



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Power influence of China and the US in Africa: A comparative case study of Zimbabwe and Zambia's national news coverage

Paepe, Amélie de

Citation

Paepe, A. de. (2021). *Power influence of China and the US in Africa: A comparative case study of Zimbabwe and Zambia's national news coverage*.

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [License to inclusion and publication of a Bachelor or Master thesis in the Leiden University Student Repository](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3283310>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

**Power influence of China and the US in Africa: A comparative case study of Zimbabwe
and Zambia's national news coverage**



Universiteit Leiden

BSc Political Science: International Relations and Organisations

Amélie De Paepe s2145103

Bachelor Project: The Return of Great Powers in Politics

Supervisor: Dr. S. P. Haigh Ph. D.

Second Reader: Dr. M. Verschoor

21.05.2021

7,993 words

I. Introduction

In September 2020, the Zambian news station Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) published an article with the title ‘Is the World entering a new cold war?’ which explores the increasing anxieties forming around the US-China rivalry (Jere, 2020). That this topic is published by a leading Zambian news agency highlights its relevance and news potential in the region. Furthermore, in a 2018 opinion publication from the Clingendael Institute, the two great powers China and the US are put in direct opposition to one another in Africa (Ursu, 2018). China’s increased role on the African continent is contrasted with a US diplomacy crisis whereby the foreign policy approach to Africa lacks a unifying framework (Ursu, 2018; Ernest, 2008). In contrast, China has demonstrated this cohesive framework whilst also being flexible about local dynamics (Ursu, 2018; Wang, 2008). With American legitimacy on the continent declining, it seems that the foreign policies of these two powers in this area will play a crucial role in their ability to project power across the world. This is significant as Africa hosts 17.20% of the world’s population in 2020 and has an expected GDP growth of 3.4% in 2021 (Worldometers, 2020; African Development Bank Group, 2020, p. 7).

Thus, observing the power dynamics which occur between the established and rising power in Africa is an important part of looking at the power influence of each country and how this is evolving. This would have consequences for looking at the US’ power decline and the future of great power politics and how the power dynamic might be shifting towards China. Furthermore, Nye (2011) emphasises the importance of the perceiver’s view of the influencing power in determining the power dynamic (p. 21). This perception can be established by looking at media coverage which can give indications on public opinion (Baum & Potter, 2008; Risse-Kappen, 1991; Wu, 2000). This brings up the following question: **How are the US and China represented in African media and what are the potential consequences of this representation for power dynamics?**

After outlining the existing literature on soft and smart power and how media can bring to light power relations, this thesis will outline three theories of media effects: agenda-setting, priming and framing. This will guide the paper to the above research question and a small-N comparative case analysis between Zimbabwe and Zambia and their media representation of China and the US. The presentation of the results will be followed by an interpretivist view of what this representation

could mean for public opinion on the US and China in these countries and how this might highlight shifting power relations between the US and China. This will be done by relying on the following theories: agenda-setting, priming and framing. The article will conclude that the news coverage of China in Africa is overall more positive than the US coverage. The results on the amount of news coverage are quite mixed and depend on the country. While political issues tend to dominate news coverage, the articles on China testify to its ever growing economic presence on the international stage and its ambitions as a world power.

II. Literature review

The importance of soft power in International Relations

With the rise of China, the US and China are increasingly competing on the world stage and looking to project their power internationally (Liff & Ikenberry, 2014; Zhang, 2007; Buzan, 2010). The definition of power that will be used here is a behavioural one as defined by Nye (2011). This definition posits that power is the ability to achieve a preferred outcome by affecting the other's behaviour (Nye, 2011, p. 10). Within this definition, the role of soft power is the ability to get what one wants through persuasion rather than coercion, this has been associated with public diplomacy (Nye, 2011). The concept of soft power has gained significance for American foreign policy and is associated with foreign public opinion (Goldsmith & Horiuchi, 2012). Furthermore, they highlight that foreign public opinion influences the attitude of foreign powers towards the US (pp. 582-583). This highlights the significance of looking at foreign public opinion to assess power influence in terms of soft power. On the other hand, soft power has also gained traction in Chinese foreign policy (Wang, 2008). Wang (2008) describes China's public diplomacy as needing a mix of soft and hard power to rise peacefully. Public diplomacy is crucial in enhancing China's soft power and countering the 'Chinese threat' image (Wang, 2008, pp. 267-268). This also has implications for the African countries as in 1949, Chinese propaganda was aimed at developing and socialist nations (p. 267).

