items were reported. This refers to whether a story was slanted towards one side or not (favorable or unfavorable for one side) in terms of party and candidate coverage (Simpande, 2019, p. 8). Some studies have expanded the variables in fairness to include the quantity and length of the story. For example, Temin and Smith's (2002) study examined the crucial role of the media in Ghana's 2000 campaigns and elections. Their findings indicate that although the media had presented a fair coverage of the elections in terms of whether the tone was favorable, neutral, or not, the length and quantity of stories in the studied media stood in favor of the state-owned media. Temin and Smith (2002) assert that the tone of the state-owned newspaper's reportage was quite balanced, with both the incumbent and opposition parties receiving largely positive or neutral coverage, with relatively few negative stories appearing in the state-owned press (p. 602).

Similarly, Chishala's (2008) study also indicated that a total of 79 stories quoted the presidential candidates directly. According to Chishala (2008) *The Times of Zambia* newspaper had the largest number of stories about the presidential candidates, 28 per cent (22/79) followed by the *The Post* Newspaper 25 per cent (20/79) (p.28). Generally, these findings were able to demonstrate that the state-owned media had some degree of favoritism towards the then president even though the findings were not statistically significant. Just like the studies highlighted above, this study sought to measure the levels of fairness by using the coverage of Chinese topics on ZNBC as a variable presented either as favorable, unfavorable, or neutral. Second, I measure the level of fairness by examining the power relations that exist between the

Zambia-China relationship. Two objectives underscore the arguments for this argument: measuring the prevalence of Chinese media agenda in the Zambian newsrooms, and then calculate the power relations between Zambia and China in the Zambian media content. To do so, I ask the following two questions:

**RQ3:** *How does the coverage of China in Zambia show fairness in how the Zambian-China relationship was framed?*

### **Network Agenda-setting (NAS)**

As an offshoot of the grand theory of agenda-setting, NAS has predominantly developed and expanded in research use and application. Dubbed as “third level of agenda-setting”, the theory asserts that “the salience of the network relationships among objects and/or attributes, in addition to discrete individual elements, can be transferred from the news media to the public’s mind” (Guo, 2012). The origin of the theory is attributed to Carroll’s (2005a, 2005b) papers presented at conferences in Lugano, Switzerland, and Netherlands, respectively. Essentially, Carroll examined how the media plays a role in forming corporate associations and described the networks of association between a company and its attributes. Subsequent studies followed suit but found their culmination in Kim and McCombs’ (2007), and later Guo and McCombs (2011) in which they used an existing dataset to demonstrate the strong effects of agenda-setting level two as a baseline for comparing the strength of agenda-setting level three networked effects. Therefore, unlike other levels of agenda-setting, NAS emphasizes the aspect of how the news media affect the cognitive networks of the audience, other media, organizations, etc.

Essentially, NAS draws from established media effects models, i.e., framing, priming, and other levels of agenda-setting to provide useful theoretical guidance (beyond the effects) to include the relationship of attributes. How does this work? First, it is established that framing

and agenda-setting effects are based on the connection between a news construct and the audience's cognitive network (Guo, 2016, p. 12). Particularly, NAS allows the possibility to demonstrate the actual anatomy of a media frame and a public schema, thus revealing more nuances of the media framing process. Second, priming effects are contingent on the associative pathways in individuals' cognitive networks through the spreading activation model (Cacciatore, Scheufele, & Iyengar, 2016). Although seemingly playing the role of NAS, the connecting mechanisms in the Priming model are often assumed than empirically investigated.

As Guo (2016) asserts, "the actual interaction between the news messages and the audience's cognitive network has not yet been systematically studied. This, therefore, leaves a gap in literature that NAS attempts to fill. In other words, the NAS model provide to us some approaches that allow us to semantically quantify the various relationships among attributes, therefore, establishing a way to explore how the salience of different links and the overall network can be transferred from the media to the public agenda (other media, audience, organizations, etc.). As a theoretical model, NAS is positioned at a high-level end of the continuum with its focus on multiplex relations (Carroll, 2016). Essentially three levels of analysis are emphasized in agenda-setting theory that are based on their focus of analysis: Uniplex, duplex, and multiplex relations. Considered as the first domain of third-level agenda-setting, uniplex relations tend to be "concerned with the salience of the link that connects two delimited objects, attributes or actors in a dyadic relationship. For example, the linking of China to COVID-19 by President Donald Trump could be considered a uniplex relationship. This is because the observer may specify the nodes and study the link by relying on the salience. Even though there might not be any quantitative evidence to support this argument, qualitative

statements could be used by focusing on the salience of the links uniting the nodes rather than on the salience of the nodes themselves.

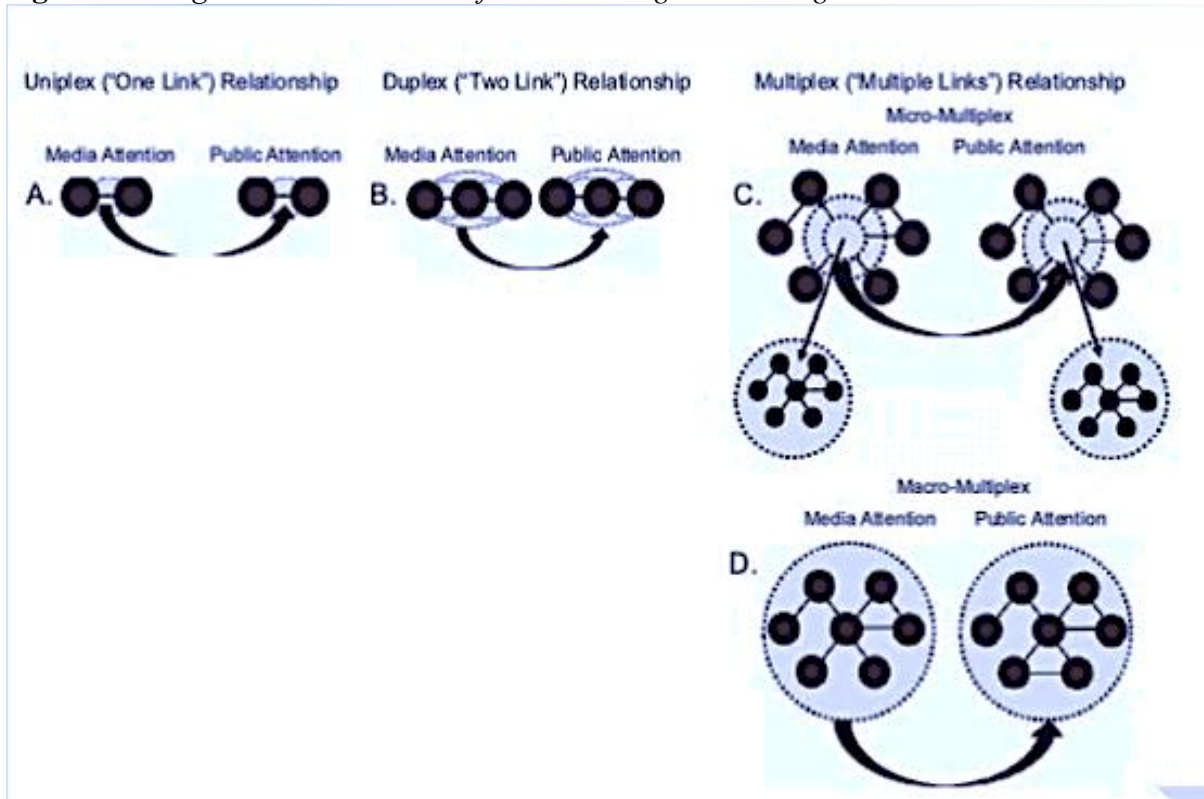
On the other hand, are the duplex relationships which are concerned with “the limited number of configurations created by two linkages connecting three nodes” (Carroll, 2016, p. 41). According to Carroll, “a duplex relationship means that there is no direct link between two of the nodes, and that the two nodes are only connected via an indirect relationship with the third node intervening between them” (ibid). In other words, the relationship between two variables cannot be established. However, this does not mean that the two variables would never intersect in other ways or forms. As Carroll (2016) continues to argue, “a duplex relationship can be characterized by the sequence of nodes A, B, and C where A and C do not have a manifest connection between them, except in an event where the connections are inferred or implied” (ibid). This argument, therefore, rules out the transitivity assumptions, to which node A could connect to node C via node B, and/or cyclicity assumptions to which each of the links are interconnected but without reciprocity. Two major dynamics that are important in the duplex relationship are that the relationship of the two could be influenced by the third intervening variable by either augmenting or changing the very meanings of those relations: e.g., China’s presence in ZNBC could either augment or change the relationship that exists between ZNBC and other media categories in Zambia (Private, Community, and Religious).

Third, and most important in the NAS analysis is the multiplex relationship which is considered at both a micro and macro level – (those in which a personal, affective relationship coincides with a business relationship, namely, with coworkers within one’s organization—are a widespread organizational phenomenon (Ingram & Zou, 2008). At a micro level, the salience of a subset of nodes in a particular network is treated in relation to the full network, while at a

macro level, salience is observed with the major networks as the figure below describe. The relationships in the multiplex relations are held together by central tendencies weighted on degree centrality (the extent to which nodes are directly connected to all other nodes in a network, betweenness (the measure of indirect connection by calculating the degree to which an object, attribute or actor is intermediary to other nodes, therefore, largely contributing to the flow of the news agenda (Guo and McCombs, 2011), and closeness (which is simply the measure of a node's indirect network and its ability to access information efficiently, whether directly or indirectly (Guo, 2012).

In the case of this study, for example, centrality could refer to ZNBC while betweenness and closeness could be played by the private media that for the most part, are either owned and controlled by the elites, who sometimes have vested interests in the government, or are even part of the government. In other words, the fact that the owners of private media are likely to be elites manifests the idea that the content of ZNBC that has shares with China's media is likely to be reflected in the private media. This is because Africa's few elites tend to engage into politics. And because of the position of the private media and their engagement with community media, the flow of news agenda is likely to be spilled over to community media, and thus religious media. Figure 2 below present a summary of these relationships as discussed by Carroll (2016).

**Figure 2:** *Craig Carroll's contours of third-level agenda-setting theories*



**Note:** *The relationships are determined by their focus of analysis*

### **Explicating Network Agenda-Setting (NAS)**

Network Agenda-Setting (NAS), as a third level agenda-setting theory, is mostly understood in the context of Wanta and Alkazemi, (2017); McCombs (2016) and (Guo, 2012). Essentially, this theory is premised on the idea that “the salience of the network relationships among objects and attributes can be transferred from the news media to the public” (Guo, p. 619). For Guo, the idea is not just about making salient issues present, but that the process has the power to “make bundles of items simultaneously prominent” (Guo, p. 619). In other words, the theory is suggesting that the relationship is neither just a flat transfer of salient issues as agenda-setting level one suggests (Wanta and Alkazemi, (2017); Shaw, 1972), nor a flat influence of media telling us ‘how to think about things’ as agenda-setting level two suggests



(Golan & Wanta, 2001). Instead, the theory is suggesting that the relationship among those issues and attributes from the media does matter, in that, those issues can dictate how the public perceive things. This implies that there is a cognitive relationship between certain issues/attributes that the media considers important with some other connected elements regardless of whether those elements have been mentioned or not.

What this means is that agenda setting is extended from just looking at the salient issues or objects to understanding how those issues are connected through other intervening or confounding variables that might seem unnecessary to the topic at hand. This understanding to be equated to the anatomy of a human body where each variable is there to support the existence and prosperousness of the entire body. For example, those that fail to acknowledge the importance of the stomach for the sake of their brains run a risk of malnourishment, and thus a full risk of not being able to develop the brain they intend to development. Similarly, when studying media effects, there is need for acknowledging the intervening and confounding variables. And this is where network agenda-setting theory (NAS) comes into a major play.

Initially, agenda-setting theory assumed that the transmission of information between the media and the audience was not only discreet, but also linear, with no overlap or interaction (Vu, Wanta and Alkazemi, (2017); McCombs, 2014). What is problematic with this argument is that it cannot detect how the message recipients associate issues or attributes. Moreover, such an understanding cannot also detect whether the public is influenced by the media or other confounding and/or intervening variables; except when we hold to the statement that agenda setting salience influence is contingent on inference of correlation and hierarchical order of the importance of the variables. However, this might not be the most adequate way of explaining causal effects. As Petty, Briñol, and Priester, (2009) would argue in their establishment of the

‘Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion’ (ELM), the success of a media campaign/effects depends on “whether the transmitted communication is effective in changing the attitudes of the recipients in the desired direction, and whether these modified attitudes in turn influence people’s behavior in the desired direction of the media” (p. 125). Note that the importance lies in being able to measure both the messages going to the audience/object and those that are reciprocated back to the subject. For example, how does one explain the complexity of the influence of agenda-setting on social media when their approach is determined by a linear and discrete transmission of information with no overlap or interaction? This concept reflects the true definition of communication in which feedback, regardless of how it comes back (no feedback is also feedback) completes the cycle of the process of communication.

For the most part, such a scenario could best be understood with the use of Network Agenda-Setting (NAS), a model that shows the interconnection and interrelationship of several variables in a network. These variables can be objects, attributes, or in this case, media outlets that stand as nodes in a network. The advantage of using this model is that “it uses network analysis methods to map out the interrelationships among various elements in the media agenda and the public agenda, and then compare the two networked agendas” (Wang, 2016). The underpinning argument is that there exists a convivial and salient interrelationship among various attributes/issues that are transferred from the media to the public. These objects, attributes/issues or nodes operate in an interdependent network in the sense that the strength and effectiveness of attribute A is deeply rooted in the relationship that attribute A has with attribute B. For example, the power-relations in the Zambian media cannot be treated in isolation from the financial dependence that is exhibited by the Zambian media. Figure 4 below explains this relationship in comparison to the traditional agenda-setting theory as described by Lei Guo.

**Figure 3:** Comparison between traditional and NAS networks.

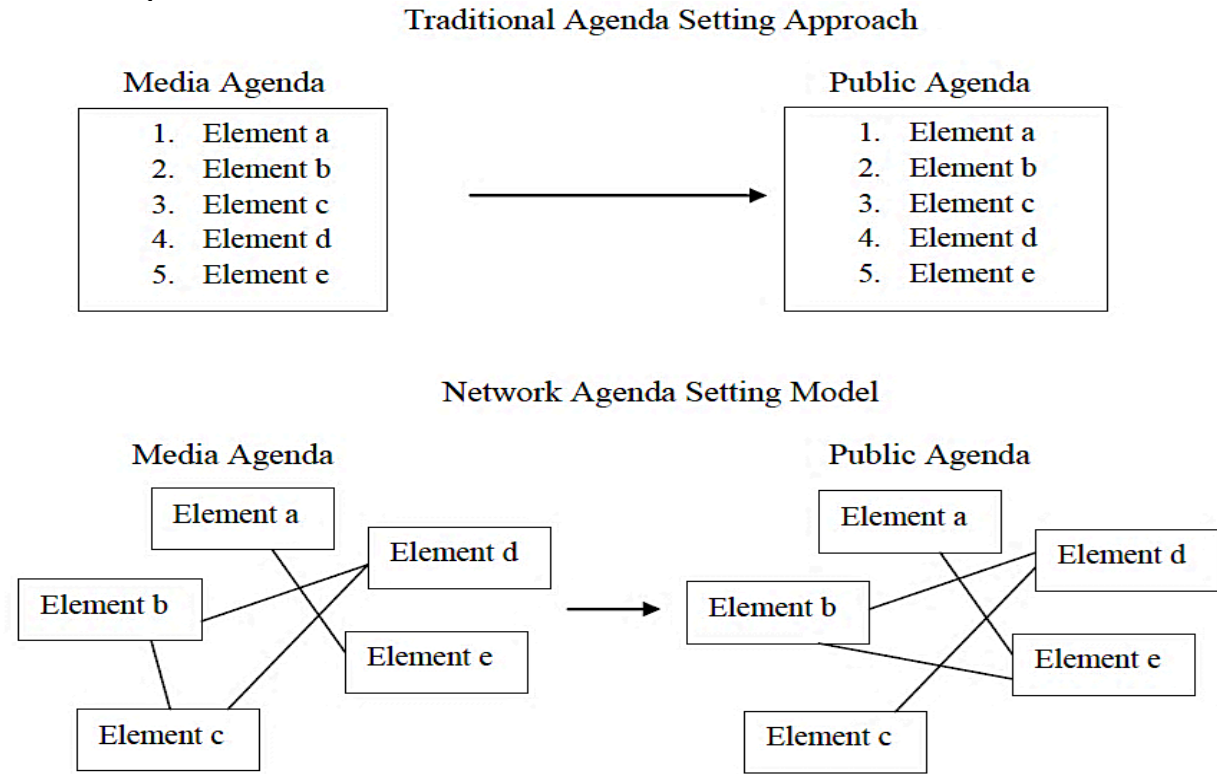


Figure 4: *Lei Guo's* typology of traditional vs Network agenda setting

### How Network Agenda-setting (NAS) works

Generally, agenda setting theories investigate individual disconnected objects and attributes, which are subsequently considered as elements of the “pictures” from media which shape our attitudes through salience of influence. Simple arithmetic can be used to explain the phenomena. For example, agenda setting level one simply conducts content analysis to examine the rank-order of object salience in the news coverage for the media agenda. By so doing, the transfer of issue salience is determined. On the other hand, agenda setting level two employs public opinion survey that are also and rank the order of object salience. The hierarchical order is further weighed based on the aggregate percentage of the public’s mentions of whatever the objects of interest are in the study. Researchers then compare the two hierarchical agendas to

determine the degree to which the two agendas are correlated. The main limitations that the two approaches pose emerge from the fact that the pictures of reality constructed by the news media and individuals' cognitive maps remain unmeasured (Guo, p. 617), and that the ideas of reciprocity of issue attributes tends to be ignored.

Consider the following example: Let's suppose we are testing the issue salience and transfer of Chinese attributes in the Zambian media and the public. If we employed agenda setting levels one and two, our approaches will be limited in the sense that we will only be measuring correlations and transfer of issue attributes while ignoring certain elements that the media does not mention, i.e, Chinese media will not talk about the existing accusations of skewed labor policies. Because of the ability to measure the semantic relationships and the cognitive maps of the issue attributes, NAS provides a more adequate measurement. However, it is also limited in the sense that the approach emphasizes only the relationships, but not in a mutual way. Or rather, suppose we are investigating tweets about President Obama and his policies. Let Obama be the central node surrounded by attribute nodes (welfare, health care, education, and jobs). If one argued that the 'job' attribute was the most salient issue, it is also true to semantically argued that all the four attributes are interrelated within a network. This implies that the three other attributes inform the importance of 'job' attributes.

This is related to what Granovetter (1973) referred to as "The strength of weak ties". In his analysis, Granovetter asserts that if A is related to B and C, then the amount of time C spends with B depends on the amount of A spends with B and C respectively (p. 1362). This suggests that the levels of importance for each tie are inevitably informed by the connection to other ties. But how does this work especially in events where one media has no common values or beliefs with other media? Mathematical models of "flocks of birds and similar species", for example,

reveal that “while there is no central controlling director telling the birds to fly one direction or another, a collective intelligence somehow emerges so that all the birds fly in the same direction at the same time”. According to Christakis and Fowler (2007), this principle is present in humans as well in the form of network science where individuals act through a network of ‘superorganisms’ in their decision-making processes. In the context of this study, Christakis, and Fowler (2007) and Granovetter’s (1973) arguments are relevant. In an event where China has great influence on the national media, it is logical to argue than just influencing the public perception, other local media outlets that have no direct affiliation to ZNBC or Chinese investment, e.g., religious and some community media, will have less of Chinese media influence. Using the above-discussed theories, we can also discern in detail the underlying connections that the publics have with the Zambian media. By so doing, we can hypothesize with confidence that the flow of the Chinese media agenda is present at a either a higher or lower degree in Zambia.

### **Network Agenda-setting in the context of Zambia**

As of current, there is no known study that has employed the NAS model in the entire continent of Africa; leave alone in Zambia. Closely related studies would be those that have used the grand theory of agenda-setting. Nonetheless, a few studies have attempted to address issues that relate to NAS. Guo and Vargo (2017) provide a broader approach for measuring the salience of attributes, but through intermedia-agenda setting. Although addressing the issue through big data analyses and global intermedia, the authors were able to provide strategies for measuring the transfer of salience from one media to the other. Sikanku’s (2014) brings this study closer to home when he measured intermedia agenda-setting across four media outlets within Ghana. Particularly, Sikanku (2014) consolidated the value of attributes through inter-media agenda-

setting to examine the associational relationships among wire, online, and print news. In this study, Sikanku (2014) was able to address and test intermedia agenda-setting influences and reciprocity of attributes and objects. McCombs and Funk (2017) believe that intermedia agenda setting is the next frontier for understanding the effective nature of agenda setting theory. This is because of the ambiguity of the digital social world that has invariably forced journalists and the media to rely on one another for confirmation and as a source of ideas (McCombs and Bell, 1996). And because of the global nature of the media, the reliance and influence have been observed even across countries. Essentially, Guo and Vargo (2017) and Golan, (2006) were able to show not only how the global media relied upon each other for news, but that there was also an interplay of news agenda influence. In other words, the two examples demonstrated power dominance within the news agenda across the globe. Drawing from 67 countries, for example, Guo and Vargo (2017) argued that the US news agenda dominated the global media agenda in 2015.