However, smart power, rather than soft power, might be what is allowing countries to exert their contemporary influence (Nye, 2011; Ernest, 2008). Smart power rests on a balanced and calculated use of both hard and soft power (Ernest, 2008, p. 120). Both Nye (2011) and Ernest (2008) see

smart power as necessary and mention that the US is having difficulty using it properly. Nye (2011) explains how a public relations event on the war on terror backfired due to the speaker not optimising a smart power strategy (p. 24). Meanwhile for Ernest (2008), the imbalance in favour of hard power in US foreign policy might be hindering the move towards smart power. This could cause foreign policy issues for the US in the future (Ernest, 2008). This might be one reason why the introducing statement was made by the Clingendael institute, as the US's foreign policy approach is not as unified and organised as China's (Ursu, 2018). Indeed, as mentioned by Wang (2008) China needs to combine both hard and soft power to rise peacefully, this would then be more associated with smart power.

Media and power

According to Van Dijk (1989), access to discourse mechanisms is a source of power. The media has been associated with a form of soft power and increasingly as forms of power have become more intangible (Uysal, Schroeder, & Taylor, 2012; Wang, 2008; Wu, 2016). Scholars have also tended to see China's strategy on media engagement abroad as a form of soft power (Wang, 2008; Wu, 2016). Wang (2008) mentions that China's leverage of public diplomacy is a projection of soft power, but there is also a need for China to combine hard and soft power in order to complete its peaceful rise (p. 257).

While the US' strategy seems more focused on soft power when it comes to media presence, if it focuses on it at all, China seems to have a more integrated approach (Wang, 2008; Wu, 2016). Following Nye's (2011) definition of smart power, it can be argued that China is pursuing a smart power strategy rather than simply focusing on soft power. The direct integration of a media cooperation plan in the aid clauses makes China's media engagement more strategic and coercive than a simple soft power strategy (China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), 2018) (Appendix A). China's media involvement is, thus, a calculated public diplomacy strategy to shape its relation with Africa (Wu, 2016, p. 81). Thus, smart power might be a better way of describing this strategy as the media involvement is inscribed in the foreign aid programme (CIDCA), and thus intertwined in economic power. But does this strategy have the wanted effect? As mentioned, the US seems to be behind on this and does not have an overarching smart power strategy when it comes to media influence and engagement (Nye, 2011; Ernest, 2008). Could this leave the US in an inferior position when it comes to its power projection?

Contrary to the US, China has integrated media cooperation within its African foreign aid programs (CIDCA, 2018). The US' failed public diplomacy campaign is more attributed to issues of smart power than soft power as it has no overarching strategy outside of hard power projections (Ernest, 2008). Furthermore, China has a more flexible approach to foreign aid which makes countries more eager to collaborate with and get aid from China (Ursu, 2018). The question arises as to whether China's use of smart power by integrating the local media, is leading to more media influence (in terms of tone, type, and length of coverage) than a country which has not been able to provide a unifying approach to foreign aid (Ursu, 2018). This emphasises the importance of the perceiver in the power interaction (Nye, 2011). Indeed, the perceiver is the one who builds the image and perception of the potential influencer's power (p. 21). Thus, there is a need to look at the opinion that is formed by countries that receive power signals.

Influences on news coverage abroad

Theoretical overviews exist of what determines the international news coverage of a country abroad. The coverage of foreign news can highlight relationships between countries, as shown by identified determinants of foreign news coverage (Wu, 2000). When looking at the number of articles published about each guest country in 38 countries, Wu (2000) found that the amount of news coverage is determined by geographical proximity, trade volume and the presence of international news agencies (pp. 110-126). Thus, media coverage could help to highlight the nature of economic ties between two countries and the interactions between them.

International news coverage also tends to focus on the powerful and the elite (Wu, 2000, p. 126). However, the news preferences in each country do demonstrate regional preferences (Wu, 2000, p. 121). Indeed, differences can exist between networks based on cultural origins (Livingston & Hebert, 2005, pp. 16-17). Looking at news coverage to determine power relations has even extended outside of communication, for instance in the planning field which shows its capacity to showcase power interactions (Lee & Silva, 2017). Even in this case, it is implied that over a fixed period of time, the group that is most represented dominates the power game during that period (Lee & Silva, 2017, p. 263). Increase in the amount of coverage of a country can also indicate an increase in interest in that particular country (Zhang, 2010, p. 245). Furthermore, the type of news coverage also gives an indication to the country's situation and its representation abroad (Nassanga & Makara, 2016; Zhang, 2010). For instance, coverage of economic and trade issues in the case of

China can demonstrate a perception of a rise that is specifically economic (Zhang, 2010, p. 246). Thus, analysing news coverage could help bring out regional views of power relations and views of certain countries.

The influence of media coverage on public opinion

If we follow constructivist logic, our reality is shaped by the information we receive and seek out and by the social processes we are confronted with (Burr, 2003). The media has shown its force in its ability to reflect and influence public opinion (Baum & Potter, 2008; Bailard, 2016). The media's agenda-setting and priming capacity means that it has an ability to shape what people think about and how people think about a particular issue (Baum & Groeling, 2009; Iyengar, Peters & Kinder, 1982; Gadarian, 2010). Furthermore, news agencies selection of what aspects of the issue to portray also entails framing mechanisms (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Gadarian, 2010; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; de Vreese, 2005). These specific theories are important here as they will be used to interpret the analysis' findings to highlight how the media can influence public opinion which in turn translates to a capacity for power projection.

Agenda setting refers to the media's capacity to shape what the public thinks about (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Weaver, 2008). Experimental research has shown the role of agenda-setting in increasing the salience of issues in the public opinion's mind (Baum & Groeling, 2009; Iyengar et al., 1982; Gadarian, 2010). Iyengar et al. (1982) demonstrated that by selecting which issues to cover or not, television news coverage could shape what the public saw as important (pp. 854-855). The media's ability to influence public opinion in this way is impacted by the level of credibility and the level of political knowledge (Lee & Silva, 2017; Iyengar et al., 1982). Priming is directly related to agenda-setting, although there are disagreements as to whether it is a direct consequence (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Weaver, 2008). Priming refers to the use of specific issues to evaluate leaders' and governments' actions (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 11). These two media effects sustain that issues that are made salient by the media have a higher chance of being seen as important by the public (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 11; Weaver, 2008). Finally, Framing relates to the idea that by selecting and presenting events and issues in a particular way, media can shape public opinion and influence the audience's understanding of the issues (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Powlick & Katz, 1998; de Vreese, 2005; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Gadarian, 2010). For instance, Gadarian (2010) has shown that when terrorism is painted in

a more negative light utilising more emotional language in American media, the public will lean towards more belligerent policy preferences (p. 481). These media effects can be relevant when looking at public opinion on matters of foreign policy and public diplomacy (Duncombe, 2017; Gadarian, 2010).

Media and Public opinion in Africa

Research has already shown the role of media on African public opinion for China (Nassanga & Makara, 2016; Bailard, 2016; Wu, 2016). However, most of this research focuses on the role of foreign media based in Africa and not on representations of foreign powers in African media. For instance, Wu (2016) has focused on explaining the workings of China's media and public diplomacy campaigns in South Africa and how these interact with the local context. Bailard (2016) has shown that the expansion of Chinese media in Africa has influenced African public opinion in favour of China (p. 468). This expansion has been done through journalistic exchanges and the broadcasting of Chinese news agencies in Africa (Bailard, 2016, p. 454).

Nassanga and Makara (2016) are part of the few scholars that have looked at the public opinion on Chinese presence as viewed in local Ugandan media. This case study provides useful insights for the thesis. However, a comparative study of two different countries could help make the findings of this single-N case study more relevant by looking at external validity. For the US, there has not been as much research on this in relation to African public opinion. This could be because the US does not have a media campaign and objective that is as explicit as China's. Furthermore, for China, media partnerships are also part of the China-Africa cooperation plan (CIDCA, 2018). This means that it will likely have more influence on news coverage due to cooperation on the economic level (Wu, 2000).

Studies on African perceptions of China have provided mixed results and appear context-dependent (Nassanga & Makara, 2016). Studies looking at sub-Saharan countries including Zimbabwe found diverse results with positive views of China as a business partner but also feelings of frustration at China's pseudo-colonial behaviour on the continent (Nassanga & Makara, p. 25). However, negative perceptions of China were found in Zambia where an anti-Chinese rhetoric gained prominence through the opposition leader (Nassanga & Makara, p. 25). Thus, studies have shown conflicting results and further research on the topic is needed.

The importance of media for China and the US's foreign policy and public diplomacy campaigns and the existing media studies in Africa make news coverage an adequate proxy measure for looking at the power influence of these countries in Africa.

III. Research Question

As shown by the existing literature, previous studies either did not focus on African media coverage of China and the USs, or choose to focus only on a single-case study which means that comparative studies on the topic are scarce. Research focused on one or the other country, but never brought them in relation with one another, emphasising the academic contribution of a US-China. Thus, this thesis provides a comparative view of China's and the US's respective influence in terms of media coverage. Comparing media coverage and influence would provide insight into the evolving power dynamics between the two countries as reflected by media coverage rather than look at them separately. Moreover, Gilboa (2008) emphasized the importance of taking a multidisciplinary approach when looking at public diplomacy (p. 74). This will be done here by taking insights from political communication, media effects theory and international relations. The above theoretical framework and research gaps bring up the following research question: **How are the US and China represented in African media and what are the potential consequences of this representation for power dynamics?**