For this study, measuring intermedia agenda-setting becomes an endeavor. This is because the study was also aimed at measuring the transfer of issue influence from one media to the other within the Zambian media. While I seek to measure Chinese news agenda, my approach starts with the story unity about China within the Zambian media, and not from the Chinese media. The reason is because, Zambia as a country in Chinese news is almost a terra incognita. But China has created structures within the African soil that create the agenda in a rather different form. That agenda is transferred from those organizations through ownership of the local media as in the case of ZNBC. In Zambia, the understanding of the interrelationship of the attributes is relevant given the complexity of the case and the debates surrounding the Zambia-China relationship. However, it is also important to understand how this

interrelationship affects each other and thus shape journalism practice. Particularly, the gaps in research on the intermedia influence and effects is important for understanding of journalism is being transformed. Emerging studies on Chinese influence take a critical approach but mostly addressing issues pertaining to politics and economics. To date, there are no known studies that has taken a media approach to the influence of Chinese news agenda other than Lim's (2012) study that addressed a comparative coverage of the phenomenon of Chinese anti-sentiments in Zambia, and Van-Bracht's (2012) general survey of Zambian views on the Chinese people and their involvement in Zambia. Therefore, this study contributes to the growing literature and theory on Chinese news agenda in Zambia by combining framing, intermedia agenda setting and network agenda setting.

To establish a baseline, this study, therefore, draws from several studies conducted in the two countries, while paying attention to Chen et. al. (2020), Wu and Guo (2017), and Guo, et. al.'s (2014) approaches and methodologies to create a framework for exploring the effects of NAS on the public networks of the Zambia-China relationship. This framework extends beyond the traditional measurements of agenda-setting theory and argues that correlation is not the same as causation. Therefore, the study employs intermedia agenda-setting to establish a baseline for testing network agenda-setting (NAS) in Zambia. By so doing, the study reveals ignored elements such as spurious correlations, outliers, reversing cause and effects, as well as confounders. Essentially, the study explores the extent to which the attribute networks are either similar or dissimilar, while reflecting upon the ongoing debates about the role of China in the Zambian media, and the broad values of journalism in Zambia. I, therefore, propose the following research question and hypotheses:

**RQ4:** *How did stories from the Zambian media frame China to shape local opinions and discourse?*

The exploration of research question three (3) identify a wide array of influences that shape media agenda. Central to these influences is the question of whether somebody else sets the agenda of the media just as the media does set the agenda of the publics as indicated in the above theories. Scholars that have attempted to answer this question tend to merge agenda setting theories to sociology (Guo, et. al., 2014, p. 346), therefore introducing the notion of inter-media agenda-setting theory, which is the fourth level of agenda-setting. Essentially, intermedia agenda setting stems from the question of who sets the agenda (Vargo & Guo, 2017, p. 1033). Although rooted in the general themes of agenda setting theory, this model seeks to address “the interplay between different media types and whether certain media influence each other” (Vargo & Guo, p. 1034). For McCombs (2005) this notion is rooted in the fact that “Journalists routinely look over their shoulders to validate their sense of news by observing the work of their colleagues, especially the work of elite members of the press, such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* . . .” (p. 549). In the internet age, this process has extended to global perspectives although there have been issues of power and dominance, and questions about who sets the global media agenda both in the traditional and social media.

Four major factors emerge from studies that have pursued this model: First, the idea that intermedia agenda setting depends on the production cycles of the individual media outlets (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Vliegenthart & Walgrave, 2008); Second, there is an assumption that each media system has an opinion leader that leads the coverage on certain issues, therefore, setting the agenda for others (Noelle-Neumann & Mathes, 1987); Third, the argument that certain issues/events are obtrusive and observable by many people and thus encourage independent reporting (Soroka, 2002); and fourth, that some media outlets are closer than others to a particular event and that the resulting geographical proximity of certain media



outlets can have an impact on journalistic co-orientation (Vonbun, et. al. 2016). The four factors addressed above highlight the major debates. While some scholars argue about the prevalence of intermedia agenda setting and the power structures of who sets the agenda, others promote the idea that journalists share characteristics, and therefore, define newsworthiness in a similar way. In the Zambian context, therefore, this approach suffices to apply as I ask the following question:

**RQ5:** *What is the relationship between the attribute network of ZNBC and the attribute network of the other media outlets in Zambia with less direct influence from Chinese media agenda*

Conversely, low degrees of networked attribute agendas are due to little or no investment in the media outlets in question, and the differences in the mission statement of the kind of media. In other words, RQ5 also asserts that media outlets with similar market values or mission statements will have similarities in networked attribute agenda. Table 2 below shows the predicted levels of correspondence which seem to RQ5.

**Table 2:** *Comparison of the attribute agenda among the media in Zambia*

	<b>Financial Support</b>	<b>Mission Statements</b>	<b>Network (r.)</b>
<b>High Agreement Predicted</b>			
ZNBC – China	High	Align	+0.93
Private – China	High	Align	+0.67
ZNBC – Private	High	Align	+0.61
Community- Religious	No record	Align	+0.59
<b>Low Agreement Prediction</b>			
Community – China	Low	Oppose	+0.31
Religious – China	No record	Oppose	+0.02
Community – ZNBC	Low	Oppose	+0.44
Religious -ZNBC	Low	Oppose	0.23

**Note:** *Policies provide a strong agreement between ZNBC and Private media*

### *Summary of the Chapter*

This chapter explored two major theories of measuring media effects and their influence: Framing and Network agenda-setting theory. Consistent with scholars such as McCombs & Ghanem (2001), the study chose to merge the two theories to provide robust explanations of the Sino-China phenomenon. A more nuanced appendment to the two theories is the treatment of local media as an audience. Therefore, the audience in this case is represented by the local media in Zambia that are recipients and objects of Chinese influences.

Intermedia-agenda-setting<sup>1</sup> is equally acknowledged in this study as a baseline for measuring frames and NAS effects. However, this study is interested in issues beyond the simple transfer of attributes to include the effects of such attributes on their object. Therefore, because intermedia agenda setting could be limiting, a combination of framing, intermedia, and NAS provide a better chance for explaining the occurrences identified as gaps in the literature of Chinese media agenda in sub-Saharan Africa, and particularly in Zambian newsrooms.

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<sup>1</sup> Intermedia agenda-setting research is concerned with measuring the extent to which news content transfers between different media (Atwater et al. 1987). Central to this assertion is that journalists tend to let their reporting decisions be guided by the coverage of their peers at other news outlets.

## CHAPTER IV

### METHODS AND MATERIALS

The general objective of this study was to explore the implications of China investing and owning part of Zambia's national media, the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC). Two main questions characterized the study:

1. To what degree and how is China's investment in Zambia reflected in ZNBC coverage of news? Under this question, we explore two main things: The "degree", to indicate the frequency of which the topic about China is featured in the Zambian media, and how those issues about China are covered.
2. Does ZNBC's coverage of China influence how other Zambian-based media organizations cover China?

The main purpose was to extend the concept of what it means to "constructively report Africa" by measuring media effects in the Zambian local newsrooms from the lenses of framing and agenda-setting theories. Traditional approaches (content and textual analyses) for testing news frames and agenda-setting were used. For reliability and validity purposes of our news frames, several software tools were also employed. However, in measuring network agenda-setting (NAS), the study leveraged Chen et al (2020); Wu and Guo (2017); and Guo et al.'s (2014). Conceptually, the study relied on Guo's (2012) structural-functionalist approach in which she defined the hallmarks for network agenda-setting as informed by intrinsic and extrinsic networks.

## **Research Design**

Agenda-setting theory in African scholarship has mostly been tested through quantitative content analysis, and in events pertaining to politics and elections. A few studies have attempted to defy the conventional approaches. For example, Yeboah-Banin et. al. (2019) employed agenda-setting and content analysis to analyze non-political/election issues pertaining to how the Ghanaian media framed Chinese aid. Similarly, Kwansah-Aidoo (2001) tested agenda-setting on media coverage of the environment and using qualitative methods. The two studies are important for drawing approaches of measuring agenda-setting theories in African contexts, and with methods relevant to the context. By so doing, they kind of break away from the traditional approaches that have measured agenda setting within the political spectrum and using content analyses. Nonetheless, content analysis method at both quantitative and qualitative levels were used to identify common themes and elements that constituted the composition of media content for their studies. As such, the data gathered gave insights to the various recurring media-related issues. What is common in all these studies is the use of the ‘news function analysis’ to study how the distribution of news sources explains the functions of news in the context of daily media events (Simpande, 2019, p. 11).

The use of content analysis to systematically measure similarities and differences in the media through the news is not a new thing. Studies that have employed framing and agenda-setting theories find content analysis as the first choice for their method. From a source perspective, studies on political communication tend to employ content analysis to explain how political issues are presented and packaged in accessible forms or as “clusters of messages” (i.e., Skewes, 2007; Entman, 1993 and the news frames, McCombs & Shaw, 1972 and other subsequent studies that explored agenda setting frames). On the other hand, those that approach

the issues from the receiver's perspective use the analysis of news content to show how some meanings are preferred over other competing meanings, thereby, influencing public opinion and voting behavior (Hopp & Ferrucci, 2020; Graber & Dunaway, 2017). As Skewes (2001) asserts, analyses of news content in relation to the distribution of news frames and sources have been able to demonstrate that authoritative sources get their messages out and become primary definers of the main issues of the news.

More studies, such as those by Umejei (2020); Madrid-Morales (2018), Guo & McCombs (2011), and many others have shown that news content with political import is "indexed" to statements by official sources and more specifically the governing elites (Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2006). Even though large-scale studies have not shown strong evidence of news media bias, content analysis of news outlets has shown evidence of bias toward partisan ideology or slant in political coverage to nationalism and political party (Schiffer, 2006).

Keeping all the arguments in mind, the focus for this study was the testing of framing and agenda-setting theories through content analysis. This allowed for the researcher to show how ZNBC plays a role in setting the new agenda of other media outlets. Content analysis method was chosen for this study because of the cognizance it holds for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of news content. Riffe et. al (2019) considers it as one of the most practical methods for examining media content. Further, Babbie (2010) and Neuendorf, Skalski, (2009) argue that content analysis is among the most appropriate methods for studying processes or events occurring over a long period of time.

### **Population target and universe**

To get a representative sample, I selected news stories from 2012 to 2018. This process was arrived at based on the arguments that, "two separate years avoids over representing a

particular event, and that looking at subsequent years allows for measuring the changes in a time series” (Wimmer, 2011). Therefore, for each year, two trained coders and I sampled 24 days represented by two days of every month (13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>) that were randomly generated using an open-source online software (random.org). This provided us with 24 days of possible data collection per year, allowing us to collect from 168 days (24 days x 7 years). Essentially, the numbers from 1 to 28 were selected to represent the days of the month on the calendar, with the month of February dictating the limit. I then inserted the selected number of days in the software for a random generation of numbers – thus days 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> to represent the days from which we would collect our sample. Several studies, including those of Wimmer and Dominick (2011) have shown that a handful of days each month or each week have the capability to represent the general characteristics of the population. This is the hallmark for content analysis for it allows us to sample across various representative data that provide robust findings with higher confidence levels.

The target population encompassed information that was especially produced by ZNBC and its direct affiliates. These were perceived as the central nodes in the data collection process. However, I further extended the data collection to include other media in Zambia within the social network framework of ZNBC. Since ZNBC refers to a corporation of all government-owned media, this study found justification in collecting data in form of news items from online sources that included television, newspapers, and social media platforms owned by ZNBC. As I collected the data, several other news items from other news sources in Zambia were being identified as relating to the data category. This provided insights for collecting all the data regardless of its source but categorizing into ZNBC, private, community, and religious media. The purpose of keeping a tab on these news items was for subsequent network analyses. The

selection and categorization processes were aided by Amazon's Alexa - (<https://www.alexa.com/topsites/category/Regional/Africa/Zambia>). The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA-Zambia) was also used for listing all the top online sources in Zambia categorized by percentage of daily time on site, percentage of daily page-views per visitor, percentage of traffic from search, and the number of total sites linking to that source. The years are crucial demarcating factors because in 2012 China officially expressed its interest to invest in Africa (Madrid-Morales, 2018) and thus in Zambia, while 2018 reflects the time after China officially bought 60% of ZNBC shares.

### **Sampling**

A crucial element according to Wimmer and Dominick (2011) is to determine the sample size. This is because the criteria for determining a representative sample is sometimes complex. This study, therefore, follows Wimmer and Dominick's (2011) justification that the sample size may largely be determined by factors such as the type, purpose, complexity of study, and the amount of acceptable sampling errors, as well as time and financial constraints. Therefore, I limited my sample size to online data collected on randomly selected dates from the Zambian local media. This implies that I collected data from any media type that was produced online. Essentially all media types in Zambia have websites and social media sites where they produce the same content as broadcasted. For example, ZNBC TV has an interactive online platform where they post all content broadcasted on-air. And so are all radio networks under study.

### **Inter-coder checks**

The importance of reliability for the validation of content analyses cannot be overemphasized. Neuendorf and Kumar (2015) identify two major reasons for conducting inter-coder reliability test: To provide basic validation of a coding scheme such that the coding

scheme is not limited to use by only one individual, and to allow for more message processing while calibrating coders amongst each other (p.142). Inter-coder reliability refers to the consistency, or agreement, of coding between or among coders (Krippendorff, 2018). High intercoder reliability means that coder X would code a given story the same way coder Y did. This implies that anyone who engages in the process of coding data is required to observe the same content and categorize it in the same way. “Without high inter-coder reliability, you are open to criticism of bias” (Lynch and Peer, 2002, p.46). To assure that the data did not suffer biases from the coding process, we conducted a comprehensive training session during which the meaning and measurement of each variable in the study was thoroughly discussed.

As a further measure for robustness, we tested the extent of inter-coder agreement across the coders. Two trained coders were thus used in aiding the process of data collection and testing reliability. The two coders who were undergraduate students from the University of Zambia (UNZA) and the National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA) were incentivized with an equivalence of \$100 each. The incentive was meant to help in the procurement of internet bundles for online data collection and weekly video meetings. (Generally, in Zambia and many African countries, Wi-Fi is a privilege. But anyone can use buy internet bundles and connect to Wi-Fi. This was what was done to hold the coders access the internet throughout the study period. Among the agreements made were that the coders have full access to good working computers and that we have weekly Sunday meetings to discuss the progress of our data collection. Generally, data collection involved a step-by step process that was done after conducting a Krippendorff reliability pre-test with the 2012 dataset that provided us with inter-coder results ranging between 0.85 and 0.93. Generally, we decided on using the Krippendorff alpha because of the assumption that it could be more when handling various measurement levels



(i.e., nominal, ordinal, interval, ratio). Most importantly, we found out that it provided a comprehensive way to parse out basically all the sources of variability in ratings. Beyond this, we opted for the Krippendorff's alpha because of its ability to ignore missing data (we manually confirmed we had no missing data) and the fact that it can handle various sample sizes, categories, and numbers of raters. The average inter-coder reliability of 0.86 was achieved for all the pre-tested variables. To note, each step was carefully recorded in a spreadsheet and later discussed in our weekly meetings. The research assistants were required to recount their weekly data collection process and document whatever challenges they faced.

### **Data collection process**

The trained coders and I collected all the stories from ZNBC online platforms that mentioned China in them. In the process, we also collected all stories about China from authentic news sources on Zambian online platforms published within the same time frame and date. The purpose of collecting all stories and categorizing them based on the media type was for the idea of expanding our measures if the need arose. Therefore, we ended up with a total sample size of 739 stories talking about China from ZNBC news sources alone, 377 stories from private media, 189 stories from community media, and 44 stories from religious media. Further, we manually cleaned the data by eliminating all the stories that did not fit our criteria (i.e., all ads and items that were not news articles were eliminated), and thus ended up with a total of  $N=728$  for ZNBC,  $N=363$  for private media,  $n=187$  for community media and  $n=43$  for religious media. This provided us with an overall total of 1,321 stories to represent the population.

### **Coding Criteria**

As noted above, content analysis methods involve a coding operation aimed at synthesizing distinctive pieces of information into a more comprehensive set of data (Babbie,

2009). This set of data allows the researcher to interpret the co-occurrences of the media events based on the categories provided. For Neuendorf (2016), coding is perceived as the placement of a unit of analysis into content categories. The main purpose is to “make sets so complete and unambiguous as to almost eliminate the individual differences among the coders” (Neuendorf, p.132). As such, the study leaned on the works of Neuendorf (2016), Amoakohene (2007), Andrade (2006), and Lynch & Peer (2002), to guide the formulation of the coding scheme for the content analysis. Also, Yeboah-Banin et. al. (2019) and Kwansah-Aidoo (2001)’s studies served as points of reference throughout the data collection and analysis process.

To develop the research instruments, I relied upon two main considerations. First, the article attributes used in the coverage and presentation of news (for example, headlines, size of the story, placement, and sources) about the Zambia-China relations. Second, I established some imageries (e.g., metaphors, phrases and adjectives used to describe China) invoked in the news about the Zambia-China relationship. The assumptions are that headlines, size of the story, and other related technical are used to frame a given story. In a similar way, several phrases, metaphors, and the general structuring of a sentence have been found to be necessary tools for influencing one’s agenda.

In summary, the various content categories were assigned to the units of analysis identified during the data collection process in the following manner:

- a.) **Story enhancement:** This relates to whether a story was accompanied by any image, illustration, or any other form of enhancing that story. The categories under this were: story with photograph, stories with illustrations such as graphs or cartoons, stories with none of these items, stories accompanied by photocopies of letter/document, stories with

photographs and photocopies of letter/visual elements, and stories with any other enhancement of story (the number of pictures used).

- b.) **Level of fairness (Bias):** This refers to whether articles were heavily slanted towards one side or neutral. For this study, slant is defined as “selecting details that are fair or unfair to the subject being described” (Severin & Tankard, 2001, p. 101). Story coverage was, therefore, measured in this regard, paying attention to whether the stories reflected power relations (Is China used as a subject or object in the story? Who is the protagonist in the story?)
- c.) **Tone of story (Valence):** This measures the general tone of the story and our intercoder reliability test of the three measures below provided a total of .88 Krippendorff alpha.
1. **Positive** (harmony, favorable, friendly, conciliatory, encouraging, exhortation) for example “President Lungu lauds China over investments in Africa”, “Zambia launches China-funded project to improve access to water,” “Zambia-China Partnership Yields \$5bn Infrastructure Projects”, “Govt Unveils US\$2.5 Billion Development Package from China”, etc.
  2. **Negative** (unfavorable, hostile, confrontational, adversarial, blame) for example “Hakainde Is A Useful Idiot of The West, He Is Fighting China for Their Interests”, “Stop being crybabies over Chinese, compete with them ,Kitwe DC”, “Say no to China: Anger mounts in Zambia over Beijing presence”, etc.
  3. **Neutral** (using words that do not portray the story with either a negative or a positive tone) for example “China attaches great importance to President Lungu's visit”, “China to implement 8 major initiatives with African countries”, “China investment in ECOWAS Member States excites President”, etc.

**Table 3: Coding Protocol**

Variable	Definition and categories coded
<b>Name and Type of Media Outlet</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ZNBC online media (ZNBC, ZNBC today, Times of Zambia, Zambia Daily Mail)</li> <li>2. Non-Government media (Private, Community, Religious)</li> </ol>
<b>Story Type</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Routine events</b>, e.g. reporting stories initiated by Chinese activities in Zambia</li> <li>2. <b>Enterprise</b> – Stories initiated by journalists themselves. These may include feature, editorials or opinion stories which indicate that some research was done on them</li> <li>3. <b>Press Releases</b> - an official statement delivered to members of the news media for the purpose of providing information, an official statement, or making an announcement.</li> </ol>
<b>Date of Publication</b>	Simply specify the date and year of publication
<b>Story Topic</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Economic</b> (See codebook in appendix)</li> <li>2. <b>Political</b> - Diplomatic relations, political tensions</li> <li>3. <b>Social issues</b> (see codebook in appendix)</li> <li>4. <b>Cultural</b> (see codebook in appendix)</li> <li>5. <b>Scientific, technical, medical</b>, (excluding environment)</li> <li>6. <b>Ecology and environment</b></li> <li>7. <b>Human Interests</b>: Does the story provide a human example on the issue?</li> </ol>
<b>Framing</b>	<p><i>Note that where an <b>episodic frame</b> would focus on an individual, a <b>thematic frame</b> would focus on the issue.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Thematic</b> (adds context, i.e., feature stories)</li> <li>2. <b>Episodic</b> (event-based, i.e., breaking news stories)</li> </ol>
<b>Story Angle</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Local</b> – Focus on the benefits of the local people (count variable)</li> <li>2. <b>China or Govt focused</b> – (Focused on government or China)</li> </ol>
<b>Story Prominence (Enhancement)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Picture/no picture</b></li> <li>2. <b>None</b> (there are no enhancements to the story)</li> <li>3. <b>Illustrations</b> (charts, cartoons)</li> <li>4. <b>Other</b></li> </ol>
<b>Story Type</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Hard News</b> (see appendix)</li> <li>2. <b>Brief news</b> (see appendix)</li> <li>3. <b>Feature story</b> (see appendix)</li> <li>4. <b>Editorial</b> (see appendix)</li> <li>5. <b>Opinion</b> (see appendix)</li> </ol>
<b>Story tone</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Language</b> – Quote any adjectives, metaphors, or phrases in the story used to describe china that illustrate the portrayal as negative, neutral, or positive</li> <li>2. What perceptions does the story invoke about the Zambia-China relationship? Negative, neutral, positive</li> </ol>

**Note:** The definitions of each variable in the table are presented in the codebook (appendix A)

## **Research questions and variables**

For each of the research questions (RQs), the overall unit of analysis was a story item about the Zambia-China relationship. Such stories focused on different subjects like investment, aid, friendship, Chinese individuals' contribution to the Zambian economy, etc. Therefore, the focus of this study and the dependent variable was simply Chinese media agenda in Zambian local news. In the analysis of this study, the factors identified in the literature as influencing Chinese media agenda in Zambia were examined. These factors were examined by assessing the story prominence, story dominance, and the degree to which a story was perceived as either fair or biased towards the Zambia-China relationship. To test correlations and the salience of interrelationships between objects and/or issues, cross-lagged analyses and network agenda-setting were respectively used. Given the fact that the measures for the hypotheses were rooted in the interrelation of the media in Zambia (government, private, community, and religious), addressing intermedia agenda-setting became a necessity, even though it was not my primary objective. The table below outlines the association between the RQs, the dependent variables (DVs), and the independent variables (IVs).

**Table 4:** Association between the RQs, DVs and IVs

Topic	Research Question	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Method/Test
Frames	<i>What are the most important issues of the Zambian media in the coverage of the Zambia-China relationship?</i>	<i>Story enhancements added to the story</i>	Frame the Zambia-China relationship to shape local media opinions and discourse	Correlations between story tone, source, and enhancement
Story Tone	<i>RQ2. How did stories from the Zambian media show China's dominant tone in the Zambia-China relationship?</i>	Story type (negative, Positive, neutral)	Tone Dominance of Zambia-China relationship	Sentiment & Tone analysis
Fairness & Power relations	<i>RQ3: How does the coverage of China in Zambia show fairness in how the Zambian-China relationship was framed?</i>	Story type (Bias: in relations to power positioning in the story)	Fairness in Zambia-China relationship	Measure power relationships: Is China a subject or an object in the story?
Chinese issues-attributes	<i>RQ4: How did stories from the Zambian media frame China as a means to shape local opinions and discourse?</i>	Important issues in the coverage of Zambia-China's coverage	Prediction of Chinese influence in Zambian media	Cross-lagged correlations
Network Agenda-Setting	<i>RQ5: What is the relationship between the attribute network of ZNBC and the attribute network of the other media outlets in Zambia with less direct influence from Chinese media agenda?</i>	Networked-attribute agenda of the Zambia-China relationship  Similarities in networked agenda	<i>Prediction of moderate to high levels of correlations between ZNBC, Private media, Community, and Religious media. (relational estimate rather than a variable)</i>  High levels of Chinese influence in the Zambian media	Network Agenda Setting  Network Agenda-setting

**Note:** The overall unit of analysis was a story items about the Zambia-China relationship

## **Measure of research questions**

Research questions one (RQ1), two (RQ2), and three (RQ3) were measured under the umbrella of framing. Therefore, the measures were done concurrently in the sense that each of the three were measured in respect to one another. Essentially, RQ1 that sought to examine the most important issues of the Zambian media in the coverage of China was measured through the lenses of story prominence. Story prominence, in this case, was measured by looking at how a story was enhanced to deliver a particular message. For example, did a story have an image or illustration? What is the source? Was it thematic or episodic? etc. This whole process was measured by counting the number of such features used to enhance the story. Further, and after establishing story tone in relation to RQ2, I established whether any differences in story enhancement attend to the prominence with which positive and negative stories are reported. This was simply done by correlating the relationship between story enhancement and story tone.

## **Measuring story tone**

The second research question (RQ2) that sought to examine the dominant tone of a story was measured with the help of the open access software called, the Alchemy Document Sentiment (ADS) (<https://cloud.ibm.com/catalog/services/natural-language-understanding?hideTours=true&=undefined>) and IBM Watson Tone Analyzer (<http://tone-analyzer-demo.mybluemix.net>) software. The aim was to examine the sentiments and tone in the news agenda pertaining to the Zambia-China relationship. Particularly, I investigated the language narratives in each of the news stories in the sample by analyzing various types of sentiments and traits. Generally, while sentiment analysis identifies the positive and negative polarity of a post, tone analysis measures the levels of positivity, negativity, and neutrality of the story (Agarwal and Sureke, 2016). In addition, emotions and social tendencies can also be

measured through such software, but I limited the measurements to only three variables. Inspired by the prior literature on framing of issues in sub-Saharan Africa as well as on analyzing linguistic features, the coders and I created a feature space that allowed us to analyze the linguistic features of the data. Together, we categorized the features as topic modeling, tone analysis, and semantic tagging.

In modeling our topic, we used the software features to identify the themes or frames. This was done by taking a random sample of 100 articles from our total sample and then extracting their taxonomies and concepts from the feature spaces generated above. Second, we created two independent lexicons of these concepts and labeled topics that had a confidence score above 0.50. Third, we manually filtered the list of taxonomy and finalized 15 labels that strictly belonged to the topic of the study. These were listed as, government policies, Chinese investment (privatization), media and culture, health promotion, agriculture, ecology and environmental protection, security and crime, tourism, education, labor laws and abuse, media and public interest/human interest, politics, foreign affairs, mining, and social issues. On the other hand, semantic tagging (which is simply used to identify the semantic role of each term present in the content as well as the hidden phrases that play a major role) was measured using the UCREL Semantic Analysis System (USAS – <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/usas>). Generally, UCREL Semantic analysis system is a framework designed since the 1990s for undertaking the automatic semantic analysis of texts. Following procedures used in prior research, I also employed the USAS to tag each news content to the dataset. The semantically tagged phrases were composed of numerical values indicating the divisions of each label in the lexicon. We then removed the punctuations and decoded all the terms with their respective labels in the tag's hierarchy (<http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/usas/semtag.txt>).



To evaluate the performance of our model, the coders and I trained the model on sentiment, semantic, and language cues based on the features of a text created on a vector space of five feature sets in congruent to Agarwal and Sureka (2016)'s 2016 study. These feature sets included: Article/document sentiment, semantic tagging, emotions, social tendencies, and writing tone. Using the same data, I performed a cross validation labeling it as DataX and DataY. Data X represented a model without emotion and writing tone while DataY represented the model with the two variables present. The output of our data suggested that removing emotions and social tendencies, from our model did not impact the overall performance of the analysis (<.051%). Iterating the analysis and removing the other tone features of the overall article (negative, positive, or neutral) decreased the precision by 83% in total. These findings give justification to the argument that emotions and social tendencies are not a necessary confounder or intervening variable for measuring tone dominance in the Zambia-China relationship.

### **Measuring power relations**

Research Question three (RQ3) that sought to examine whether the Zambia-China relationship was covered in fairness in the Zambian news media was measured by exploring the power relations through syntactic analyses. In other words, to measure the power relations in the news items collected from the four media categories, I created a word and phrase frequency using the *Nvivo* software, and then performed syntactic analyses. As Hulden (2016) asserts, "a syntactic analysis has the potential to go beyond the 'bag-of-words' in illuminating power relations, as well as capturing more clearly who exactly is at the center of the analysis" (p.140). Based on this assertion, the first step was to collect all the sentences that had China in them from the news using an auto-coding command, then performed the syntactic analysis for all the media categories. This provided a total of 923 sentences/phrases from ZNBC, 228 from private media,

162 from community media, and 61 from religious media. Together with the two trained coders, we manually labelled the data for each news story in the four media categories and presented them as either China is a subject or an object in the story. This was done after conducting an intercoder reliability test with 50 sentences from each category, therefore providing the coders and I with the Cohen's Kappa Coefficients ranging between 95-100%.

### **Measuring intermedia agenda-setting**

Research questions RQ4 and RQ5 sought to examine Chinese media agenda in the Zambian newsrooms, therefore employing Network Agenda-setting theory and analysis at a more detailed level. Therefore, to address the question of Network Agenda-setting (NAS) I began by assuming that the relationship between the news agenda categories in Zambia were connected at the second level of agenda-setting. Therefore, I tested the overall flow and influence of media agenda using intermedia agenda-setting approaches through cross-lagged correlations. This was done by replicating Lopez-Escobar et. al.'s (1998), cross-lagged correlation analyses which followed causal inferences made from correlational data. Generally, cross-lagged correlation asserts that if X causes Y more than Y causes X, it should then follow that  $PX1Y2$  will be higher than  $PCIY2$  (Sikanku, 2014). Similarly, the inverse that Y causes X more than X causes Y, also supports the argument that  $PX2Y1$  should be higher than  $PXIY2$ .

For Lopez-Escobar, et. al. (1998), the cross-lagged correlation analysis provides two advantages for testing hypotheses. The first advantage is that we can examine two competing hypotheses simultaneously, in the sense that not only the hypothesized relationship between the independent variable at Time 1 and the dependent variable at Time 2 could be assessed, but also the strength of the hypothesized relationship *vis-à-vis* a hypothesis asserting exactly the opposite. For this study, this implies that we can examine the agenda-setting before China owned 60

percent of ZNBC shares (Time 1) and after (Time 2) for all the media. In this case, I divided the time frame from 2012 to 2016, and 2017 to 2018. The two years represent the time before and after China invested in the Zambian newsroom. The variations in years across the given data is acknowledged in the sense that it seems not to make sense to compare five years (2012 through 2016) to two years (2017 and 2018). For this reason, it is important that cross-lagged correlations be measured on percentage and ratio value. This is done by measuring the percentage increase in stories per year and testing them for cross-lagged correlations. Second, both of these hypotheses can be assessed based on the Rozelle–Campbell baseline, which is the level of correlation to be expected on the basis of the autocorrelations and synchronous correlations alone” (Lopez-Escobar et al., 1998, p.233).

### **Network Analysis model**

Primarily, the objective of the Network Agenda Setting (NAS) model is to explore the impact of the media on the audience’s cognitive network (Guo, 2016). Nonetheless, since information networks can flow between or among a variety of entities, such as media to media, organizations to organization, civic groups to civic groups etc., the use of NAS was justified for this study. As mentioned, while intermedia-agenda setting could be implied in this situation and was used, NAS provided me with an extensive approach to understanding not only the flow of information, but the effects and relevance of the attributes within a network. For this reason, the networked perspective of the NAS model was applied to examine many other aspects of the communication process. This approach, therefore, contributes to the broader discussion of new media and communication theories (particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where several methodological challenges continue to persist) by enabling a more nuanced approach of

measuring information flows and the persuasiveness of pro and counter news agenda from several global media outlets.

The hallmark for network analysis is centrality, and particularly, “degree centrality” which is the most straightforward centrality measurement (Guo, 2016). Wasserman and Faust (1994) defined degree centrality as “the number of ties or links that a node has” (p.254). This implies that the more ties an attribute/node has with other elements, the more central it is in a network, and thus the more relevant it is to other networks. However, this does not automatically mean that the more an issue is covered in the news, the more associations it has. That would be possible with intermedia agenda setting measures, but NAS unveils other sub-structures that gives the researcher a robust understanding of how the media bundle various objects or issue-attributes in their quest to construct meaning. These meanings are usually vividly expressed in network visualizations that seek to describe the relationships.

### **Network Analysis’ coding scheme**

The coding process for network analysis drew several insights from the already generated themes in the analysis of framing although it tried as much as possible to remain independent. To measure how the media in Zambia comparatively cover the Zambia-China relationship, data from other media outlets within Zambia were used. Both the coders and I started by categorizing news stories from what we had previously referred to as government verses non-governmental into “ZNBC”, “private”, “community”, and “religious media.” ZNBC simply represented government state-owned media corporations; Private - represented the media owned by elite individuals, Community referred to media owned and sustained by the community, and Religious media referred to media that were owned by religious organizations in Zambia. The categorization process was aided by *MISA – Zambia*, a media conglomerate that aims at

advocating for the unhindered enjoyment of freedom of expression, access to information and a free, independent, and pluralistic media. Second, the coders and I collected all the news stories in their full context and copied them on a single word document, which I then imported into *Nvivo* for the purpose of coding the attributes (*Nvivo* is a computer software package designed for qualitative data analysis. *Nvivo* is also useful for coding attributes and performing thematic content analyses). Then we generated a script to detect the Zambia-China relationship from the imported document.

Using a dictionary of 138 words and phrases of attributes designed by the coders and the use of “OpenFraming” (<http://www.openframing.org/>) software as suggested by Smith et. al. (2020), we generated a script to help combine the matching words. The matching words were then approved manually by looking at whether those words were indeed referring to the Zambia-China relationship or not, and whether there were other words or phrases that the script had missed. Words like Chinese labor laws, Chinese aid, Chinese mining, Chinese scholarship, and many other related words and phrases were collected. In each case, external validity was above 95% percent. Third, we manually clustered all the attributes collected from each article into the 15 themes generated earlier. This was done after performing intercoder reliability tests that yielded alpha coefficients between 0.80 and 0.92. In total, we extracted 6, 881 data points with ZNBC stories (N728) providing attributes, Private  $N = 363$  provided a total of 2,301 attributes, Community that had  $N = 187$  had a total of 1,233, and Religious media  $n = 43$  recorded a total of 154 attributes.

The thematic attributes included government policies, Chinese massive investment (Privatization), media and culture, health promotion, agriculture, ecology and environmental protection, security and crime, tourism, education, labor laws and abuse, media and public

interest/human interest, politics, foreign affairs, mining, and education. The justification for using thematic attributes is rooted in the argument that a good network is one that is simple and easy to interpret and visualize. This, therefore, is highly contingent on the size of your network, which is informed by the total number of attributes in question. Although a network could be created with big data, proponents of network analysis encourage the use of simple and “easy to interpret” datasets, which could also provide a simple visual description of the network (Luke, 2015, p. 12).

Therefore, given the size of our population sample, and the number of attributes generated from our overall sample, it was justified that the issue-attributes be thematically content analyzed to generate thematic attribute. In this case, each theme represents several issue-attributes. Note that by thematic, we do not mean that we ignored episodic issues, but that we mostly generated our themes in a broader sense to include anything pertaining to China. The use of sentiment, tone analysis, and semantic tagging helped unveil our hidden phrases that were not directly referring to China but were directly linked to Chinese activities. For example, statements such as “repressive labor laws in the mining sector” might not have had China in them but were relevant in the analysis of Chinese influence of the Zambian media.

A total of 15 attributes, as table three (3) below indicates, were included in the analysis. These were then converted into four 15 x 15 matrices using network and computer analysis techniques, as recommended by Guo’s (2013) approach. The matrices are intended to demonstrate the strength of the of the connections of all the attribute pairs in the sampled articles (Saldaña, Ardèvol-Abreu, 2016). The strength of connections was measured by the number of stories in which an attribute is mentioned. We then coded the type of each association as either explicit or implicit. By explicit, we refer to stories with attributes that were explicitly connected,

while implicit in this case referred to attributes that appeared together in the story with no evidence of direct associations, e.g., a story about culture yet referring or glorifying Chinese investment would be considered as implicit while a story that directly reports about Chinese activities would be considered as an explicit story. Table 5 below presents a summary and definition of the thematic attributes.

**Table 5:** *Definition of thematic attributes*

No.	Attribute	Definition
1	Government policies	Refers to all policies related China in Zambia
2	Privatization	All stories pertaining to investment and privatization of structures to China
3	Media and Culture	Stories in the media addressing Chinese culture, i.e., celebrations, food, clothing, work culture, Chinese movies, etc.
4	Health	Stories pertaining to Chinese involvement in the Zambian health industry- this would include story like Chinese medicine in Zambia
5	Environment	Story that shows China's effort to conserve the environment
6	Security & Crime	Stories pertaining China's involvement in the defense forces and any crimes committed to or by Chinese nationals in Zambia.
7	Agriculture	Issues pertaining to China's involvement in Agriculture – strategies used to farm in Zambia, etc.
8	Tourism	Stories/issues pertaining to China's promotion of Tourism in Zambia. It could be investment.
9	Public/Human Interest	Stories related to China's involvement in people's life at a personal level. E.g., Chinese nationals playing soccer with the locals, Chinese nationals participating in traditional events such as cultural dances, food, etc.
10	Labor laws	Issues pertaining to labor laws implemented by China. For example, riots and protests that emerged in retaliation to Chinese labor laws, China whipping a Zambian national for reporting late at school.
11	Politics	All stories pertaining to issues of politics in Zambia
12	Foreign Affairs	Zambia-China relationship (foreign policies), e.g., Zambia government visit China
13	Mining	Issues pertaining Chinese mining in Zambia
14	Religion	Stories that reflect China in Religious matters – i.e., Chinese individuals engaging in Pentecostal services - preaching
15	Education	Chinese investment in education, i.e., offering scholarships, introducing Chinese language in Zambian schools

Note: *Each attribute in this table is thematic*

## **Creating Matrices**

The general approach for creating matrices followed Guo's (2012) model in which she provided the procedure for transferring the content analysis to matrices. The matrices were constructed according to the interrelationships between the elements found in the media messages regarding the Zambia-China relationship. This was based on the numerical pairing of elements in a network by calculating the frequency of how often the items co-occurred across the same coding unit. The assumption was that the more the elements co-occurred across the coding units, the stronger the connection. In each cell, the entry is a numerical value that represents the level of interrelationship between two corresponding elements composed by N rows x N columns. These corresponding elements are symmetrical in the sense that the relationship between attributes A and B is the same as the relationship between attributes B and A. Precisely these interrelationships are measured by taking into consideration the message strength of each coding unit with "0" being a possible representative of zero connection, "1" representing low-levels of elaborative association – referring to elements that are just mentioned together in a coding unit of the content analysis; and "2" representing high-level coding units.

## **Network Analysis Procedure**

After establishing the measures for intermedia agenda-setting with the cross-lagged analysis, I drew more insights from Guo's (2012) NAS model to examine the attributes constructed within the studied media. To identify the co-occurrences of the issue-attributes, I created a matrix of attributes to represent the network agenda of ZNBC, private media, community media, and religious media. Given the 15 attributes, I composed 15 rows and 15 columns for each media category. The attributes are represented by a cell in the matrix. And each cell reports the number of times the attributes were mentioned in the article. Since the goal of



network analysis is to identify the co-occurrences of attributes in the same news report, I used a binary coding approach to which a number, “1” was assigned if the attribute was mentioned in the generated theme and “0” if it wasn’t. The binary numbers were further totaled into numeric counts, and using the R-scripts, I calculated the correlations and transformed the numerical counts into continuous variables which I later used to visualize my data.

To test the degrees of similarity or dissimilarity among our four media categories we employed the Quadratic Assignment Procedure (QAP) - a statistical tool that compares matrices by calculating the correlations among the attribute networks. The software is “commonly used in social network analysis, as a resampling-based method, similar to the bootstrap, for calculating the correct standard errors” (Simpson, 2001). Second, I calculated both the frequency and “degree centrality” of each of the attributes to determine which attributes were more important. Degree centrality, or rather the importance of an attribute or node is determined by its centrality, meaning that the more connections an attribute has with other attributes, the more central and important it is to the network.

The overall impact of agenda-setting for each of the media categorized: ZNBC (government-owned), private, community and religious, was measured by dividing the number of issues found in a particular medium by the total number of issues. This approach has been substantively employed in several studies (Serwornoo, 2019; Pinto, et. al, 2018; Guo & Vargo, 2017) and has been shown to produce reliable results. Tables 6a, 6b, 6c, and 6d, below provide the matrices that represent ZNBC, private, community, and religious media issue-attribute agenda. Each connection in the matrix represents the influence and presentation of issues pertaining to the 15 suggested issue attributes. However, these influences are discrete numerical variables that were transformed into continuous variables through the process of correlation

analysis. The aim is to find a number ranging from 0 to 1 to allow a thorough and clear visualization process through R-Script and the Quadratic Assignment Procedure (QAP).