Due to a lack of previous research, the potential findings for the US are uncertain. It is likely that the news coverage will be very high due to the US' prevalence on the world stage and its world power role, as shown by Wu (2000) (p. 126). In the case of China, the case study of Uganda by Nassanga and Makara (2016) could give potential indications as to the findings of this thesis. Assuming that their findings are generalisable, we can suspect that, for other African countries, media coverage of China will be high and prevalent, that the major focus will be on politics and foreign affairs and that China will be portrayed in neutral terms in most articles (Nassanga & Makara, 2016, pp. 28-31). The potential observation that news coverage of China will be high and prevalent is also supported by Wu (2000) who argues that trade and international news stations predict the amount of news coverage. Due to China's media clause which accompanies the China-Africa cooperation action plan, it seems appropriate to think media coverage will be high and prevalent (CIDCA, 2018) (Appendix A). These findings can be considered as working hypotheses,

but due to the nature of this study and the interpretation needed to look at the potential impact on public opinion, the results will be based on the evidence obtained through the research design and the interpretation will be done accordingly.

IV. Research Design

Case selection

To address the topic, a small-N comparative case study will be conducted, focusing on two countries: Zambia and Zimbabwe. Nassanga and Makara (2016), have shown the benefits of case studies in looking at the African perceptions of foreign countries. Using these two countries would allow for a comparative case study of two similar countries which would give grounds for a potential generalisation to other countries in the region. Geographically, they are neighbouring landlocked countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. They also have similar historical backgrounds as British colonies and are now both presidential republics.

Furthermore, the economic involvement of Zimbabwe and Zambia with the US and China is similar when it comes to aid. Their net official development assistance received and the aid they receive from USAID, the official US aid agency, are similar (USAID, 2019). Whilst finding information of Chinese foreign aid is difficult, AidData provides a potential overview (Constantaras, 2016). From the AidData, we distinguish that over the 2000-2013 period, Zimbabwe and Zambia got \$6.8 million and \$4.1 million in Chinese foreign aid, respectively (Constantaras, 2016).

The case selection is also motivated by practicality as the content of the more prominent news agencies is available in English. Furthermore, these two countries with geographical and historical similarities have news stations with an online website and not just social media accounts (as is the case for some news agencies in Africa). Thus, their main news sources are easily accessible and present a well-functioning search engine for the collection of data. This method of case selection following a most-similar system design would allow us to identify if the trends can be seen across these two countries for each great power.

Data

To answer the research question, published articles from the country's main news station will be analysed using content analysis. For Zambia, this will be ZNBC (retrieved from <https://www.znbc.co.zm/news/>), and for Zimbabwe this will be the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) (retrieved from <https://www.zbcnews.co.zw/>). These are both very influential news agencies in the respective countries (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), MISA, & Fesmedia Africa, 2021; FES, MISA, & Fesmedia Africa, 2018). The overall internet penetration in 2017 was of 27.1% in Zimbabwe and of 27.9% in Zambia (The World Bank, 2018). However, according to FES, MISA and Fesmedia Africa (2021; 2018) the internet penetration is much higher: for Zambia 36% internet penetration and 75% cellphone penetration and for Zimbabwe 62% internet penetration and 83% cellphone penetration.

Despite these low internet penetration rates, looking at the sources online gives indications of the new agency's coverage across mediums. It is worth noting that the ZBC despite being a 'public broadcaster' has a board entirely appointed by ministers (FES, MISA, & Fesmedia Africa, 2021, p. 33). The ZNBC's board is described as 'compromised' in the report with involvement from the ruling party (FES, MISA, & Fesmedia Africa, 2018, p.47). However, following J. Laski's still relevant statement "there is no government in the world not engaged in 'weighting' the news in its own interest", this should not compromise the findings (Östgaard, 1965, p. 41). Research has shown the role of political elites in shaping news flow, even within established democracies (Robinson, 2001; Aday, 2010). Thus, even though the government's influence might be more significant due to the nationalization of the ZNBC and ZBC, particularly in Zimbabwe, these effects can be disregarded due to the occurrence of elite influence in media worldwide. However, it is worth noting that the control exercised over the news media is reflective of these countries' regime types and their Freedom House Index for 'are there free and independent media?': 1 out of 4 for both 'partly free' Zambia and 'not free' Zimbabwe (Freedom House, 2021a; Freedom House, 2021b). The non-democratic regime classification could push news coverage in favour of China as relative value proximity, which is the proximity between country A and country B relative to that between country B and country C, improves the effects of public diplomacy campaigns (Sheafer, 2014, p. 149).