**Table 6a:** Matrix representing ZNBC network media agenda

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
A	0	471	14	9	63	11	22	4	29	3	9	183	221	366	7
B	471	0	214	19	77	6	312	2	64	6	119	309	271	294	3
C	14	214	0	3	41	66	2	13	5	20	61	238	163	97	34
D	9	19	3	0	0	8	6	0	4	34	0	21	6	72	89
E	63	77	41	0	0	277	78	1	56	111	0	126	87	93	119
F	11	6	66	8	277	0	27	49	66	43	14	165	87	214	133
G	22	312	2	6	78	27	0	41	3	79	1	141	47	271	97
H	4	2	13	0	1	49	41	0	1	0	0	3	1	2	6
I	29	64	5	4	56	66	3	1	0	8	36	88	73	84	73
J	3	6	20	34	111	43	79	0	8	0	1	21	6	31	35
K	9	4	61	0	0	14	1	0	36	1	0	207	19	2	142
L	183	309	238	21	126	165	141	3	88	21	207	0	213	298	181
M	221	271	163	6	87	87	47	1	73	6	19	213	0	276	10
N	366	294	97	72	93	214	271	2	84	31	2	298	276	0	314
O	7	3	34	89	119	133	97	6	73	35	142	181	10	314	0

**Key:**

- |  |  |                              |                             |
|--|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>A</b> = Government policies on China,               | <b>D</b> = Scientific, technical & medical (health promotion), | <b>G</b> = Security & Crime, | <b>M</b> = Foreign affairs, |
| <b>B</b> = Chinese massive investment (Privatization), | <b>E</b> = Agriculture,  | <b>H</b> = Tourism,          | <b>N</b> = Mining,          |
| <b>C</b> = Media and Culture                           | <b>F</b> = Ecology & environment                               | <b>I</b> = Education         | <b>O</b> = Religion         |
|  |  | <b>J</b> = Labor laws,       |                             |
|  |  | <b>K</b> = Human Interest    |                             |
|  |  | <b>L</b> = Politics          |                             |

**Table 6b:** Matrix representing PRIVATE network media agenda

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
A	0	367	319	39	184	228	31	3	46	128	17	487	68	222	11
B	367	0	281	2	62	44	93	2	167	371	12	369	115	357	1
C	319	281	0	57	77	43	63	12	61	119	221	287	264	45	84
D	39	2	57	0	67	78	65	12	37	2	7	22	17	25	0
E	184	61	77	67	0	121	2	7	23	78	89	281	14	93	0
F	228	44	43	78	121	0	0	77	89	117	147	166	1	359	7
G	31	93	63	65	2	0	0	9	1	128	174	229	217	177	0
H	3	2	12	12	7	77	9	0	1	0	0	3	5	2	0
I	46	167	61	37	23	89	1	1	0	71	63	97	82	56	13
J	128	371	19	2	78	117	128	0	71	0	318	276	22	375	47
K	17	12	221	7	89	147	174	0	63	318	0	115	23	217	311
L	487	369	287	22	281	166	229	3	97	276	115	0	217	317	67
M	68	115	264	17	14	1	217	5	82	22	23	217	0	186	0
N	222	357	45	25	93	359	177	2	56	375	217	317	186	0	3
O	11	1	84	0	0	7	0	0	13	47	311	67	0	2	0

**Key:**

- |  |  |                           |                             |
|--|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>A</b> = Government policies on China,               | <b>D</b> = Scientific, technical & medical (health promotion), | <b>H</b> = Tourism,       | <b>M</b> = Foreign affairs, |
| <b>B</b> = Chinese massive investment (Privatization), | <b>E</b> = Agriculture,  | <b>I</b> = Education      | <b>N</b> = Mining,          |
| <b>C</b> = Media and Culture                           | <b>F</b> = Ecology & environment                               | <b>J</b> = Labor laws,    | <b>O</b> = Religion         |
|  | <b>G</b> = Security & Crime,                                   | <b>K</b> = Human Interest |                             |
|  |  | <b>L</b> = Politics       |                             |

**Table 6c: Matrix representing COMMUNITY network media agenda**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
A	0	341	377	27	295	183	78	13	93	314	402	61	2	119	273
B	341	0	93	3	4	9	2	0	2	316	2	187	2	302	0
C	377	93	0	5	2	18	11	0	2	7	32	137	49	82	1
D	27	3	5	0	1	7	67	0	5	1	17	19	14	23	0
E	295	4	2	1	0	48	0	0	37	12	213	78	12	201	29
F	183	9	18	7	48	0	2	73	34	78	85	5	0	107	1
G	78	2	11	67	0	2	0	0	17	228	156	207	89	12	2
H	13	0	0	0	0	73	0	0	1	0	76	41	14	34	12
I	93	2	2	5	37	34	17	1	0	37	95	17	24	214	87
J	314	316	7	1	12	78	228	0	37	0	233	211	6	319	56
K	402	2	32	17	213	85	156	76	95	233	0	4	0	79	314
L	61	187	137	19	78	5	207	41	17	211	4	0	175	322	78
M	2	2	49	14	12	0	89	14	24	6	0	175	0	289	0
N	119	302	82	23	201	107	12	34	214	319	79	322	289	0	80
O	273	0	1	0	29	1	2	12	87	56	314	78	0	80	0

**Key:**

**A=** Government policies on China,  
**B=** Chinese massive investment (industrialization),

**C=** Media and Culture  
**D=** Scientific, technical & medical (health promotion),  
**E=** Agriculture,  
**F=** Ecology & environment

**G=** Security & Crime,  
**H=** Tourism,  
**I=** Education  
**J=** Labor laws,  
**K=** Human Interest

**L=** Politics  
**M=** Foreign affairs,  
**N=** Mining,  
**O=** Religion

**Table 6d: Matrix representing RELIGIOUS network media agenda**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
A	0	78	83	13	128	45	54	0	5	202	67	71	9	213	333
B	78	0	89	3	167	76	2	1	76	313	3	74	1	288	7
C	83	89	0	8	93	41	17	2	9	19	106	98	21	72	136
D	13	3	8	0	56	45	1	0	47	2	6	2	0	67	1
E	128	167	93	56	0	122	0	34	98	183	191	216	6	193	44
F	45	76	41	45	122	0	3	53	39	14	22	1	3	5	1
G	54	2	17	1	0	3	0	2	34	78	23	97	42	34	0
H	0	1	2	0	34	53	2	0	63	1	4	5	79	34	0
I	5	76	9	47	98	39	34	63	0	227	106	35	42	112	34
J	202	313	19	2	183	14	78	1	227	0	157	151	30	285	32
K	67	3	106	6	191	22	23	4	106	157	0	11	5	163	214
L	71	74	98	2	216	1	97	5	35	151	11	0	123	314	56
M	9	1	21	0	6	3	42	79	42	30	5	123	0	24	0
N	213	288	72	67	193	5	34	34	112	285	163	314	24	0	34
O	333	7	136	1	44	1	0	0	34	32	214	56	0	34	0

**Key:**

**A=** Government policies on China,  
**B=** Chinese massive investment (industrialization),  
**C=** Media and Culture  
**D=** Scientific, technical & medical (health promotion),  
**E=** Agriculture,  
**F=** Ecology & environment  
**G=** Security & Crime,  
**H=** Tourism,  
**I=** Education  
**J=** Labor laws,  
**K=** Human Interest

**L=** Politics  
**M=** Foreign affairs,  
**N=** Mining,  
**O=** Religion

## CHAPTER V

### PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

Chapter five presents the findings based on the analyses of the data collected from online media platforms in Zambia. The methodological approaches used are mostly attributed to content analysis although qualitative approaches, such as the use of *Nvivo* software were employed in the organization and patterning of various data points. Five major research questions and one hypothesis guided this study. The use of these many research questions and hypothesis is justified by the fact the study is nuanced, and thus exploratory to a large extent. Specifically, the study did not only intend to show the patterns of Chinese influence as several studies have done, but also to measure the influence of China in the Zambian media.

Agenda-setting levels one and two were limited to explain the entangled phenomenon, and neither was network agenda-setting (NAS) sufficient to provide a convincing explanation of the phenomena. Thus, drawing from several levels of agenda-setting theories, with reference to the theory of framing provides us a closer understanding of the situation in Zambia. For a better understanding, the results were thematically addressed as in the following manner:

*Theme 1:* Examining Levels of Prominence, fairness, and tone dominance of China in the Zambian media (RQs 1, 2, and 3).

*Theme 2:* Examining the salience and influence of Chinese media agenda in Zambia (RQ4)

*Theme 3:* measuring the relationships and patterns in the Zambian media through Network agenda-setting (RQ5).

As a recap here are the research questions and hypothesis addressed in this study.

***RQ1:** What are the most important issues of the Zambian media in the coverage of the Zambia-China relationship?)*

***RQ2:** How did the stories from the Zambian media show China's dominant tone in the Zambia-China relationship?*

***RQ3:** How does the coverage of China in Zambia show fairness in the Zambian media?*

***RQ4:** How did Stories from the Zambian media frame China to shape local opinions and discourse?*

***RQ5:** What is the relationship between the attribute network of ZNBC and the attribute network of the other media outlets in Zambia with less direct influence from Chinese media agenda?*

### **Theme 1: Prominence, fairness, and tone dominance of China in the Zambian media**

Research questions **RQ1**, **RQ2**, and **RQ3** sought to respectively examine story prominence, story fairness, story tone, and whether China's increased media content shifted the power relationships between Zambia and China. Most importantly, the questions were intended to examine whether China continues to shape Zambian media influence and opinions.

Specifically, story prominence, fairness, and dominance of tone were examined through story characteristics, which to a large extent, exhibited genres of routine/ready-made news about China's activities. In other words, most stories seemed to suggest that they were a result of the coverage of routine or events culled from Chinese owned media operating within Africa. In particular, the CGTN – Africa (China Global Television Network) was used as a reliable source for information regarding Chinese policies. Both ZNBC and private media that provided more data in the sample indicated a higher inclination to routine events (62.06% and 52% respectively). Intermedia sources were also a major category in the findings of ZNBC and

private media. However, community and religious showed a rather different form of dedication to story source. As indicated in the table below, 62% of the stories came from the community and 58% of the stories from religious media came because of journalistic initiatives. Essentially most stories from community and religious media were deemed as investigative and pursuing an issue regarded important to their communities. Nonetheless, routine stories still held a privileged position in all the media categories in Zambia. The interpretation could be that on aggregate, the local media in Zambia does not appear to be keenly interested in interrogating the Zambia-China relationship in the sense that little effort is dedicated to interrogating the meaning of the Sino-China relationship.

Second, findings indicate that most stories focused on political and economic issues, and with less stories dedicated to discussing the environment, scientific inventions, and culture which are key to the “constructive reporting of Zambia”. The findings are overtly presented in the data from ZNBC that seemed to follow hard and brief news formats, which are mostly routine stories, as opposed to analytical story formats such as features and opinions. Particularly, 69 percent (%) and 20 percent (%) of the stories in ZNBC respectively followed a hard and brief news format, therefore privileging political and economic subject matters that most of the population would find difficult resonating with. This is because ZNBC, as a national media corporation is intended for the local Zambians. This kind of reporting is in contradiction to the general population of Zambian whose literacy levels are just above 50 percent (Kombe & Mwanza, 2019).

These findings are consistent with the findings found in several other studies regarding how stories are framed, as either episodically or thematically. In synthesis, data from ZNBC showed that most of the stories focused on politics and China’s economic activities in Zambia.

Very few stories exploring the social, cultural, scientific, or environmental dimension were covered. Table 7 below presents a summary of the sample characteristics of the stories.

**Table 7: Overall sample characteristics**

<i>Variable</i>	<b>ZNBC</b>		<b>PRIVATE</b>		<b>COMMUNITY</b>		<b>RELIGIOUS</b>	
	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>
<b><i>Story Source</i></b>								
Routine	458	62.06%	188	52%	19	10%	16	37%
Intermedia source	196	27%	74	20%	47	25%	2	5%
Enterprise	71	10%	87	24%	116	62%	25	58%
Not indicated	3	0.4%	14	4%	5	3%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>
<b><i>Story Topic</i></b>								
Political	407	56%	141	39%	13	7%	2	5%
Economic	291	40%	67	18%	89	48%	21	49%
Social	9	1.06%	39	11%	3	2%	1	2%
Scientific	3	0.4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Environment	18	2%	101	28%	63	34%	11	26%
Cultural	0	0%	13	6%	2	1%	0	0%
Human Interest	0	0%	2	1%	18	10%	8	19%
Other	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>
<b><i>Story Type</i></b>								
Hard news	502	69%	119	33%	47	25%	23	53%
Brief News	145	20%	7	2%	39	21%	5	12%
Opinion	51	7%	22	6%	86	46%	7	16%
Feature	14	2%	215	59%	15	8%	8	19%
Other	16	2%	0	0%	0	0	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>
<b><i>Story Enhance</i></b>								
Picture	673	92%	218	60%	106	57%	9	21%
Illustration	28	4%	122	34%	4	2%	0	0%
None	27	4%	23	6%	77	41%	34	79%
<b>Total</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>
<b><i>Story Frames</i></b>								
Episodic	614	91%	137	38%	70	37%	5	12%
Thematic	14	9%	226	62%	117	63%	38	88%
<b>Total</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

**Note:** Percentages were estimated to the nearest whole number

### Chinese frames and the Zambian news

Among other things, research questions **RQ1**, **RQ2**, and **RQ3** sought to understand how the media in Zambia presented China, and how the Zambia-China relationship were framed to the local audience. The underlying argument is that by virtue of being the fourth estate and the

ability to access the minds of the people as agenda-setting levels one and two contend, the media can shape the audience's opinion on issues. As asserted earlier, the media can shape the audience on 'what to think about' (Kim, et. al. 2017; McCombs and Shaw, 1972) as well as on 'how to think about issues' (Golan & Wanta, 2001; Wanta & Golan, 2004). This implies that how the Zambian media, and particularly ZNBC frames the Zambia-China relationship reflects how the Zambian media invites the local audience on what and how to think about Chinese activities in Zambia. Therefore, the 'what' and 'how' to think about the issues was quantified and measured through story tone with the research question (**RQ1**), "What potential perception(s) does the story invoke about China in the reader's mind? This question has been used in several studies including Yeboah-Banin, et. al. (2019) whose findings provided consistent results. Therefore, we followed the same procedure through which we analyzed the language in our four media categories with which such perceptions were invoked. This was done by identifying adjectives, metaphors and phrases used with China as a referent.

Findings suggest that in comparison to other media categories, ZNBC used frames that presented the Chinese activities in Zambia with positivity. Particularly, 96% of the stories about China in ZNBC news issues were presented with positivity. On the other hand, the Private media indicated that 51% of the stories about Chinese activities were presented with positivity, while Community media and Religious media had 21% and 11%, respectively. Interestingly, only 1% of the 728 news items from ZNBC accounted for negative stories. However, the records indicate that the more a media category detaches itself from ZNBC, the more critical it becomes of the Zambia-China relationship, and the more negative stories it presents. For example, although not statistically significant, we observe a rise in stories that present a negative tone of the Zambia-China relationship in the Private media (48%).



Further, Community and Religious media present statistically significant percentages (76% and 81%) of the negativity of Chinese activities in Zambia. Unfortunately, less stories accounted for neutrality. These finding demonstrate a tendency for the sampled media to communicate the Zambia-China relationship in two modes: positive or negative rather than toeing the objective middle line. This could be the result of the nature of journalism practice that is more inclined to reporting two dichotomies. Table 8 presents a summary of the findings.

**Table 8.** *Perceptions of China invoked by Zambian media*

<i>Tone</i>	<b>ZNBC</b>		<b>PRIVATE</b>		<b>COMMUNITY</b>		<b>RELIGIOUS</b>	
	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>%</i>
Positive	699	96%	185	51%	39	21%	5	11%
Negative	7	1%	174	48%	142	76%	35	81%
Neutral	22	3%	4	2%	6	3%	3	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

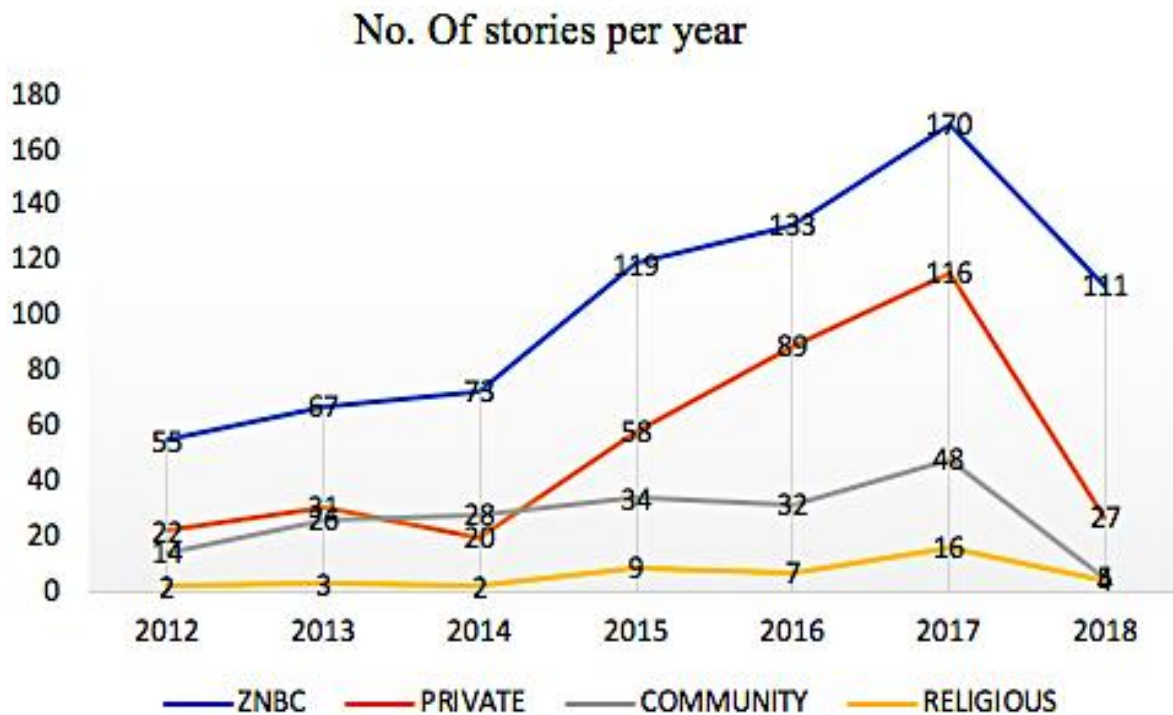
**Note:** *% was calculated by the number of stories coded as either positive, negative, or neutral*

Overarchingly, in an event where Chinese activities were positively framed, the language used was mostly focused on how the presence of China in Zambia was going to benefit the Zambian people. For example, statements like, “China will correct Zambia’s infrastructure deficit”, “China a star of Zambian cooperation”, “China aiming to help Africa develop”, etc. were used. In contrast, negative frames were presented by uncomplimentary expressions that especially showed concerns about the growing influence and the worrisome impressions that it was coming to colonize Zambia and “take over” the resources through soft powers. Statements like, “Say no China...”, “Workers detail abuse in Chinese Mines”, “China in Zambia, Jobs or exploitation?”, “Give us trade deals not debts”, etc. characterized what constituted negative frames. Stories representing neutrality were mostly characterized by government official visits to China or Chinese officials visiting Zambia, i.e., “In China, First Lady Esther Lungu takes part in

the gathering of heads of states”, “International students flocking to China”, “China urges stability”, etc.

On the other hand, findings indicated a gradual average increase of 71 percent (%) of stories about Chinese activities in the Zambian media from 2012 to 2018. In all the media, a peak is recorded in 2015 and 2017 to indicate the years that China’s influence became more prevalent and salient. As earlier indicated, 2017 was a year when China bought 60% of the shares of ZNBC. The year 2015 is also crucial in the sense that it indicates the time when China began to financially invest and renovate the government media outlets. Not surprisingly there is a drop in the number of stories in 2018. This drop might be the result of Chinese stories moving to TopStar; a Chinese owned media organization operating independently in Zambia. We did not collect data from TopStar, therefore, the comparison could not be done. Nonetheless, table 9 below presents a summary of story increase per year in all the media categories in Zambia.

**Table 9.** *Number of Stories per year in the Zambian media*



**Note:** *The peak of stories was in 2015 and 2017*

### **Relationship between story tone and prominence (Enhancement)**

The prominence of a particular story is relevant in determining how news is framed. In other words, the deliberate strategies added to a news story to make it more visible and relevant describe the prominence of the story. This strategy can be determined simply by looking at where a story is placed in the news (placement), size of headline, amount of space dedicated to it, or the number of things attached to it, for example, a picture or an illustration (enhancement). In this study, story enhancement was used with an intention of establishing whether any differences attend to the prominence with positive or negative stories about the Zambia-China relationship. To achieve this objective, I explored the relationship that existed between story enhancement and the intonation in that story.

The findings indicate that most stories from all the media categories under in the sample were generally enhanced by either a picture or an illustration as seen in **table 4** above. News from ZNBC with enhancements seemed to have been framed with positivity. The Private media, on the other hand, had a seemingly equal division of tone with those enhanced with pictures having a higher inclination to positive frames, and those with illustrations aligning towards negative frames. Stories with enhancements from Community and Religious media indicated statistically significant results of framing Chinese activities with suspicious impressions. Further, only Community and Religious media seemed to have presented some stories with some neutrality. Table 10 below presents the summary of this relationship.

**Table 10:** Relationship between tone and story enhancement

	<b>ZNBC</b>		<b>PRIVATE</b>		<b>COMMUNITY</b>		<b>RELIGIOUS</b>	
<i>Enhancement</i>	<i>+ve</i>	<i>-ve</i>	<i>+ve</i>	<i>-ve</i>	<i>+ve</i>	<i>-ve</i>	<i>+ve</i>	<i>-ve</i>
Picture	98%	2%	53%	47%	22%	88%	19%	81%
Illustration	91%	9%	46%	54%	7%	93%	0	100%
None	83%	17%	16%	84%	0	100%	1	99%

**Note:** Table 6 works in collaboration with table 4 above

### **Relationship between frames and story source**

Further compounding led the study to the examination of whether framing of the Zambia-China relationship was related to how the stories were sourced by the four media types. For example, we asked whether there is a relationship between positive framing and routinized sourcing of information. In other words, suppose most journalists from ZNBC were more inclined to enterprise journalism, would the tone of the story change? The analysis of data suggests as assumed, and especially in news stories from the Private, Community, and Religious media. Most stories that emerged from routine activities were framed positively in all the media. On the other hand, enterprise stories reflecting journalistic initiatives were accompanied by negative frames. This could explain why only 10% of the news stories in ZNBC and 24% from Private media were sourced through enterprise, but 62% and 58% from Community and Religious media. This follows also that both ZNBC and Private media recorded more than 50% of routine stories than Community and Religious media. Table 11 below presented the summary of the relationship between tone and mode of story generation.

**Table 11:** *Relationship between tone and story source*

<i>Story Source</i>	<b>ZNBC</b>		<b>PRIVATE</b>		<b>COMMUNITY</b>		<b>RELIGIOUS</b>	
	<i>+ve</i>	<i>-ve</i>	<i>+ve</i>	<i>-ve</i>	<i>+ve</i>	<i>-ve</i>	<i>+ve</i>	<i>-ve</i>
Routine	95%	5%	62%	38%	77%	23%	65%	25%
Enterprise	88%	12%	34%	66%	1%	99%	21%	79%
Intermedia	84%	16%	16%	84%	41%	59%	42	58%

**Note:** *Table 7 works in collaboration with table 4 above*

On face value, these findings seem to be presenting an obvious interpretation, however, a thorough introspection of how issues are framed through story generation belies the argument. Looking at the findings in the Private media, we would conclude that its criticism of the Chinese activities in Zambia could be just as complimentary as the positive image it presents about the Zambian China relationship. This could be because of many intervening variables that are yet to be discussed, i.e., the connection that it might have to ZNBC and the likeliness of receiving funding from China as well. Since all private media, regardless of their affiliations, were grouped together, it is difficult to tell which ones are pro or anti-ZNBC.

## **Theme 2: Zambian-China power relations in the media**

Power relations in the news items were measured by computing the frequencies of significance in the tests according to the degrees of “subjectness” or “objectness” of China and Chinese activities in the Zambian media as per syntactic analysis. This was done by selecting the most frequently used noun phrases on China (NPs) in the data and then calculating the ratio of how many times it appeared as subject (passive or active) verses as an object (indirect or direct). An aggregate ratio indicated that China in the phrases was especially used as a subject in ZNBC

and Private media, and only as an object when used in the passive voice. Example of phrases in which China was a subject included statement like, “China means well”, “China is a good partner”, etc., were used. On the other hand, China was used as an object in instances like, “ZNBC has benefited from loans given by Chinese *TopStar*”, “The Zambia Geo-Engineering company is being rehabilitated with the engagement of China”, “ZNBC’s collapse was redeemed by China”, etc. This implies that China was in less or no circumstance receiving the command in stories found in ZNBC or Private media.

Second, in both media categories, the object level of China appeared only in situations where it had a case to answer (e.g., the labor law cases were people complained about the working conditions or in a story were a Chinese national had shot and killed a Zambian teenager). These did not align with Community and Religious media that seemed to have presented China as an object for the most part. However, an average total of 47% of the news items from Community and Religious media indicated that they still presented China as a subject. The difference in stories was revealing. For example, while most stories that presented China as a subject in ZNBC and Private media were Routine, and glorifying Chinese activities, most stories from Community and Religious media were based on criticism (e.g., China’s contentious stake in the Zambian media...). A Chi-square test was also performed for the overall data in which “subject and object” were treated as nominal categorical variables. The results ( $\chi^2=16.34$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p<.001$ ) for ‘subjectness’ and ( $\chi^2=0.117$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p<.091$ ) also support the assumption by indicate a strong association of how power relations are exercised between China and Zambia in the Zambian media. In other words, China as a subject in the overall Zambian news was significantly supported by the findings to indicate that most media, and particularly ZNBC and private media gave authority to China in the news. It is in rare circumstances, and

particularly in passive voice or in events where certain calamities have occurred that China was used as an object. Following the general grammar principles, we could, therefore, deduce that China exhibits power relations in the Zambian news as opposed to the purported “constructive reporting of Africa”.

### **Theme 3: Measuring NAS relationships and patterns in the Zambian media**

Research question (RQ5) sought to measure the effects of pro-and counter attitudinal effects of Chinese media agenda in Zambian newsrooms. Several steps were followed in this process ranging from simple measures of the importance of issues in the news, their relationship with other media, to the prediction of correlations among the media. Cross-lagged correlations, the Quadratic Assignment Procedure (QAP), and the R-script were used to assess these effects. To respond to RQ5, “*What is the relationship between the attribute network of ZNBC and the attribute network of the other media outlets in Zambia with less direct influence from Chinese media agenda?*”, three major steps were followed: The measure of Intermedia agenda-setting, cross-lagged correlation measure, and the measure of frequency and degree centrality.

#### ***1. Intermedia agenda and Impact factor in Zambian local newsrooms***

The first step was to measure the impact of Chinese media agenda in Zambian local newsrooms, then determine the central node that sets the agenda for other local newsrooms. The idea was not to simply assume that ZNBC did set the agenda although the findings did confirm my overall hypotheses. Therefore, I began by dividing the number of media agenda for each media outlet by the total number of salient/prominent issues in the news stories collected over the stipulated time. In other words, we collected the total number of all the media agenda (in this case, frames that reflected Chinese presence in the news). This process was aided by the analysis

of frames, tone dominance, and the number of frames I found to be biased (fairness in coverage) as the first analysis indicates. *Nvivo* software helped extract these phrases and sentences, providing a total of 6, 881 data points.

ZNBC media corporations that had recorded a total number of 728 sample data, provided us with a total of 3,193 Chinese media agenda, Private  $N = 363$  provided a total of 2,301 Chinese media agenda, Community that had  $N = 187$  had a total of 1,233, and Religious media  $n = 43$  recorded a total of 154 Chinese media agenda. These assessments allowed for measuring agenda setting for each media we had sampled from using the total number of Chinese media agenda for each category. As earlier indicated, the measure was done by dividing the number issues in a particular local newsroom in relation to the total issues found within that media category. The findings were recorded in percentage (%) through which the actual number of issues can be calculated by the formula percentage (%) of  $n = \text{Large } N$  (e.g., 31.3% of  $n = 3,193$ ). This method of measuring the impact of intermedia agenda setting has been used in several studies including Vargo and Guo's (2017) study that examined Global intermedia agenda. Overall findings suggest a higher presence of Chinese media agenda in ZNBC, therefore, making ZNBC a central node. Table 12 below presents the summary of these finding.



**Table 12: Chinese Agenda-setting % Impact in Zambian local newsrooms**

<i>Medium</i>	<i>Issue%</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Issue%</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Issue%</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Issue%</i>
ZNBC	27.31	Byta FM	3.82	Lutanda	0.33	ZNBC2	25.14
Parliament	14.02	Choma	4.86	Pasme	1.77	Muvi TV	5.71
Radio		Maanu FM					
Radio	8.67	Mungu FM	1.01	Mphangwe	3.81	C/Belt TV	7.19
Phoenix							
Joy FM	5.11	K FM	8.21	Chikaya	3.33	TBN	0.18
Hot FM	6.55	Tuta FM	7.77	Maranatha	0.22	Kopala TV	9.34
Q FM	11.19	Flava FM	11.4	Icengelo FM	1.22	CBC	2.15
Pan African	16.91	“YAR” FM	9.13	Serenje FM	9.89	Revelation TV	0.11
FM							
Komboni	7.22	Kokoliko	9.35	Namwianga	10.21	Catholic TV	0.14
Rock FM	3.27	Sun FM	9.14	Voice of Kalomo	7.12	Q TV	9.11
5 FM	14.56	Your	13.1	Chikuni	4.23	NW TV	8.17
		Anthem					
Millennium	14.19	Vision	4.18	Kariba	9.12	CAMNET	6.22
		Macha					
One Love	13.71	Zambezi	7.12	Mosi-o-tunya	4.28	Prime	9.34
Muchinga	12.38	Young Gen	9.31	Itezhi-tezhi	1.34	ABN	1.91
Beats FM	9.23	Sky FM	12.33	Cheke	3.78	Chipata	14.17
New	6.16	ISO FM	2.34	Lyambai	2.44	Mozo	12.87
Generations							
Cloud	7.45	Mazabuka	2.75	Lukulu	2.48	Fresh	8.34
Valley	7.61	Lubuto	9.11	Liseli	9.14	Hope	2.34
Power FM	6.34	Luswepo	14.60	Luapula	17.56		
Wave FM	3.17	Chikankata	2.26	Yangeni	1.23		
Jive FM	3.44	UNZA Radio	23.16	Chimwemwe	6.89		
Ama FM	2.23	Chimwemwe	6.4	Rise FM	15	Zambian Daily	17.15
						Mail	
Falls	6.67	Mano radio	2.04	Icengelo	1.71	Times of	21.34
						Zambia	
Live	5.56	Bangweulu	3.6	Chongwe FM	8.47	Daily Nation	17.26
Comet FM	4.24	Hone FM	9.16	United Voice	4.56	The Mast	7.22
Roots FM	3.23	Alliance for	4.23	Radio Maria	1.13	New Vision	9.77
		Community				Lusaka Times	4.45
Metro FM	2.45	Kwenje	6.02	Christian Voice	3.14	The Indep	3.02
						Observer	
Breeze	0.56	Mpika FM	19.3	Yatsani Radio	0.03		
Petauke	8.71	Kafue FM	0.002	Kabangabanga	0.13	Multi-choice	2.89
Explorers							
Feel Free	4.20	Mkushi FM	11.43	Solwezi FCC	1.23	Viewsat	4.07
KNC FM	6.12	Walamo	3.14	Kasempa FM	4.26	Platinum	2.21
Mumbwa	12.21	Cheke	4.11	Mwinilunga FM	3.23	Starsat	2.32
Blue Sky							
		Indep FM	1.62	Mungu FM	1.01	City Channels	7.81
		Authority	7.4	Faith Radio	1.21	GO TV	5.79
		FM					

Note: We calculated Chinese media agenda in the Zambian media by dividing the issues in a particular local newsroom by the total issues found.

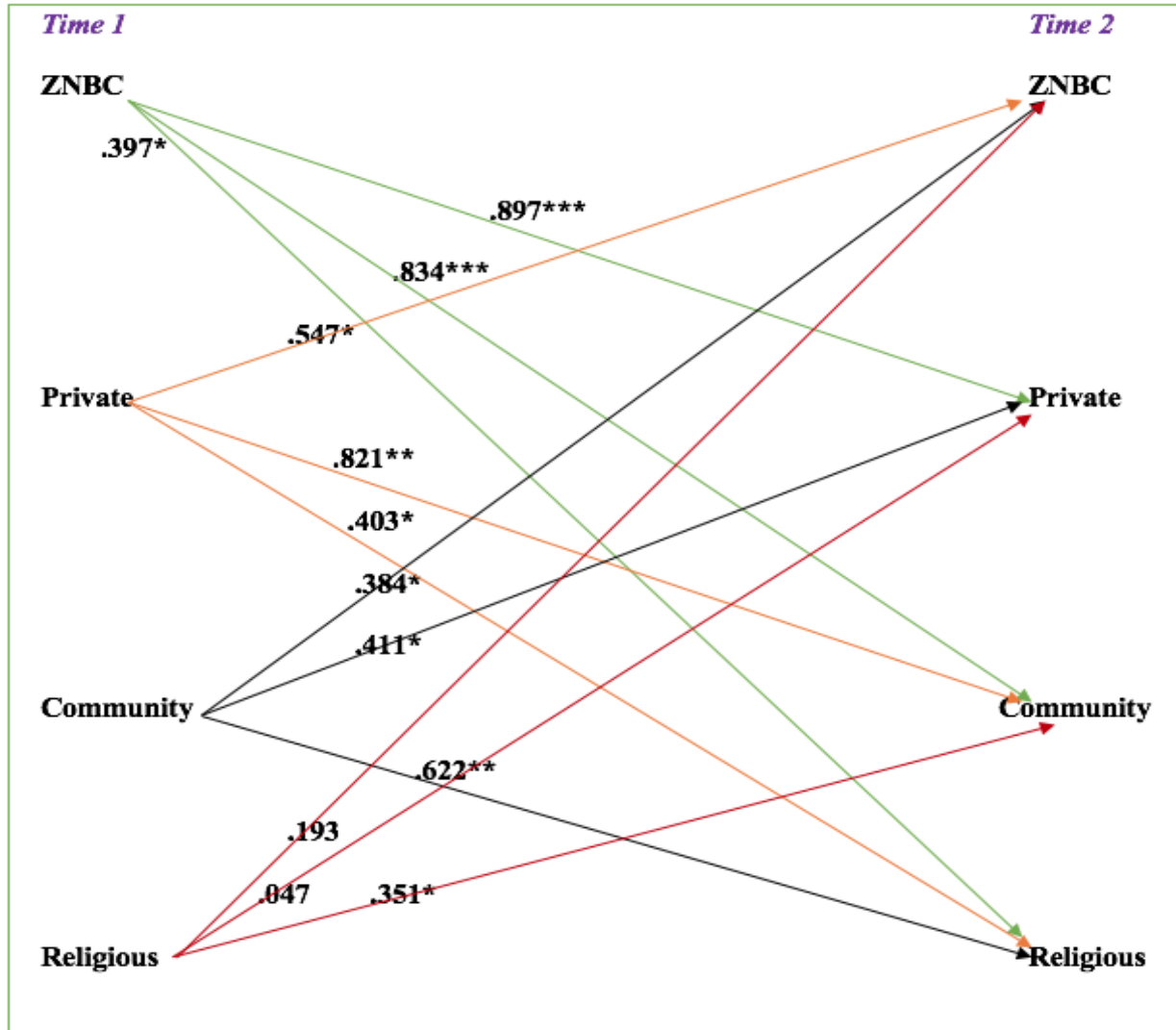
## ***2. Cross-Lagged Analysis of ZNBC, Private, Community, and Religious***

For cross-lagged correlations, I began by testing the overall flow and influence of Chinese media agenda in the Zambian news over two different time periods (2012 -2015 and 2016 -2018), with ZNBC as the central node. These time distinctions were based on the notion that they characterized the times China had officially declared to partner with ZNBC and the subsequently when it owned 60% of the ZNBC shares. Initially, China operated in Zambia at a general level and through what many people would consider as natural bi-literal relations occurring between two independent countries. But a different kind of relationship was introduced in 2012 when the Zambia-China relationship was extended beyond bi-literal relations through imbalanced control of Zambian government parastatals with massive financial investments from China – a strategy that Nye (2004) referred to as ‘soft-power strategy’.

Particularly, China began to buy out Zambian government parastatal and other private asserts disguising as investment. It started to directly engage in local politics such as having Chinese national commissioned in the Zambian Police force; generously constructing accommodation for the Zambian armed forces; or sending out a proliferated number of Chinese individuals with no formal jobs to stay in Zambia – a population that some critics assumed were prisoners sent to Africa as either punishment or individuals sent for the reasons of depopulating China. These changes created a new and questionable phase of Chinese presence in Zambia. The 60 percent ‘ownership’ of the national media (ZNBC) became public in 2017 although rumors began circulating around the year 2016. Therefore, the years 2012-2015 represent the ‘before’ time of China’s 60% ownership of ZNBC, and the years 2016-2018 represent the ‘after’ time. The findings from cross-lagged correlation analysis confirmed our hypothesis that ZNBC influenced the other three media categories in Zambia. Figure 4 below presents the findings of

the cross-lagged topic agenda correlations between ZNBC and the other three media categories (Private, Community, and Religious).

**Figure 4:** Cross-lagged correlations comparing issue agenda of ZNBC and the Zambian media



Note: \* $p .05$ ; \*\* $p .01$ ; \*\*\* $p .001$

Based on the Rozelle-Campbell baseline, the results were able to demonstrate that ZNBC “caused” Private, Community, and Religious media in Zambia to focus on the importance of China at a greater extent than the other three media were able to “cause” on ZNBC ( $r_{c1e2} = .47 > r_{c1e2} = .02$ ); where  $r$  stands for correlation coefficient,  $c$  stands for cause,  $e$  stands for effect, and **1** and **2** stands for successive time periods (Campbell, 1963; Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Pelz &

Andrews, 1964). The overall results indicate that ZNBC agenda at Time 1 significantly influenced the news agenda of the three media categories as an above baseline correlation was observed in relation to the Private media ( $r = .897$ ), Community media ( $r = .834$ ), and Religious media ( $r = .547$ ) at Time 2. It was also observed that private and community media agenda recorded statistically significant correlations for all the three media categories, with the greatest influence observed between private and community. On the other hand, religious media agenda seemed to have less influence among all the media categories, particularly ZNBC and private. However, statistically significant influences were recorded from religious to community ( $r = .351$ ).

As a preponderance, the findings suggest that the correlations between ZNBC news agenda on China and that of other media categories in Zambia was higher where the news agenda were lagged after China had declared its intentions to invest in ZNBC and owned more than 60% of the shares than when China had not declared. These findings lead to the conclusion that although both directions existed, the causation from the second wave was preponderant. However, further unique findings are observed in the year 2018, and particularly in ZNBC media where the news agenda seems to be rapidly dropping. A possible explanation is that Chinese media agenda shifted to *TopStar* cable TV that is owned by China and is now a popular TV network in Zambia. For the simple imbalance flows of news agenda between ZNBC and each media category in Zambia, I merged the hypotheses into two pairs with each matched to ZNBC. Hypothetically, I argued that at Time lag 2, the joint effects of ZNBC news agenda would be more prevalent in Private, Community, and Religious media than in Time lag 1. And that this joint effect is greater than the influence that each of the three media news agenda has on China.

Thus, the results imply that issue agenda of ZNBC was transmitted at a much higher degree to Private media outlets when compared to the other three media outlets. These findings also demonstrate that ZNBC news agenda continue to influence the other three media news agenda as they relate to China-related news agenda. In other words, China's influence on ZNBC is being transferred from ZNBC to all media houses in Zambia. This transfer is done directly and indirectly, especially through networked agenda-setting and the connection of issue attributes. Theoretically, these results are consistent with previous research findings which continue to demonstrate that by mirroring each other's news stories, the media have the potential to create comparable news agenda (Sikanku, 2014; Dunn, 2009; Boyle, 2001; Sweetser et al., 2008). And because ZNBC has the means and influence its position allows it to create an agenda that other media mirror in different forms. It sets the environment for what other media should think about and how they need to think about those issues.

### **3. Time series modeling of Chinese media agenda in Zambia**

The above arguments are further supported after performing a Granger causality test, which was done by first, creating a univariate time series model and then calculating some prediction quality, which I further used as a baseline for calculating vector autoregression model (VAR). Simply put, VAR models describe the joint generation process of several variables over time, so they can be used for investigating relationships between the variables. Granger causality is one type of relationship between time series (Granger, 1969). Generally, the VAR natural extension of the univariate autoregressive model to dynamic multivariate time series (Campbell, et. al. 1997). Thus, as a first step is to determine how in ZNBC interacted with each other, we treated the news coverage of China as a time series and then employed Granger causality tests. In this case, we treated time series one (TS1), which is represented by the years

2012-2015 as a “Granger cause” of time series (TS2 =2016-2018) if regressing for the years 2016 - 2018 in terms of past values of both TS1 and TS2 results in a better model for TS2 than regressing only on past values of TS2.

Second, we employed the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression through which I tested each year’s time lag through the regression of each issue media agenda. In addition, I regressed each outcome variable upon with its own past values, therefore, eliminating spurious causality from predictor variables better explained by the outcome variable’s past values. This approach is consistent with Guo & Vargo’s (2017) approach that yielded relevant results. The relationships across the four media categories were also regressed based on each media’s past issue agenda. Based on our results, we constructed temporal causal models for each media category x issue to determine whether one media category’s news coverage could predict the other.

This whole process resulted into a total of 231 possible combinations for all the four media categories across the seven-year time. I illustrate these by showing the degrees of causality within the themes generated by China in comparison to other local media. Then I calculate the F test for variances using the F distribution. The idea is to show the probability of making a type one error ( $\alpha$ ). I set the level of significance for my hypothesis test at 0.05 to indicate that I was willing to accept a 5% chance that I was wrong when rejecting the null hypothesis. However, the results provided me with more robust results as indicated in table 10 below. This process has proven to yield consistent and reliable results as seen in Guo & Vargo (2017) and Meraz (2011) studies on intermedia agenda-setting.

**Table 13: Granger test causality on salient issues**

<b>China News Agenda</b>		<b>Local Media Agenda</b>	
<i>Issue</i>	<i>GC Results</i>	<i>Issue</i>	<i>GC Results</i>
Government policies	334.31	Governance	71.34
Privatization	387.67	Privatization	60.23
Education	21.45	Education	238.72
Health	23.18	Health	156.91
Politics	289.14	Politics	66.32
Tourism	88.41	Tourism	78.12
Labor Laws	9.14	Labor Laws	236.12
Mining	55.43	Mining	162.4
Foreign policy	247.34	Foreign policy	52.51
Environment	6.14	Environment	77.91
Media & Culture	3.11	Media & Culture	68.33
Security	167.32	Security & Crime	23.14
Religion	0.23	Religion	256.26
Human Interest	0.37	Human Interest	182
Agriculture	73.2	Agriculture	166

*Note: lag = 1-F(1, 7183); P<.01*

By all accounts, the F-tests provided values of significance in which the Granger causality could be determined. The results indicate that the sample standard deviation (S) of China's news agenda is considered higher than the sample standard deviations (s) of the Zambian local news agenda ( $p < 0.01922$ ,  $p(x \leq F) = 0.00961$ ). These findings suggest that the chance of

type I error (rejecting a correct  $H_0$ ) is small: 0.01922 (1.92%). Note: The smaller the p-value the more it supports RQ5. Thus, the overall Granger-causality test indicated a stronger correlation of ( $r=.734, p<.01$ ) with  $F(1, 7,812) = 262.46$ ) for all government and privately-owned media to suggest that China's media agenda has been steadily growing in Zambia's local newsrooms since 2012. However, community and Religious media did not show a strong correlation despite a statistically significant p. value ( $r=.21, p<.05$ ). It is important to point out that environmental conversations are not part of the salient issues advanced by China's media agenda. This in some ways, explain the argument regarding the poor conditions Chinese labor laws across the globe.

### **Frequency and Degree Centrality – Measuring the importance of issue attributes**

To determine which issue-attributes were more important in the news coverage of the Zambia-China relationship, simple metrics were performed by calculating both the frequency and degree centrality of each of the attributes, regarding their news coverage. As mentioned earlier, *Degree Centrality* in network analysis refers to the number of ties that a node has (Guo, et. al., 2014; Wasserman and Faust, 1994). This argument is based on the idea that a node that has more direct ties is more important than nodes with fewer or no ties at all. Therefore, with the assumption that the independent variables were a salient of issue-attributes measured by their degree centrality, network analysis software packages in R-studio were employed to calculate the degree centrality of each attribute (see code in appendices). UCINET was also used as a baseline for reliable results. This was followed by correlating the degree centrality score of each attribute with the salience of the issue in each media category indicated as, ZNBC, Private, Community, and Religious. In other words, the recorded degree centrality scores were matched with the most prominent issues in the news for each media category (ZNBC, Private, Community, and Religious). The results are recorded in table 10 below.