The data will be collected through the news organisations' online websites. The search engine will be used to find articles concerning the US and China. The terms used to identify the articles concerning each country will be 'America', 'American', 'Trump' and 'China', 'Chinese', 'Xi Jinping' for the US and China, respectively. Integrating the leaders' names allows us to encompass all the articles on the US and China and as leaders represent their countries, it can be assumed that they contribute to the country's image abroad when they are talked about in the foreign press.

Regarding the time-period, the data will look at articles published from January 2020 to December 2020. This will posit this thesis within the contemporary debate of shifting power dynamics between the US and China and provide findings which could guide future research looking at this specific year. However, in a first analysis of the yearly data, it becomes clear that the data for China is biased by an increase in news coverage on Covid-19 at the beginning of 2020 and the data for the US is biased by the presidential elections at the end of 2020. This would lead to unrepresentative results. To avoid these biases relating to Covid-19 at the beginning of 2020 for China and the US elections at the end of 2020 for the US, the time periods will be adapted for each country. For China, the period used will stretch from May till October and for the US from February till July. This will provide some overlap between the two countries whilst reducing the bias in news coverage caused by these two major events, by excluding the months in which coverage on them was most prominent. However, the role of COVID-19 might still influence the observed patterns due to its omnipresence in 2020, particularly when looking at the type of topic addressed. In these time periods 172 articles were identified and coded, 85 for the US and 87 for China. This includes 114 for ZBC and 58 for ZNBC who had significantly less coverage on these two countries in the selected time periods (Table 1).

Table 1 – Articles identified and coded per country

	Zambia (ZNBC)	Zimbabwe (ZBC)
US	30	55
China	28	59

Operationalisation of key variables

To operationalise the media influence of China and the US, three distinct elements are considered. The first concerns whether the article uses a frame of the country (US or China) that is positive or negative. By looking at whether the coverage is positive, negative or neutral, a picture can be built of how the US and China are represented in foreign media. This will be determined by coding the tone of each article as positive, negative, or neutral. This will be done by looking at the testimonials and quotes used in the article, the tone used by the reporter and the word choice used to describe the country (Appendix F). These elements will be compounded together to form an overall opinion on the coverage as positive, negative, or neutral (Appendix F). This has been done by researchers to look at the tone of news coverage and assess whether the coverage does not stick to reporting facts (Aday et al., 2005; Nassanga & Makara, 2016).

The second concerns the type of news coverage which gives an indication of the image that a country gives off abroad in terms and impacts how the public might view the country; this also impacts the power projection of the country (Zhang, 2010; Massanga & Nakara, 2016). News coverage type refers to the type of stories covered and ranges from economics to entertainment to health etc. The categories will be determined throughout the coding, although inspiration will be taken from Nassanga and Makara's (2016) categories (Appendix D).

Third, the overall influence will be assessed by looking at the article length and the number of articles published in the designated time period for the US and China. An article concerning both countries will be coded for both. Hence, the data analysis will mix quantitative and qualitative content analysis to form different indicators which will help assess different elements of China's and the US' media representation by looking at the tone, type, and length of coverage (Appendix C). This will allow a look at the public opinion which is forming around these two countries in Africa and how they compare to one another. The theories of agenda-setting, priming and framing will be used to determine what the news coverage properties tell us about public opinion in Africa on China and the US.

V. Results

Zambia

Regarding the extent of news coverage for Zambia, the US is covered in 30 articles in the period of February to July 2021, with an average word count of about 535 words. This includes 17 articles with less than 500 words, 8 between 500 to 1,000 words and 5 over 1,000 words (Table 1). China was covered in 28 articles in the period of May to October 2021 with an average word count of about 346. 21 articles had below 500 words, 7 over 500 and 0 had more than 1,000 words (Table 2).

Table 2 – Extent of news coverage by length of article (Zambia)

Number of words	US	China
<500	17	21
500-1000	8	7
>1000	5	0

The issues covered in the news coverage of each country is shown in the pie charts below (Figure 1.a). The coding for each category is detailed in Appendix E. Visibly, issues on health (including Covid) took up most coverage for both countries. Foreign affairs were also a significant category. As found by Nassanga and Makara (2016), foreign affairs and politics would have been the biggest category if they had been combined like these two authors did in their research. For the US, a bigger focus was on social and cultural news, which includes Black Lives Matters protests. In contrast, ZNBC’s coverage on China focused more on infrastructure which includes aid projects by Chinese companies and China’s contributions to Zambian infrastructure.