Overall findings suggest that there is a correlation between the levels of investment and the number of stories about China as well as the amount of the Zambia-China related news agenda. These finding could be interpreted in the argument that the more China invested in Zambia, the more the Zambian media focused on the Zambia-China relationship as the most important topic. Note that this data only reflects the news agenda about China, and nothing else. Therefore, as I had earlier indicated, and yet to prove below, certain thematic attributes had more Chinese news agenda than others, and there was a gradual increase in the Chinese agenda that seemed to correlate with investment.

**Table 14: Issue-attribute importance based on Frequency and Degree Centrality**

Issue Attributes	ZNBC		PRIVATE		COMMUNITY		RELIGIOUS	
	Freq	Degree Centrality	Freq	Degree Centrality	Freq	Degree Centrality	Freq	Degree Centrality
Gvt. Pol	.96*	.95*	.90*	.90*	.87*	.84*	.92*	.90*
Investment	.90*	.89*	.93*	.90*	.90*	.92*	.87*	.84*
Culture	.59	.79*	.89*	.88*	.95*	.89*	.65	.61
Health	.55	.64*	.52	.54*	.80*	.82*	.56	.64
Env	.63*	.88*	.95*	.90*	.85*	.80*	.90*	.90*
Security	.92*	.90*	.83*	.83*	.79*	.80*	.80*	.82*
Agric	.87*	.89*	.79*	.86*	.92*	.86*	.87*	.93*
Tourism	.78*	.93*	.88*	.90*	.60	.54	.57	.50
Human Int	.61	.89*	.89*	.92*	.94*	.87*	.81*	.83*
Labor	.58	.86*	.84*	.90*	.92*	.90*	.95*	.88*
Politics	.92*	.89*	.95*	.90*	.72*	.77*	.67	.89*
Foreign A.	.90*	.89*	.82*	.78*	.52	.58	.50	.50
Mining	.87*	.92*	.95*	.89*	.89*	.90*	.94*	.95*
Education	.56	.75*	.64	.60	.86*	.89*	.83*	.89
Religion	.53	.59	.57	.61	.63	.55	.90	.84

**Note:** Degree centrality refers to the number of links an attribute has with other attributes in the network \* $p < .01$

The correlation coefficient of our attributes ranged between 0.84 to 0.93, with the median of (0.86). This means that there is a presence of a strong network connection of attributes in all the four media categories. However, in all the media categories, we observe higher degree centrality among five attributes: Government policies, investment, politics, mining, and labor laws. This implies that the five attributes were at the center of all the discussions in ZNBC,

Private, Community, and Religious media. In other words, there was a networked connection of all the attributes, but with only a few holding prominent positions to suggest that every thematic issue above had some links or was tied to either of the five predominant attributes. However, it does not mean that the conversations were always the same but that most agenda in all the media was influenced by the same attributes, and that there was a strong connection among the attributes. For example, a story about government policies on China were strongly connected to investment. This investment was mostly about mining, and thus labor laws. Although seeming like outliers, education attributes were also made prominent in the process as they got tied to investment and labor laws. The same is true about other seemingly outliers. The whole conversation got tied into politics because of most media reporting on them. These findings confirm the theory of Granovetter (1973) and his argument of the “strength of weak ties” or “the friend of your friend is my friend” principle.

The delineated findings in the table above continue to support the assumption that the two salient attribute measures (frequency and degree centrality) have similarities yet identifying different compelling arguments in the Zambia-China relationship. As observed in the above table, although government policies, politics, labor, mining, security, and foreign policies exhibit strong influences of frequency and degree centrality, ZNBC and private media emphasized different attributes as those emphasized by community and religious media. The difference exists in the equal but opposite forces that existed within the dichotomy. While ZNBC and private focused on attributes that seemed to position the Zambia-China relationship in a positive light, community and religious media seemed to retaliate with issue-attributes that exposed Chinese position in Zambia. For instance, community and religious media were in the forefront of exposing poor labor conditions that were attached to Chinese companies. Equally, they also

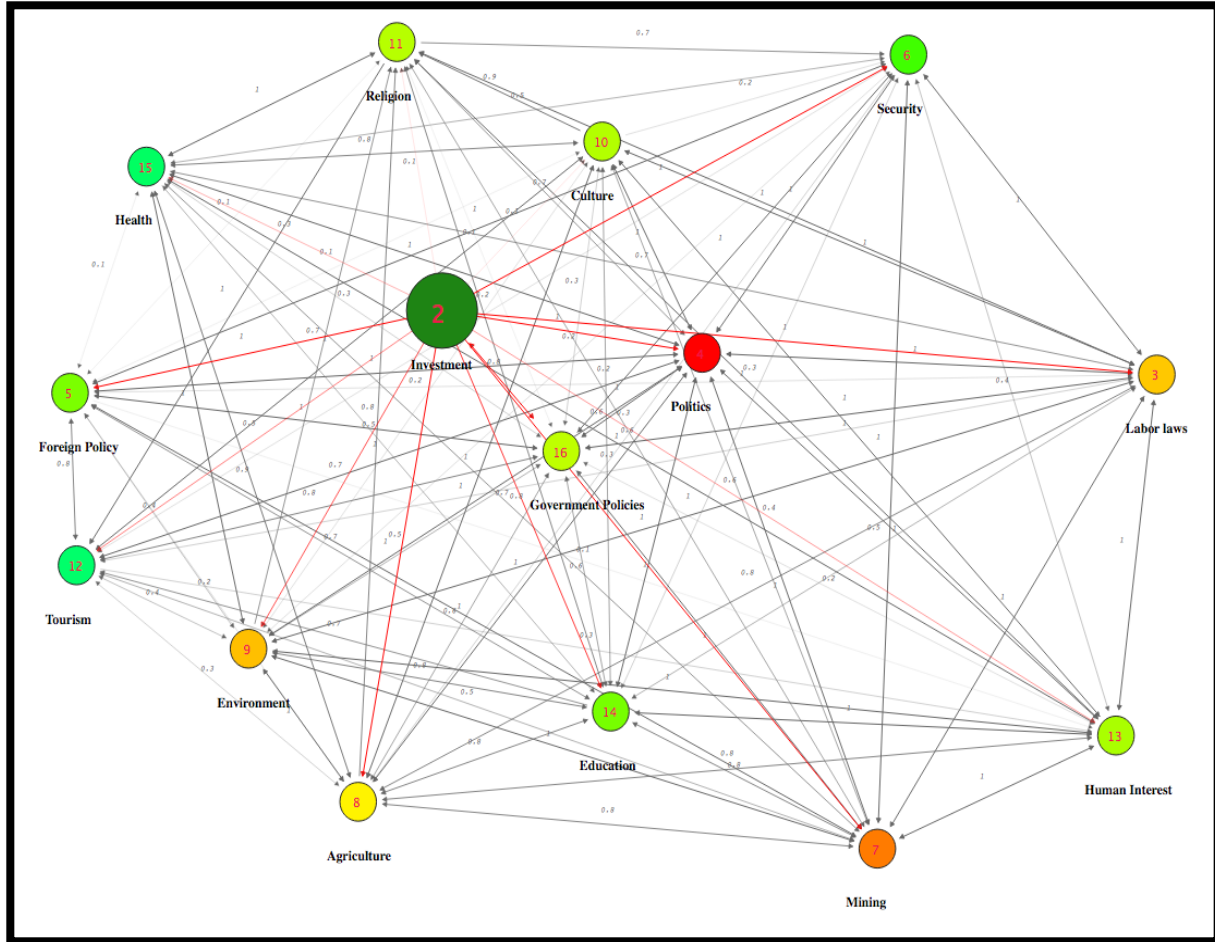
talked about the implications of the mining as it related to environmental degradation, prostitution, and high levels of chronic diseases such as cancer, birth defects, and even high rise in HIV/AIDS cases in places like Solwezi town of Zambia.

The negative aspects were mostly observed in thematic stories critiquing how China's news agenda has taken precedence of the Zambian news at the expense of human interest. For example, most media reported the presence of China in Zambia as toxic and that the relationship between the two countries was not characterized by mutual friendship, but by a "master – slave" relationship. Other stories focused on the repressive laws or behaviors of Chinese investors to the local people, particularly in mining sectors and other production industries. Attributes on government policies, investment/privatization, and politics were only used to sustain arguments regarding how Chinese investment or policies are reshaping labor laws in Zambia in favor of China, or how the three issues are reshaping news at the expense of the public forums. Most of these stories were episodic in the sense that they were hard and brief news stories.

To further explain the relationship of attributes as they relate to degree centrality, the results were visualized. The visualization process followed an iterated process and practice with various software including UCINET, Socnetv, R-studio and Gephi. Several visual outputs were arrived at, but we settled with Gephi to create figures that represent each attribute agenda's network. After creating the figures, I adjusted the node to match the degree centrality of each, to emphasize the point that "the bigger the node, the greater degree centrality an attribute has" (Guo, et. al. 2015, p. 352). Like in the above findings, five major attributes emerged as central to the attribute network across our four media categories: government policies, politics, mining, labor laws, and investment/privatization. At the center of these was investment that seemed to

control and influence other attributes. As shown in figure 5 below, investment had strong ties with government policies, politics, mining, and labor laws. Politics also tied everything together.

**Figure 5 (a):** Network showing investment as central node

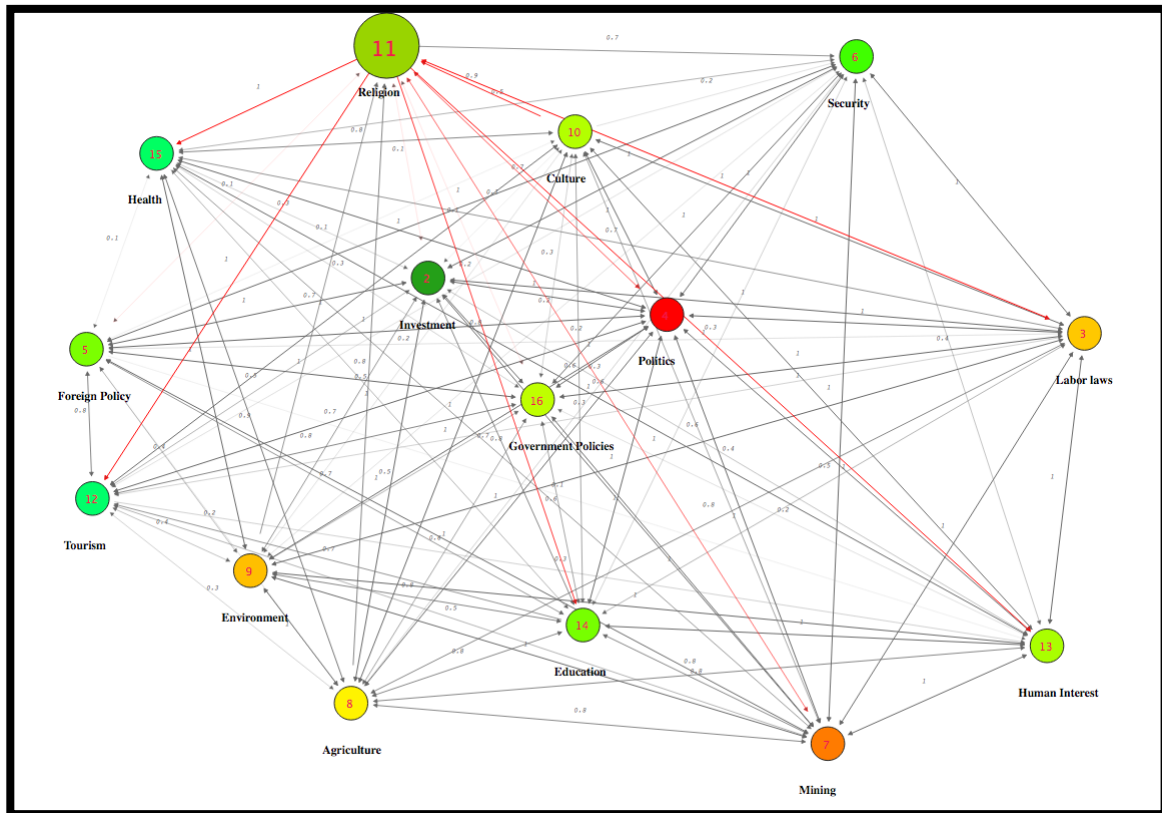


*Note.* The nodes were adjusted to reflect the number of issues that were found significant in Granger causal relationship for each media pair comparison.

As presented in figure 6 (a) above, every attribute in the network was influenced by the attribute of investment, but at a different level. Strong influences are observed in government policies, politics, labor, mining, security, and foreign policy. Other moderate influences are observed in tourism, education, environment, and human interest (note, human interest in this case was mostly observed in stories about Chinese media in Zambia- i.e., movies. There also examples of investment done in games such as soccer). Other attributes, such as health, culture,

and religion received almost no influence from the attribute of investment. In other words, the connections recorded were not statistically significant. However, religion as an attribute had its own influence on other attributed. Instead of receiving the influence, religion seemed to influence other attributes through its criticism of the government and the Zambia-China relationship. Particularly we observe strong and statistically significant values of connections between religion and labor laws, mining, politics, and human interest. The connections were mostly informed by stories on that critiqued the operations of China in Zambia. Figure 5 (b) presents the findings.

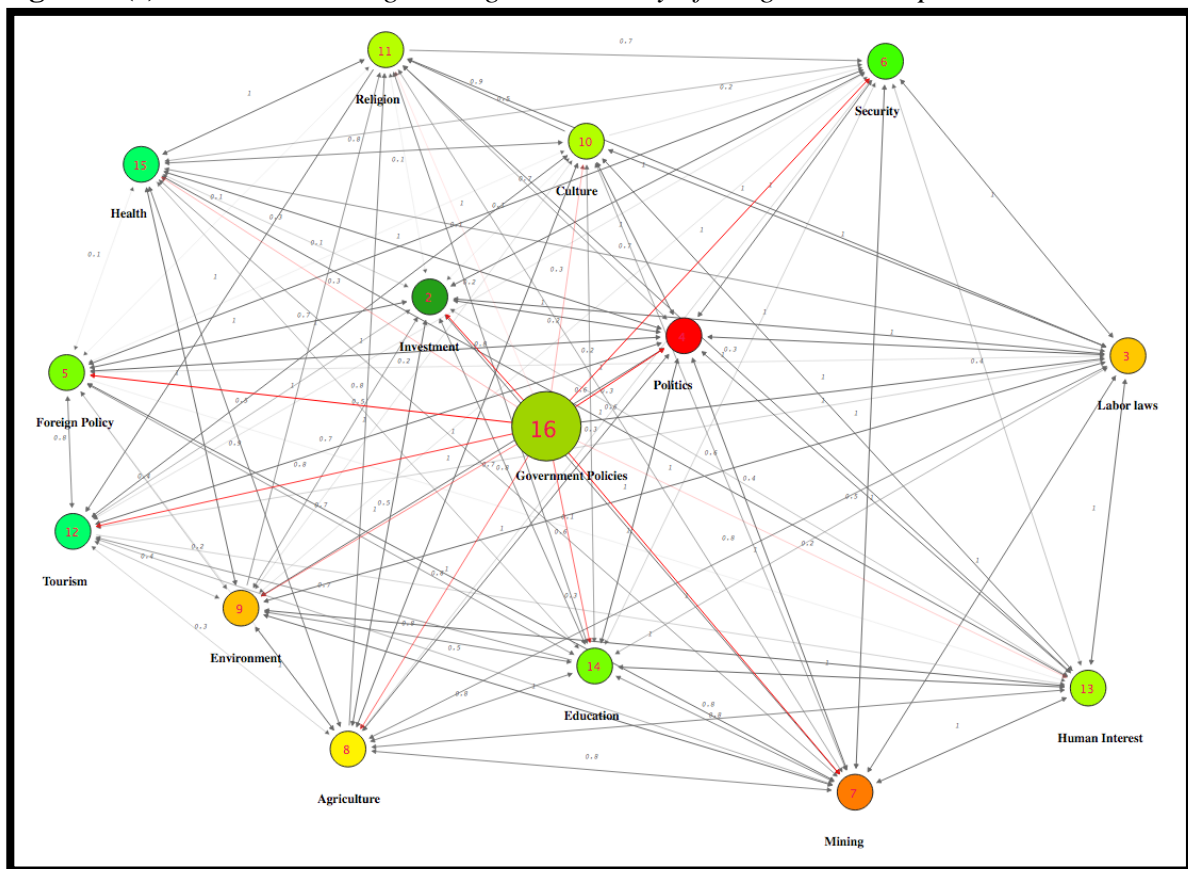
**Figure 5 (b): Religion as a central note in the network**



*Note. The nodes were adjusted to reflect the number of issues that were found significant in Granger causal relationship for each media pair comparison.*

Above all, the attribute of government policies recorded more ties with other attributes than any other attribute in the network. In total, the government policy attribute recorded a total of 198 arcs, with a density of 0.95, an in-degree of 15, an out-degree of 15, with a cluster coefficient of 0.98. In graph theory, a clustering coefficient reflects the degree to which the nodes tend to cluster together. In social network analysis, it is often used to characterize the transitivity of a network. This indicates that the government policy attribute had more connections with other attributes than any other attribute in the network. Figure 5 (c) below present the summary of the findings.

**Figure 5 (c):** Network showing the degree centrality of the government policies attribute



*Note.* The nodes were adjusted to reflect the number of issues that were found significant in Granger causal relationship for each media pair comparison.

In summary, the findings on frequency and degree centrality reveal that investment was the most frequent attribute while government policies presented more connections with other attributes. What this means is that although investment influenced other attributes at a higher level, government policies seemed to have stronger ties with other attributes in the network. Therefore, as figure 6 (c) presents, government policies influenced, and was also influenced by all other attributes at a different level. Particularly, we observe strong and statistically significant evidence between government policies and politics, mining, labor laws, agriculture, environment, tourism, investment, and foreign policies. What seems to tie all these connections together is politics that runs across all attributes. This explains how and why attributes like religion, culture, and human interest had some direct or indirect influence from central nodes.

### **Summary of the Findings**

This chapter presented the findings of the study thematically in the sense that although each research question and hypothesis were tackled separately, their objective to set to meet standards. Similarly, several methods were used, but for a single purpose. The first theme covered RQs 1, 2, and 3, and 4 were aimed at examining whether Chinese news agenda had a dominant tone, whether the tones were fair, and whether power relations could be deduced. Findings supported the assertions especially because of the lack of thematic stories in the media and China taking the subject lead in the story headlines. Also, Chinese news agenda were positively framed, and most stories were enhanced in different ways through illustrations, headline size, amount of space dedicated to the story, and other forms of visual enhancements. These findings were also confirmed by RQ5 that sought to measure media effects of the transferred salient issues from one media to the other.

## CHAPTER VI

### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study examined the interactive effects of Chinese media agenda in the Zambian newsrooms. We particularly categorized all the media in Zambia the into four types namely, ZNBC/Government-owned media; Private to refer to commercial media that are not owned by the government; Community, to refer to all non-profit media outlets run by local communities, and Religious, representing all the media owned by religious groups in Zambia. To discuss the findings presented above and relate the implications of the findings, I divide chapter six into four distinct subsections. First, I begin by offering a general discussion of the findings while summarizing all of them and giving context to each as they relate to the research questions and hypotheses. Second, I draw from the theories used to discuss the current study's contribution to both theory and practice. Third, I discuss the limitation associated with this work and explore the alternatives for approaching this study. In this subsection, I also discuss the possible avenue for future research as they relate to Chinese influence not only in Zambia but in Africa as a whole. The final subsection provides a conclusion for the discussion.

#### **Overview of the study's results**

The study used Zambia as an example of the depth of investment and influence that China has on most sub-Saharan Africa. Although studies about this influence have been done, most of them are still posed with limitations that make it hard to compare their rich findings to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. However, their contributions expose gaps in literature that continually need to be updated. Madrid-Morales's (2018) macro approach to the study sets the standards for understanding how China's media internationalization impacts the global flows and contra-flows of information. The rich set of evidence provides an avenue for appreciating the



need for studying the influence of China in Africa. On the other hand, Wasserman & Madrid-Morales, (2018), and Wasserman, (2013)'s, studies provide an insight to a micro-understanding of China's influence on journalism in Africa. Their findings suggest that China has no major influence on Africa. But these findings are particular to South Africa which might not be a better representation of most sub-Saharan countries. Some interesting findings come from Umejei (2020; 2018)'s study of the African journalists working in Chinese newsrooms located in Africa. His extensive interviews unveil some strong levels of Chinese control of the media content and journalists in Africa. What is unique about Umejei (2020)'s approach is that he foresees some influence that go beyond a Manichean prism to the Sino-Africa debates, therefore, suggesting a hybridized African global media comprised of Western, African, and Chinese media agenda.

A further analysis of the above, and other existing literature suggests that Chinese influence in African local news content has not been deeply explored. Therefore, this study goes deeper to explore Chinese influences, including subliminal media agenda through frames and NAS. Situating the study in Zambia is more justified, and especially for the following two reasons: So far, Zambia is the only sub-Saharan country with China owning more than 60 percent of the national media, and in theory and practice the Zambian media shares characteristics with most media in Sub-Saharan Africa. Second, the theories (Framing and Network agenda-setting) and advanced methodological approaches used in this study provide strong evidence of the findings. This is because the study was able to identify intervening and confounding variables that most studies have ignored. Particularly, Network agenda-setting was able not only able to identify the salience of issue attributes, but also explore the networked relationship of the attributes. Overall, the results provided support of all our research questions and hypotheses as indicated in table 15 below.

**Table 15:** Summary of all RQs and Hypotheses associated with the study

<b>RQ &amp; Hypotheses</b>	<b>Proposition</b>	<b>Results</b>
<b>RQ1:</b> What are the most important issues of the Zambian media in the coverage of the Zambia-China relationship?	<i>Presumptively, I ascertained that the proliferated Chinese news agenda will shape and influence the discourse in other local media in Zambia through ZNBC</i>	Chinese news agenda was found to shape and influence the local discourse through ZNBC
<b>RQ2:</b> How did the stories from the Zambian media show China's dominant tone in the Zambia-China relationship?	<i>Chinese media agenda was presented with positivity, therefore allowing Chinese media agenda to hold a dominant tone.</i>	Chinese media agenda was more dominant in the news
<b>RQ3:</b> How does the coverage of China in Zambia show fairness in the Zambian media?	<i>The coverage of China by the Zambia was biased in favor of China.</i>	Findings suggest that China was more favored in the Zambian news coverage
<b>RQ4:</b> How did Stories from the Zambian media frame China to shape local opinions and discourse?	<i>In covering China, the Zambian media will focus on issues that present China in positive light at the expense of public interest.</i>	China was positively framed in the news
<b>RQ5:</b> What is the relationship between the attribute network of ZNBC and the attribute network of the other media outlets in Zambia with less direct influence from Chinese media agenda?	<i>Issue-attributes will be highly connected to each other in the sense that one salient issue will drive the debates in the media and control the media agenda.</i>	Chinese issue attributes were found to be driving the news agenda

Essentially, the study offered an in-depth approach to the visible and subliminal influences of Chinese media messages. A core assumption made in this study was that China's massive investment in the Zambian newsroom that has led to China owning more than 60% of ZNBC shares will subsequently reshape the Zambian news agenda intended to benefit the locals. Following these assumptions, the expectations were that China's presence in ZNBC would

heighten the effects of Chinese news agenda not only in ZNBC newsrooms, but across all the other local media in Zambia. In particular, the tone and fairness in the coverage of China's would align in favor of Chinese policies in Zambia. The second expectation was that there would be a transfer of influence through a patterned network of issue attributes from ZNBC to the rest of the media, including religious media that claim to have less influence from China.

If these expectations are confirmed to be true, it would mean that political and other "special" interests pertaining to China will take over the media space at the expense of public interest. This is, therefore, inconsistent with China's claim that they seek to constructively report Africa as opposed to the western media that has, for the most part, presented Africa as 'dark continent' (Allen, 2015). Through mixed methods, I was able to provide a rich set of evidence showing how China has not only influenced ZNBC, but also demonstrated how such influence is transferred to other media outlets through Network Agenda Setting (NAS). In other words, while the influence might be occurring within ZNBC, the interconnectedness of issues within the Zambian media frameworks inevitably leads to other media assimilating and adopting Chinese media agenda in their news. This is especially true given the central role of ZNBC to other media categories in Zambia (Private, Community, and Religious media).

Particularly, the findings encompassed by this study confirm that China's implicit and explicit investments in the Zambian media do offer a dominant tone of Chinese news agenda to the Zambian media. As delineated in the theme one above in the prominence section, most coverage of China in the Zambian media seemed to incline to routine or events culled from other Chinese-owned media operating within Africa. In particular, the CGTN – Africa (China Global Television Network) was used as a reliable source for information regarding Chinese policies. This by itself is suspicious as noted by Umejei's (2020) "Upstairs" verses "Downstairs" principle

(p. 55), where he observed two dichotomous gatekeepers within the same Chinese owned media operating in Africa. As he had argued, the schism between the two was reflected by how the “Upstairs” gatekeepers (comprised by Chinese nationals) controlled news content pertaining to China and Chinese policies and left anything else that did not mention China to the “Downstairs” gatekeepers (comprised by local journalists).

Second, the findings confirm that most media in Zambia frame China in a positive light, except for Religious and Community media whose agenda was mostly about critiquing China’s performance in Zambia. However, it was observed that over time, both Community and Religious media began to present China with positivity. A time series seem to indicate a steadily growing change in the way the media presented China in Africa. In the same way, stories about China in the Zambian media continued to be enhanced through pictures and illustrations. For example, images of fancy homes for the armed forces, a renovated national airport, and other similar things accompanied the stories.

Nonetheless, we observe a drop in such influence after 2017. This could be explained by the fact that China had managed to establish itself in the Zambian media, or the fact that the focus was moved to TopStar network that most Zambian citizens now use as an alternative to South African owned and local cable networks. Nonetheless, the analysis of China in the news indicated that most media presented China as a subject, and only an object in the common cases about poor labor laws. This was especially observed in Community and Private media. ZNBC and Community seemed to maintain the same principle of presenting China as a subject regardless of the circumstances.

Third, after analyzing intermedia and Network Agenda-setting, I was able to establish that there was a transfer of Chinese media agenda from ZNBC, which acted as a central node, to

other media categories in Zambia. I was also able to establish the causation from ZNBC to other media in the sense that other media categories began to emulate ZNBC in covering what they believed was important. While granger causality was used to measure the changes in a times series, cross-lagged correlations measured the impact at two stipulated time periods. Cross-lagged correlations conducted at two time periods confirmed the transfer of Chinese media agenda from ZNBC to private, community, and religious. The time series also confirmed this by asserting the gradual changes that have occurred since 2012. As noted, the correlations between ZNBC news agenda on China and those of other media in Zambia were higher when lagged within the news agenda representing China after it officially partnered with ZNBC. In the same way, the measure of frequency and degree centrality was able to demonstrate that the Zambia-China relationship was mostly characterized by the attributes of government policies, politics, labor, mining, and foreign policies.

### **Implication of the findings**

Some of the findings presented in this dissertation largely mirror some existing literature on the implications of China in the African media. Demographically, the current study lends credence to Umejei (2020 and 2018); Madrid-Morales (2018); Wasserman & Madrid-Morales (2018); Madrid-Morales & Wasserman (2018), Banda (2020), and their assertion that China's role in the African media, particularly sub-Saharan Africa has raised some implications of concern. However, a schism still exists between scholars who argue for, verses those who see China's unprecedented interests in the African newsrooms as an affront to the development of African professional journalism. In their studies, the authors found that China's presence in Africa had implications that were both positive and negative. While Madrid-Morales & Wasserman perceived China as having little or no impact to the African media, other scholars

were able to identify the negative implications. What remains as an avenue for future research is the underlayment for what the media will look like in the next decade or so. Umejei (2020) suggests a hybridized media and journalistic practice but his findings are far from making that conclusion.

The unique situation in Zambia of China owning more than 60% shares of the Zambian government media, illustrates another point of departure of understanding China's influence in sub-African. The main contribution to the existing theory and literature is its extension of prevailing indices, which as noted, were done with little or no conception of how China would extend its influence on the African media by owning the media and its content. As we had earlier indicated in the study, most existing literature treat China as a friend and a panacea to the questions of how to "constructively report" Africa or provide an African journalism. However, the prevailing indices fail to embrace this assumption. The reality is that China's investment has reached unprecedented levels that have not been scientifically explored by scholars. Therefore, as of date, this study is of its kind in updating and appending a new outlook to the existing literature.

The theoretical expectations associated with the current work were anchored in previous research and theoretical approaches associated with framing and network agenda-setting (NAS) theories. Like several other studies that have used framing theory, the framing measures were done by looking at prominence, tone, and fairness of the story. On the other hand, NAS was measured through network analysis, intermedia agenda setting, and time series. The current results provide initial evidence that China's presence in the Zambian government media continues to gradually shape how other media and the publics' view China's soft power strategies in Africa. As observed in the findings, China's influence on ZNBC managed to shape

how ZNBC reported China over time, and that the positive perception of China by ZNBC were transferred to other media in Zambia. This means that as we progress, the Zambian media will eventually be reporting what China wants, and the upcoming generation will be less critical to Chinese media agenda since it now dominates not just ZNBC but all other media including social media. These findings are inconsistent with what Umejei (2020) had earlier suggested about the possibility of a hybridized media capable to compete at a global level.

The implications of the findings are that an “African media” as envisioned by Nyamnjoh (2010; 2005), Kasoma (1996) and Mfumbusa (2008) will no longer be realized – since the media will embrace a culture that will be foreign to the native society. This, according to many scholars is what has led to non-professional journalism practices in most of the sub-Saharan. As many studies had earlier noted, the problem of the African media is rooted in the conflicting values of trying to present western journalism values with an African fabric (Nyamnjoh, 2015, 2005; Kasoma, 2007; Kasoma, 1995; Thussu, 2006; Traber, 1989). This is the reason most scholars were pushing for an African centered approach to journalism, thus, “Afro-ethics”. Therefore, the influences observed, and even the hybridization envisioned by Umejei (2020) do not seem to offer a solution unless there is a suggestion that the existing media practices in Africa be replaced by Chinese media policies and how they perceive professional journalism.

And consistent with the above argument is that we will see a decline in sub-Saharan cultures since most media programs are now filled with Chinese media content starting with children to adult programs. Such trends, as Thussu (2006) had earlier argued, cannot promise that they will tell an African story in the media – the baseline for trying to constructively tell an African story is inconsistent with the reality. In other words, China is slowly framing its messages through the media for the African people to easily embrace China without a second.

### *Is China “Constructively Reporting” Africa?*

Given the findings provided by this study, it is suspicious to argue that China is exclusively helping the African media to realize its full potential. The financial support provided does indeed help elevate the physical needs of media in sub-Saharan Africa, i.e., advanced technologies to aid the process of reporting. However, this does not automatically guarantee the means for global competence as envisioned by Umejei (2020). If China is really interested in helping develop the field of African journalism, then it should start by helping African journalism practices, context, and experience contribute toward theory building. This means that all those things that Africa holds dearly as culture, be acknowledged in the field.

As Nyamnjoh (2010) had noted, “The precepts of journalism that apply currently in Africa are largely at variance with dominant ideas of personhood and agency” (p.26). This observation has stood a test of time since Traber (1989)’s argument that African journalism and its journalists were simply western journalists in African fabrics. These observations came because of the role of western media in Africa. Unfortunately, China seems to be doing the same, but with a greater force exerted by massive investments and the buying out of local media outlets as in the case of Zambia.

### **Is China telling an African Narrative?**

For China to constructively report Africa, it needs to ask itself what it means to tell an African story, and how that story looks like. This is because the measures for constructive reporting are determined by the amount of commitment a media dedicates to local issues, and the level of independence through which a journalist operates. In his book, *Africa’s Media, Democracy, and the Politics of Belonging*, Nyamnjoh (2005) explains what it means to constructively report Africa. He asserts that “constructive reporting of Africa” entails becoming



a social actor or actress enmeshed in a particular context that has been and continues to be shaped by a history of connections and disconnections informed by interconnecting local and global hierarchies.” This statement implies that a narrative of Africa that is devoid of its ethnicity and religion cannot provide a true representation of the African story (Mazrui, 1979).

In a similar way, a journalism that downplays the African personhood and belonging is hardly in tune with the quest for equality of humanity and for expression, recognition, and representation. It is, therefore, relevant to ask whether Chinese media organizations, in their attempts to constructively report Africa, and the framing of a win-win and mutuality that inform China-Africa relations, reflect issues that pertain to African humanity and identity. Obviously, the fact that most stories in ZNBC are episodic, as opposed to thematic, is another indication that China’s approach in the Zambian media does not reflect constructive journalism.

Generally, and in the Zambian context, most episodic stories come from press releases or invitations of journalists by Chinese organizations in Zambia to cover a story about them. Such stories, by and large, tend to parrot what Chinese organizations want for their agenda. Such types of stories contrast with thematic stories that are investigative in nature, dig deeper, and therefore, are solution oriented – the major characteristics of constructive journalism. Further, since our results suggest the gradual disappearance of the Zambian media agenda, we would argue that the presence of China in the Zambian newsroom does not advance “African news reporting” nor does it seek to “constructively report” Africa as a whole. This is because their agenda does not seem to have been designed with an intention of reporting issues affecting the Zambian people. What we see is a debasement and caricature of African humanity, creativity, and realities through various forms of soft powers that are rendered by their financial muscles.

Subsequently this tendency leads to “constraints that render African Journalism a journalism of bandwagonism, where mimicry is the order of the day, as the emphasis is less on thinking than on doing, less on leading than on being led...relying overtly on imported content (even when you have the tools) instead of promoting creative production units of local contents” (Nyamnjoh, 2010, p. 26). Given this situation, it is possible to envision a hybridized media in Africa, but almost impossible to assume that ‘African journalism’ will be represented in this kind of hybridization. The reasons behind this hopeless assumption can be found in Franz Fanon’s (1961) argument about the several stages that most ‘soft power’ nations use to colonize and decolonize a society. In this context, China’s strategies of constructively reporting Africa do not align with the procedures or observations made by Nyamnjoh (2010, 2005), Kasoma (1996), Mfumbusa (2008), or even Traber (1989) who believed in the African journalism but through that it needed to divorce itself from the aspirations of western, and now Chinese modernity and civilization.

### **How can the African media own its journalistic narrative?**

Several ways could serve as a panacea for the African media to own its narrative. Among them are:

#### ***1. Creating African-oriented journalism training/Curriculum***

While debates about the nature of “African Journalism” are still underway, one thing is clear – that most scholars agree that it does indeed exist. What separates the debates is the implementation, and whether the suggested remedies are plausible. If China and the US are indeed interested in “constructively reporting Africa”, then the first step should be for them to help Africa find its own narrative. African scholars should equally hold symposiums to discuss and decide the nature of journalism training in Africa. It’s not about what China or the US should

do, but about how much room/space should be given to the African journalists and scholars to create what they deem as a local narrative. Therefore, Africa should start by interrogating the freebie journalism trainings offered by both the US and China.

## **2. *Prioritizing Issue-Based reporting***

Journalists reporting on Africa should be accorded the agency of becoming social actors enmeshed in a particular context with direct ties to both the local and the global. African journalists should market themselves by producing issue-based stories rooted in the needs of the local people. This could be reinforced if media councils were given the attention and authority to correct media performance in Africa. On the other hand, those who criticize China and the US incentives, should further interrogate their press freedom with their governments. In other words, they should ask whether they have the freedom, or even think about whether they question their governments and leaders about their engagement with China. This is because most journalists, while criticizing foreign policies, they do not have the ability to question their governments over the same.

## **3. *Appreciating African epistemologies and cultures***

Local African journalists should be trained to value African epistemologies and culture. There is a tendency among most journalists to devalue African epistemologies and culture in their reporting. Most journalists tend to value information emerging from foreign cultures even when it has less impact on the local people. For example, the attention that was given to the Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markel, over her statements as opposed to the attention given to issues affecting the local people, speak for itself. It is true that “big names” make news, but African journalists can also make big names from small ones by making those small names valuable.

For Nyamnjoh (2005), the above statements imply that what most local people consider as important should characterize the news as opposed to the stories that simply focus on government leaders and other public figures. Djokotoe (2004) calls this, “Issue-Based” journalism, which is opposed to a kind of journalism characterized by ‘big names’, character assassination, and thus lacking in-depth content. Overarchingly, the media and its journalists must always endeavor to ask the question of how they are empowering the local people through their narratives. It is then that the media, regardless of whether it is Western, African, or Chinese can claim that it is telling an African story in a constructive way.

Important to note, the 1990s were a time of recovery and the redefinition of the African systems, include those of the media. Particularly, the media sought for African value systems to guide the practice of journalism (Kasoma, 1995; Banda, 2009). However, this quest was short-lived after China’s invested interest in which we now see a decline in efforts among scholars to explore how an African media, or Afri-ethics would look like in the next generation. Overarchingly, scholarship about the African media is now drawn towards hybridization – a concept that still positions the African media at a disadvantaged place.

In summary, this study addresses subversive but salient strategies that can be identified in China’s soft power strategies to the Zambian and African media at large. Critically analyzed, the Europeans used the same strategies to colonize Africa and China is more advantaged in the sense that it can use the media and create its own agenda through framing theories and reinforce the agenda through the media it now owns and controls in Zambia. Therefore, the inevitable question is whether China’s strategies will lead to the same outcome of colonization as with the Europeans, or is China’s strategy intended to strengthen African national media and brands? There is little evidence to suggest that China’s strategies will eventually transform the African

media into a global competitor as most scholars suggest. Instead, across time, we see an African media that will be engulfed by Chinese policies and news agenda. For this reason, it is justifiable to argue that China's interest in the Zambian and Sub-Saharan African media, at large is not intended to "constructively" report Africa.

Nonetheless, China is applying a business market model that the African media can take advantage of. Amidst the competing powers, Zambia and Africa at large could market its media with an idea of authenticity and in-depth reporting, while leveraging on the African cultural values proposed by Kasoma's (1995) Afri-ethics. Most of all, the African media could benefit if they designed their own rigorous curriculum for journalism training that is not a counteract of the existing western model, but one that highlights a niche and thus sell at a global level. Drawing from the Chinese and Scandinavian definitions of "Constructive reporting", the Africa media can come up with their own well designed journalism education system.

### **Theoretical and practical contribution of the study**

In summary, this study makes several important contributions that range from methodological to theoretical underpinnings of framing and network agenda setting theories. To the theory of framing, this study was innovated by seeking to bypass the issue of journalistic neutrality in favor of the concepts of weak frames. Consistent with established framing theorists discussed in the third chapter, the findings in this study reemphasize the need for making available and accessible in the memory of an audience, or an object in our case, to elicit responses (Wekesa, 2012; Sheufele & Iyengar, 2012). Scholars of framing contend with the idea that constraints such as newsroom routines, deadlines and news values influence journalists to make spur-of-the moment decisions in their selection of news items, which in turn tends to lead to the advancement of certain ideas (Wekesa, 2012; Entman, 1993). Therefore, by virtue of this

process, such as choosing how to bring readers ‘juicy stories’ journalists may develop frames of mind about China that would only change through what Druckman (2007) calls a reorientation of thoughts. “This call to mind the conception of journalists as readers, in this case readers of the news agencies from which they persistently draw international news, as well as readers of their own news content” (Wekesa, p. 35). A major contribution to the field of journalism and communication lies in treating the local media as an audience. By so doing, we bypass the conventional conceptualization of whom framing can affect, and especially by observing both the weak and strong frames through positive and negative processes.

Second, the study extends the NAS model to a non-Western context, and particularly sub-Saharan Africa where the NAS has never been used before as of date. Second, the study uses a non-political context and framework to explore the extent strength of the NAS model. The findings provide strong evidence for the NAS model by showing the interconnectedness or association of issue attributes and objects in the network. This measure of both implicit and explicit associations provides higher degrees of validity in the study. Further, the combination of various measures provides strong evidence of our data and results. For example, sentiment analyses have been criticized as lacking in their measures, therefore, a combination of various methods and yielding similar findings gives the study more robust findings.

Theoretically, the study offers additional nuances to understanding the NAS effects beyond humans by considering effects from one media to the other. Studies that have employed the NAS model (Chen, et. al., 2020; Guo, 2012, Wu &Guo, 2017) usually measure the effects as emanating from the media to the publics. However, this study extends the approach to measuring effects from one media to the other. While intermedia agenda-setting would be considered appropriate for this kind of situation (Vargo & Guo, 2017), intermedia agenda-setting only

measures the transfer of issue attributes. By extending the approaches to NAS, we were able to measure, not only the transfer, but also the frequency and degree centralities, therefore, understanding and explaining the effects of pro-and-counter attitudinal news agenda in the Zambian media. To the best of my knowledge, this study is the first of its kind to empirically consider agenda-setting level three (NAS) in an African context, and in measuring Chinese influence in sub-Saharan Africa.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

#### **Study Recap**

As a recap, this dissertation contributes to the consolidation of other existing literature on the influence of China in African media systems. The study took an approach that allowed to explore Chinese influence at a micro level; meaning that I was able to expose hidden and subliminal estimations of causal effects of Chinese news agenda to the Zambian media and the entire public. From the media perspective, the study was able to offer further insights into how the media mirror each other's agenda in an event where there is a major player acting as central node – and in our case, ZNBC whose agenda symbolizes Chinese news agenda. Second, the study was also able to provide theoretical and methodological confirmation of framing and network agenda setting through repeated applications. By using the NAS model in a nuanced way, the study has been able to provide a better understanding of how China's salient influence varies from media to media, with a lot of influence being observed within the government media. But also, the study has been able to demonstrate the interconnected of issues, especially those that are framed in favor of China. Above all, not only has the study been able to show the transfer of issues, but of influence as well as noted in the time series and cross-lagged correlations.

#### **Main Findings**

The main findings of the five research questions and one hypothesis undergirding this study can be summaries in the following manner. First and foremost, the study was able to establish the influence of China on the Zambian media agenda. I used the framing theory to explain the phenomena and found that ZNBC, which was the central node had more stories about



China than any other media category in Zambia. This is expected, but what was more revealing is that most of stories from ZNBC were a result of routine coverage. In these stories, China was presented with prominence as observed in tone, fairness as well as the position that China took in a story (mostly as a subject speaking to the object). Most of these findings are consistent with theoretical studies conducted in Zambia by Banda (2009) and other empirical research that speak to a broader spectrum about China's influence in Africa (Umejei, 2020; Madrid-Morales, 2018; Workneh, 2016; Wekesa, 2013).

Second, I used intermedia, and then network agenda-setting to go beyond the measuring of salience issue transfers to exploring the possible interconnected on issue attributes and/or objects as well as estimate causal effects. Particularly, cross-lagged correlations, network analysis, and time series were used in these sections. The cross-lagged correlation analysis that were based on the Rozelle-Campbell baseline demonstrated that ZNBC "caused" the other media in Zambia (Private, Community, and Religious) to focus on what ZNBC believed to be the most important issues – and in this case, Chinese news agenda. Essentially, correlations between ZNBC news agenda on China and that of other media in Zambia was higher where the news agenda were lagged after China had declared its intentions to invest and own 60% of the Zambian Shares. Network analysis also measured through frequency and degree centrality was able to demonstrate that issues that were directly linked to Chinese dominance recorded higher degree centrality scores as opposed to those that had little or nothing to do with China's presence in Zambia. For example, a few issue issues were tied human interests, culture, and the environment. This implies that the importance of issue attributes about China in the media were determined by the benefits that they had to the presence of China in Zambia.