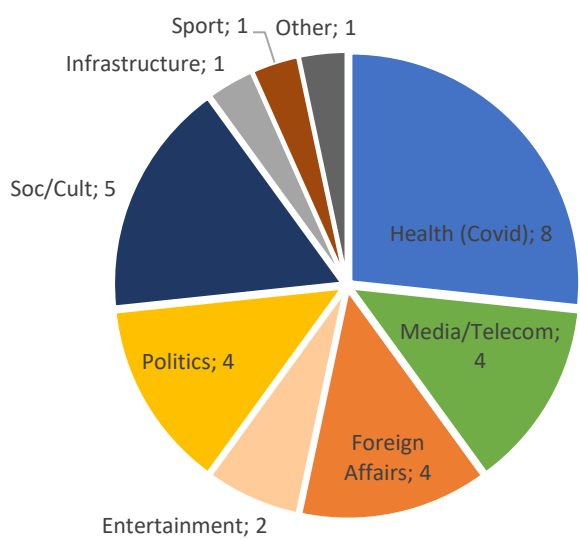


Figure 1.a. Subject of focus in ZNBC's US coverage

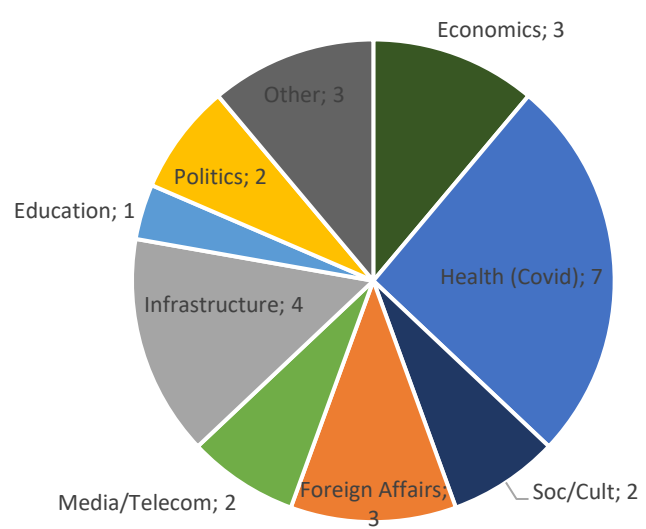


Figure 1.b. Subject of focus in ZNBC's China coverage

Finally, the bar charts (Figure 1.c & Figure 1.d) visualise the news coverage’s tone for each country and whether this coverage is more neutral, positive, or negative. As we can see for China the coverage was mostly positive or neutral. However, for the US the coverage was mostly negative, this is due to articles presenting internal conflicts in American politics and the media representation of Trump and his unpredictability. The articles with a positive tone did include one on how the US was helping Zambia in fighting against Covid-19.