These findings were further supported by time series that were modeled through the Granger causality tests. As indicated in the results, there is a gradual causal effect observed over time in the Zambian media. In other words, a change on how the Zambian media is influenced by Chinese media agenda can be observed across time. This, and the rest of other questions and hypotheses help respond to and support the main question of whether Chinese media agenda shape local opinions and discourse. As demonstrated earlier, the criticism of China's presence in the Zambian media is slowly disappearing, and Zambia is slowly embracing China as an inevitable partner without looking at the possible implications. The findings showed a decline in stories about China in 2018. This could be explained in three ways: That China's attention has shifted from the local media to its own network channels operating in Zambia; that the decline in Chinese stories is a manifestation of Chinese control of the local media agenda; or that because China's presence has taken root in the Zambian media, people have become less critical of China's presence in Zambia.

### **Limitations and recommendations for future research**

Despite the many efforts applied to this study, the findings cannot be interpreted without limitations. First and foremost, budgetary constraints restricted my ability to improve the implementation of certain research methods – it is for this reason that I used quantitative and computational textual analysis for my data collection and analysis. However, constraints provided insights into testing NAS methods with a very nuanced approach in which the publics/audience were not used but replaced by other local media outlets in Zambia. I, therefore, acknowledge the presence of several limitations in the dissertation that range from methods to impediments in accessing data. The limitation of this study lies especially in its operationalization and the quest for substantiating causal effects. While this was intended, as

observed by the number of approaches used, the results ended up as only hold that our findings are only estimations and not an establishment of causal effects of Chinese media agenda in the Zambian media. The findings do support the objectives and assumptions of causal effects, but it is hard to establish with 100 percent that the changes we see are a result of direct effects.

Therefore, we cannot also rule reverse causality from the Zambian media to China. This is where my argument intersects with Umejei's (2020) ideas of hybridization. In other words, there might be a lot of intervening and confounding variables that future research could explore through rigorous methods.

Second, the use of NAS in the context of intermedia agenda setting might be limiting in the sense that other media were treated as publics. Generally, studies that have used NAS (Chen, et. al., 2020; Wu & Guo, 2017; Vargo et al., 2014; Guo, 2012) tend to observe the networked relationship within the public audience. Therefore, they design their methods by holding that agenda-setting levels one and two exist before establishing the interconnectedness of the issue attributes. This study, however, took a non-conventional approach in which other media outlets were treated as publics and recipients of the news agenda. By so doing, it was hard to establish well defined variances in terms of agenda setting effects. This is, therefore, an avenue for future research in the sense that researchers could measure individual level effects emanating from ZNBC to one single media category, i.e., community media. This would provide more robust results. Future research should consider establishing real causal effects. This could involve measuring cartoon networks and seeing how much of Chinese media agenda is slowly being imprinted in Zambian children. especially on culture.

Third, the assessment of constructive journalism. Although I was able to draw comparisons from the literature and theory to the context of this study, it should be clearly stated

that what I have done is not a measure of constructive journalism, but an inference based on the status core of journalism practice in Zambia. Despite feeble attempts, measures for constructive journalism are not clearly established. Most of them draw from Johan Galtung's approach which reflects peace journalism. Others draw insights from solution-based journalism. As a result, this study was faced with the similar conundrum of choosing what measures to take for their analysis. Nonetheless, the study used content analysis of frames and news agenda, language sentiment analysis, and network analysis to draw insights to what would be considered as constructive journalism. Based on the significant levels of the findings, I justified the validity and reliability of the measures. However, I believe that a thorough dedication to constructive journalism can yield clear measures beyond those suggested in this study.

Above all, an overarching limitation of this dissertation is its inability to speak to the entire African continent; leave alone sub-Saharan Africa. It would be presumptuous and obviously inaccurate to assume that my findings can speak for other African countries. This is not to suggest that the study can only speak to the Zambian context. Given the rich data and findings, it is likely that scholars from other parts of the continent of Africa can draw insights from it. Therefore, expanding and comparing the results from other sub-Saharan African countries could be a starting endeavor in contributing to the growing literature. Nonetheless, this does not rule out the fact that some findings and methods in this study are unique and can benefit the situations observed in other African countries. As I had earlier indicated, the case of Zambia is a textbook example of China that most scholars seem not to envision as the approach situations in other countries.

Umejei (2020, 2018), Madrid-Morales (2018), Wasserman & Madrid-Morales, (2018); Skjerdal & Gusu, (2016) Workneh, (2016), Wekesa (2013), e.t.c., are all blueprints for

understanding the influence of China, yet most of their approaches have treated China as a partner who is innocently exerting some seemingly draconian policies that are rooted in their work ethics. This dissertation takes a rather different approach to fill the gaps with Zambia as a perfect example of exploring the influence of China in Africa. Further, as Madrid-Morales (2018) had indicated, there is still a dearth of research on China's influence in Northern Africa, and especially in smaller nations of West Africa, and less populated countries like Namibia and Cape Verde (p. 313).

As a final note, there is need for research in Africa to explore more theoretical and methodological approaches for analyzing causal effects other than conventional qualitative and quantitative methods. I argue that this study suggests that the presence of China in the Zambian newsroom is slowly reverting the quest for African media to develop in its own accord. The dreams of creating an African professional journalistic system that is rooted in African values and designed to promote "issue-based" reporting based on the narratives of African ideologies and culture (Djokotoe, 2004; Kasoma, 1995; Mfumbusa, 2008; Nyamnjoh, 2005) is becoming more far-fetched than ever. And the hope for a hybridized African media capable of competing at a global scale is equally something that needs a lot of justification. There is need to understand what we will eventually mean when we say the African media: Is it because it is in Africa? What will differentiate it from other media? Nonetheless, while it is important to acknowledge and take advantage of China, as President Barack Obama and Adam Smith (1776) would suggest in his invisible hand theory, we argue that it is also necessary to retain an image that identifies a country, and especially in defining power relations. China has defined what it wants for its people. It's now up to Zambia and Africa at large, to define what it wants for its people and the future generation to come. It is only Africa that can create an African agenda and narrative.

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**APPENDICES**  
**CODEBOOK FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS**

**NEWS STORY**

**001 – Coder (dfreelon.org)**

1. Coder A
2. Coder B
3. Lead Researcher

**002 – Name of the news item:** i.e. Zambia-China ties to Continue, or China steps in as Zambia runs out of loan options.

**003 – News Story ID & Name of media outlet** (Each news item will be assigned with a 4-digit unique case identification number to indicate where exactly the story came from). Particularly we have the following government-owned media:

**0001 to 1000 (ZNBC):** servicing ZNBC TV 1, ZNBC TV2, ZNBC TV3, ZNBC RADIO1, ZNBC RADIO 2, & ZNBC RADIO 4

**1001 to 2000 (Times of Zambia Newspaper):** Government-owned national daily

**2001 to 3000 (Zambia Daily Mail):** Government-owned national daily

**3001 to 4000 (ZNBC Today):** Facebook nested news page hosting more than 73,851 followers.

**004 - Date** (yyyy/mm/dd) to indicate the year, month and date when the news item appeared.

**005a – Day of the week**

1. Monday
2. Tuesday
3. Wednesday
4. Thursday
5. Friday
6. Saturday
7. Sunday

**005b - Sampled Week**

**006 – Length:** The size of the story will be measured in proportion to screen size, computer type, and web interface used.

**007 – What is the position of the news story in the round down?** (Ordinal number)

**008 – Is the story in the main headlines?** Generally, the main headlines come first online and are accompanied by a lead. Those that are not in the headline are located down and can only be accessed after clicking on the link. When a headline refers to multiple news items, we will only code the first news item that mentions China in the headline as (0 = China not in the headline; 1 = China in the headline)

**009 – Byline** (we will record whether the story is written by, a. Staff member, b. Wire service, c. corresponding journalist, d. unable to determine.

## PRODUCTION & FORMAT

### **010 – What format is the news item presented in?**

1. **BRIEF NEWS.** This refers to items that contain an announcement or a quick fact about Chinese activities in Zambia. For ZNBC TV website, they might also include anchor news (a brief news item, read by the news anchor in studio, often as a voiceover to footage) and public statements (transmitting highlights in the form of sound bites from public appearances such as a press conference, a speech, a television address, or selected parts of an interview).
2. **BREAKING NEWS.** Urgent occurrences that are reported in immediacy and quickly become obsolete. Sometimes they tend to develop into a hard news story along the way.
3. **HARD NEWS.** These are substantially timely research news items that discuss China in Zambia and give an in-depth analysis of the situation or event.
4. **SOFT NEWS.** These are stories that are usually not timely in the sense that they are not reported as the event occurs. However, they equally involve substantial research done on a particular subject. Feature and investigative stories fall into such criteria. Other stories are those that express an opinion held by the media or staff member.
5. **OTHER.** This may include, among other types of stories, longer pieces with a voiceover (i.e. not read by the anchor) but without footage (such as stories purely based on graphs).

### **011 – Does the news item about China include images? How big? (0 = no image; 1 = Has image)**

### **012 – Are there direct quotations in the story: (These will be necessary to determine who speaks in a particular issue)**

### **013 - Who gets to speak in the news item? – How many times does that person appear in a news item? If somebody appears more than once in the news item, we will ONLY code him/her once. You can code up to 5 sound bites in each news item. They should be coded in the same order as they appear in the news item.**

1. **ZNBC, TOPSTAR officials** (Journalists and other analysts belonging to these media)
2. **Current Zambian government officials (government officials, diplomats/ambassadors, military/armed forces, members of parliament of the ruling party).** Also, government-appointed, or government-related figures: judges, public officials, policemen, prosecutors...
3. Chinese officials or Citizens (Anyone of Chinese descent, including government officials)
4. Non-governmental yet institutional sources such as the political opposition, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious leaders, tribal elders, respected members of the community, labor unions... **Former presidents, ministers, judges who do not hold a government position.**
5. Business leaders (such as bankers, leaders of business organizations...). This includes the president of the producer's association, Chambers of Commerce... or any organization that brings together businesspeople.
6. **Individual businessmen, shop owners, representatives of a company (like a spokesperson).** Economic actors who are NOT representing any institution or organization.



7. “Expert” or analyst, who is not staff ZNBC - China - Topstar networks, and who is presented to us as an authoritative voice on the matter under discussion. Scholars are excluded.
8. **People in academia: scholars, researchers, university professors, lecturers, but not students.**
9. “Ordinary” citizens (a victim, a witness, somebody who was passing by when the news took place, citizens, non-officials).
10. People of arts: cooks, artists, writers, designers.
11. **Professionals (doctors, teachers, lawyers, engineers...)** as long as they do speak on behalf of an NGO (they would be coded as 2) or they do not hold a direct government-appointed position (they would be coded as 1).
12. **Sportsmen and sportswomen** (including referees, coaches but not presidents of sports federations or UEFA or FIFA, for example, who would belong to category 1).
13. **Journalists** (news editors, producers, correspondents...) from the channel or elsewhere.
14. Other

### CONTENT

**014 - What is the main topic of the news item?** Most stories are complex and therefore involve more than one theme. You need to decide which theme is most prominent. The questions to ask are: What is this story really about? What is the main point in the story? What is the central topic talked about in the story? To answer these questions, I will use the following guidelines:

1. **Look at the actions or developments in the story, rather than the context in which they occur.**
2. Focus on why this story is in the news at all – usually, something has to happen (a news peg) that can give you a clue on how to classify the story.
3. If I fail to decide between two themes (or more) I will resort to the size of the story (i.e. choose the theme that has more time in the story).
4. Use headlines or section heads **as clues only**: a story in the Business section is more than likely to include information relating to business, **but it should not necessarily be coded as “business” for a topic.**
5. Write down any stories that you are unsure about so that these can be discussed with the lead investigator.

For example, a story about Chinese investing in ZNBC might be multifaceted. Even though the specific case might be investment, the topic of the story might be implying “Media Freedom” or “Economic Matters”. Therefore, there will be a need to read in detail the list of possible themes. The following themes will be approached in relation to Chinese investment and the stories that pertain to China in Zambia.

1. MEDIA RELATIONS (Chinese investment in the Zambian media. Role of China’s TopStar digital network in media production and consumer relations.
2. POLITICS WITHIN A STATE (elections, campaigns, appointments, government changes; other political, including legislation); political domestic issues, civic manifestations or protests (not turned to violence and repression), political trials and censure/censorship (not turned to violence and repression), corruption, political policies, political crime.

3. FOREIGN AFFAIRS/DIPLOMACY – political activities between states; **Zambia – China relations (including foreign aid)**, confrontation, criticisms and sanctions (political and economic) to other countries, responses of one country to an international event, international organisms, but **excluding matters related to political violence or military intervention in a foreign country.**
  4. ECONOMIC MATTERS (**personal, domestic and international**): **trade**, stock issues; other economic performance (unemployment), output, growth, sales (for economy as whole or particular enterprise); prices, taxes, cost of living, inflation; industrial projects (factories, dams, ports...); agricultural matters; industrial/labor relations, monetary questions, economic and statistic indicators.
  5. SOCIAL ISSUES: health, infections, diseases, housing, living conditions, illiteracy, poverty conditions, etc.; educational provision; health provision; family planning; other social services and social welfare matters), access to services, food insecurity, working and labor conditions.
  6. SECURITY, CRIME, POLICE, JUDICIAL, LEGAL AND PENAL: non-political crime, police, judicial and penal activity, as above; non-criminal legal and court proceedings, e.g., claims for damages; other crime/legal. Individual crime, not politically motivated crime.
  7. CULTURE, literature, museums, architecture, cinema, dance, theatre, opera, television, arts, archaeology, religion; entertainment, show business, personalities, festivals, exhibitions, museums, monuments, and tourism.
  8. SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL, MEDICAL (excluding environment-related matters), research, discoveries, inventions.
  9. ECOLOGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT: energy conservation and creation (air, oil, solar) and pollution, destruction of the environment; protection and hunting of endangered species, land, other;
  10. SPORTS: international; non-international;
  11. HUMAN INTEREST stories, odd happenings, funny animals, sex and others.
  12. NATURAL DISASTERS ACCIDENTS (human-made hazards, negligence, errors, etc.)
- 015 – How do stories portray the locals when in the same story with China?** Under this variable, we will be looking at each sentence independently. We will write down the number of favorable sentences and the number of unfavorable sentences in the new item. You just need to count the total number for each category. When deciding whether a sentence portrays a country in a favorable or unfavorable way, the following guidelines will be followed:
1. First determine the actor/subject by asking yourself the question, what the event is all about – whether the story has a direct effect on the local community or not. For example, a story of poor working conditions and unpaid workers, or a case where China is accused of polluting the environment of the community through its activities.
  2. Determine whether the actor is portrayed favorably or unfavorably (negatively, positively, or neutral) based on the following list of statements. In order to avoid dispersion in the answers, limit yourself to the cases below.
3. **Instances where a statement will be coded as favorable...**

- 1 – The actor is described with positive words.
- 2 – The actor cooperates with others, is a good influence on others or is proactive in finding solutions to problems.
- 3 – The actor is presented as a good member of the community.
- 4 – The actor’s actions are lauded/praised.
- 5 – The actor’s efforts to overcome problems are exalted
- 6 – The actor’s achievements, success or qualities are highlighted.

**4. Instances where a statement will be coded as unfavorable...**

- 1 – The actor is described with negative words.
- 2 – The actor is involved in fighting/conflict/rioting, illegal/illicit activities or a catastrophe.
- 3 – The actor does not fulfill previous promises.
- 4 – The actor is convicted in court.
- 5 – The actor’s actions are decried/criticized.
- 6 – The actor’s failures, shortcomings, and problems are highlighted.

3) Write down in the code sheet the number of favorable and unfavorable sentences. In the first column we will write the total number of favorable statements and in the second column the total number of unfavorable statements.

**016 - Does the story or any of the actors refer to China as a model for Africa?** A role model can be in terms of economic development, policymaking, fight against corruption... (0 = No; 1 = Yes)

### FRAMES

News frames are a very subjective variable to code. Frames refer to the way a story is presented, structured and organized. For this project, the unit of analysis in coding frames will be each paragraph in the news item. Because frames are highly subjective, it is important to follow some rules when coding frames:

1. Do not use the keyword for each frame as the guiding principle when deciding whether a frame is present or not. In other words, A particular story might be named “Conflict”, but not all stories about a conflict necessarily need to contain this frame.
2. Try to use the transcripts of the news bulletins when coding frames.
3. Each paragraph should be independent of the others. The fact that one paragraph is coded “Conflict”, does not imply that the rest of the paragraphs need to be coded the same way.
4. Some paragraphs (sometimes many of them) might not include any of the assumed frames.
5. For each frame, please write down the total number of paragraphs that contain a given frame. If a story has 6 paragraphs, and the ‘Conflict’ frame is present in 3 of them you should write ‘3’ in the ‘Conflict’ column in the Excel file.

Therefore, when coding frames, please follow these instructions:

1. Locate in the paragraph any of the keywords (or similar words in meaning) provided in

the matrix included in the Codebook.

2. If any of the keywords are present, use the questions provided to help determine whether that frame is present or not in a paragraph.
3. Aid yourself with the list of themes/types of stories when in doubt.

**017 - Is the story framed in terms of CONFLICT?**

Does the story reflect disagreement between parties-individuals-groups-countries?  
Does one party-individual-group-country reproach another?  
Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem or issue?

**018 - Is the story framed in terms of HUMAN INTEREST?**

Does the story provide a human example of “human face” on the issue?  
Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?  
Does the story contain adjectives or visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy caring, sympathy, or compassion?

**019 – Is the story framed in terms of BLAME?**

Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?  
Does the story suggest that an individual or a group of people in society is responsible for the issue-problem?  
Does the story point to the culpability of an individual or group in a certain situation?

**VA039 – Is the story framed in terms of ECONOMIC PROGRESS?**

Is there a mention of financial or economic gains now or in the future?  
Is there a reference to the positive economic consequences of pursuing a course of action for the economy as a whole?  
Does the story refer to the economics of financial benefits a given action had, has or will have on individuals or groups in society?

**020 – Is the story framed in terms of SOLUTION SEEKING?**

Does the story suggest solution(s) to the problem/issue?  
Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem?  
Does the story present an individual or a group that is able to solve the problem?

**SUMMARY OF FRAMES IN NEWS ITEMS**

<b>Frames</b>	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Keywords</b>	<b>Usual themes/stories</b>
<b>Conflict</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does the story reflect disagreement between parties-individuals-groups- countries?</li> <li>● Does one party-individual- group-country reproach another?</li> <li>● Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem or issue?</li> </ul>	<p>Dispute; disagreement; fighting; argument; battle; conflicting sides; accusation; tension; criticizing; denounce; clashes; discrepancies.</p>	<p>Military conflict; political disputes; warring factions; political infighting; court battles; family disputes; diplomatic conflict; regional disputes.</p>
<b>Human interest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does the story provide a human example on the issue?</li> <li>● Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem?</li> <li>● Does the story contain adjectives or visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy caring, sympathy, or compassion?</li> </ul>	<p>Affected; consequences; impact; hardships; life-changing; people; dramatic; touching; emotional; heart-breaking; story; average man/woman; citizens; children</p>	<p>Personal profiles; family stories; humanitarian issues; social and economic hardships; first-person accounts; stories of survival, i.e. through Chinese labor laws; personal achievements; sports and success; from rag to riches</p>
<b>Blame</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?</li> <li>● Does the story suggest that an individual or a group of people in society is responsible for the issue- problem?</li> <li>● Does the story point to the culpability of an</li> </ul>	<p>Culpability; blame; responsible; accountability; liability; irregularities; corrupt; caused by; origin; failure to protect; inaction.</p>	<p>Social issues; Chinese actions and inactions, government action and inaction; NGO reports; corruption and abuse of power; governance individual or group in a certain situation?</p>

Frame	Questions	Keywords	Usual themes/stories
<b>Solution-oriented</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the story suggest solution(s) to the problem/issue?</li> <li>• Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem?</li> <li>• Does the story present an individual or a group that is able to solve the problem?</li> </ul>	Solving; invention; solutions; improvement; spending; government-led; investment; take action; creation; promotion; proactive.	Government activities; new inventions; NGO & civil society actions; plans, projects, and inventions;
<b>Harmony &amp; Stability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the story talk of the need to avoid confrontation?</li> <li>• Is reference made to the political or military stability of a country (region), government or society?</li> <li>• Is reference made to harmonious relations between or among nations, ethnic groups or different sectors of society, or peaceful coexistence?</li> </ul>	Stable; security; safe; peace; peaceful; protection; coexistence; harmony; nonviolent; diplomatic; mutual respect; post-conflict; unity; development.	Diplomacy; peace efforts; post-conflict environment; success stories; social issues; conflict avoidance; political transitions; religious and cross-cultural affairs.
<b>Economic benefit &amp; progress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a mention of financial or economic gains now or in the future?</li> <li>• Is there a reference to the positive economic consequences of pursuing a course of action for the economy as a whole?</li> <li>• Does the story refer to the economy of financial benefits a given action had, has or will have on individuals or groups in society?</li> </ul>	Yields; progress; success; benefits; progress; investment; growth; advance; economy; financial; banking; fast-growing; raising; development; improve; opportunities.	Investment projects; stories of economic development; personal growth and development; ‘Zambian economy raising’; women and youth empowerment; poverty alleviation