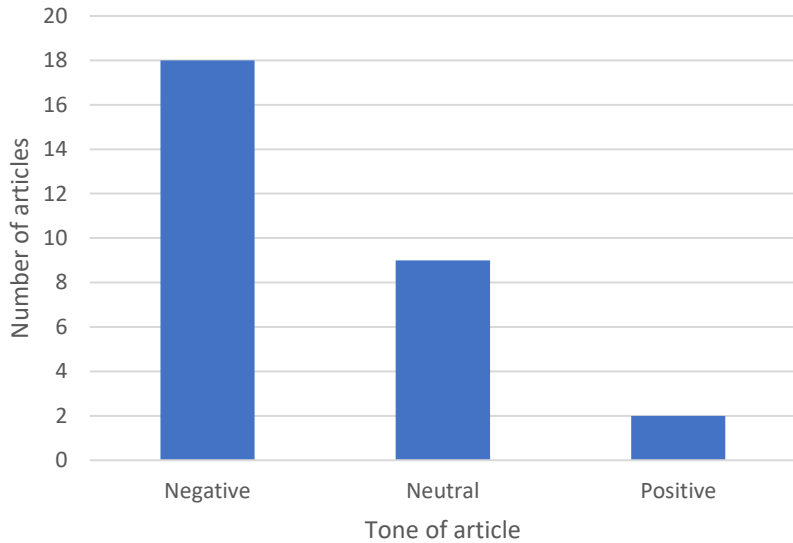


Figure 1.c. Tone of articles in ZNBC’s US coverage

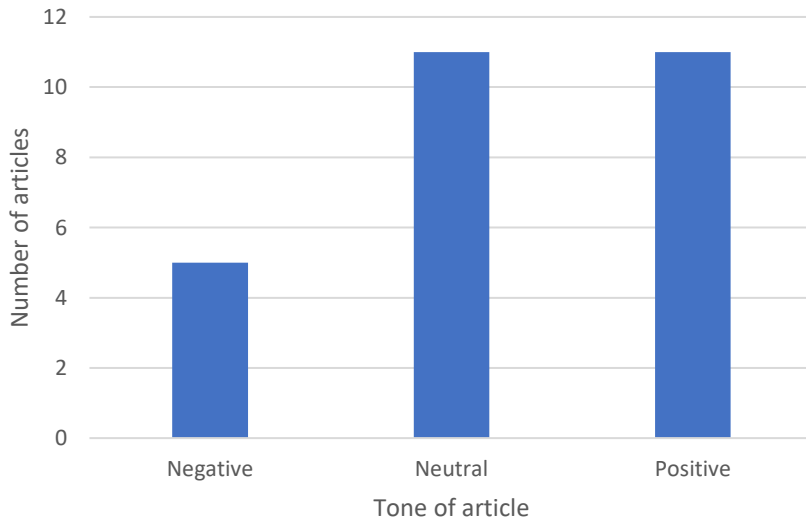


Figure 1.d. Tone of articles in ZNBC’s China coverage

Zimbabwe

US coverage in Zimbabwe in the period February to July 2020 included 55 articles. The average article length was around 674 words with 10 articles over 1,000 words, 24 between 1,000 and 500, and 21 articles below 500 words (Table 2). On the other hand, for China, the coverage included 59 articles. The average word count was approximately 544 words. Only 6 articles had above 1,000 words, whilst 24 had between 500 and 1,000 words and 29 had less than 500 words (Table 3).

Table 3 – Extent of news coverage by length of article (Zimbabwe)

Number of words	US	China
<500	21	29
500-1000	24	24
>1000	10	6

In terms of issues covered, the results for the US and China can be seen in Figure 2.a and 2.b, respectively. Once again, the categories of politics and foreign affairs were very prominent in the US coverage. For China, however, economics joined foreign affairs as the prevailing categories and the coverage on health (including Covid) was few compared to ZNBC's China coverage. Articles having as main subject science and technology topics also constituted an important part of ZBC's coverage of China. These included articles on China's space exploration and accomplishments. Such topics are not addressed at all in coverage of the US.

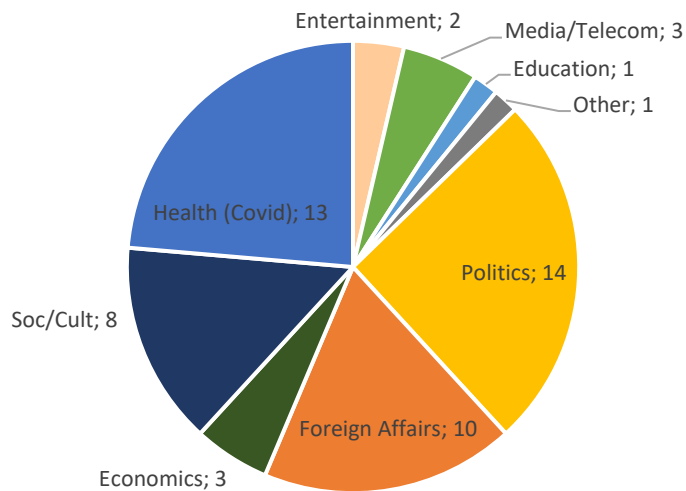


Figure 2.a. Subject of focus in ZBC's US coverage

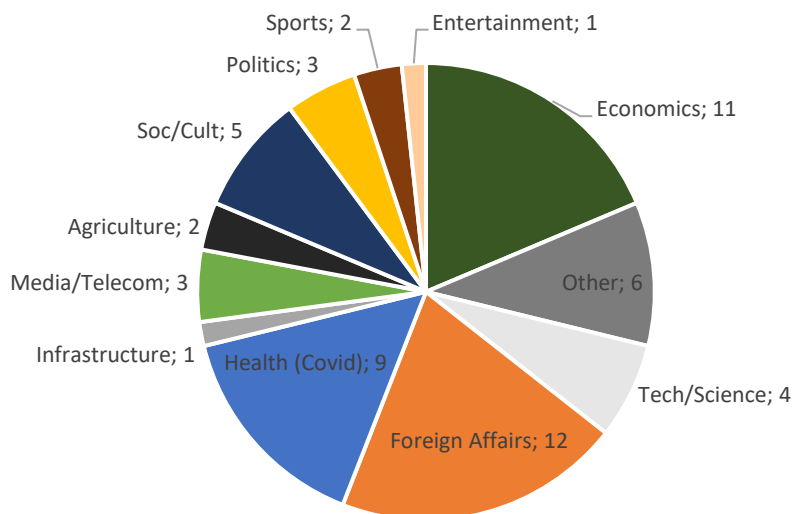


Figure 2.b. Subject of focus in ZBC's China coverage

Regarding the article tone, the bar chart shows the distribution of articles as positive, negative, and neutral (Figure 2.c & Figure 2.d). For the US, the tone of the articles was largely negative. This could be due to the large amount of coverage on Trump and the contradictory and volatile image that the media present of him. There are a lot of topics which question his credibility or capacity to lead a country. Some articles also portray the US as a divided nation where people in power

contradict each other regularly. Discrediting the American leader and presenting the country as divided clearly presents a negative framing of the US. Even more so when we compare it to the coverage of China which is limited to the Hong Kong issue in terms of internal politics and which does not openly discredit leader Xi Jinping. For China, the coverage is largely positive in contrary to the largely neutral coverage found by Nassanga and Makara (2016) in Uganda. Most positive coverage was based on China-Zimbabwe cooperation and on China’s economic accomplishments. Negative coverage related to human rights issues and the Hong Kong protests.

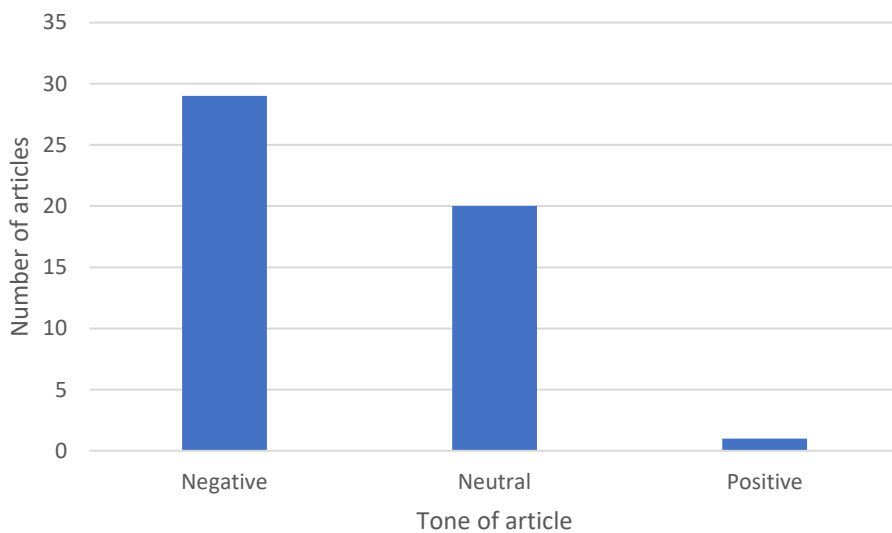


Figure 2.c. Tone of articles in ZBC's US coverage

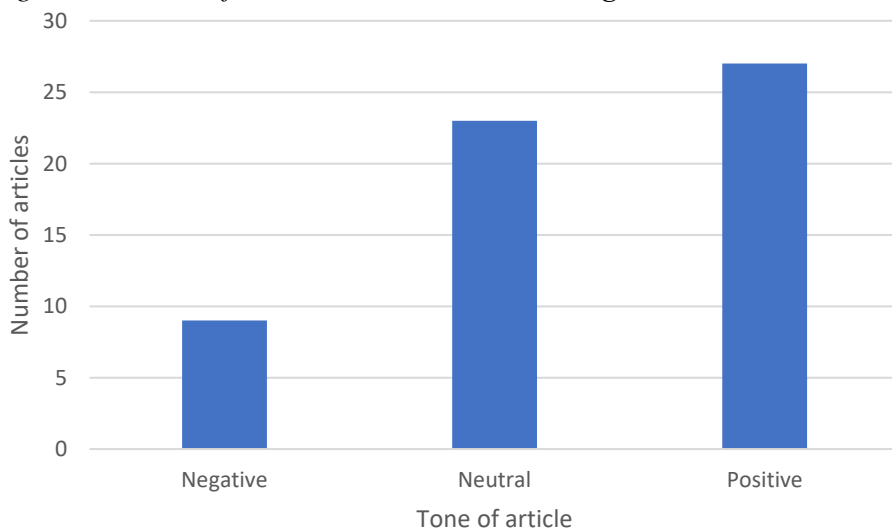


Figure 2.d. Tone of articles in ZBC's China coverage

VI. Implications according to Agenda-setting Theory, Priming and Framing

Using the above theories of priming, agenda-setting and framing and assuming that the coverage of these countries influences what the public thinks about and how they think about an issue, it appears that the US' image both in Zambia and Zimbabwe has received a blow.

Influence on what the public thinks about and how they think about an issue

According to agenda-setting theory and priming, the media shapes what the public think about and how they think about it (Weaver, 2008; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Baum & Groeling, 2009; Iyengar et al., 1982; Gadarian, 2010). Wu (2020) found that the US dominated news coverage in his international news coverage study (p. 121). This matches the findings for Zambia as the US was covered in more articles and the articles were also longer on average. To make this contrast more explicit, articles covering China never went above 1,000 words. In Zambia, we could say that the US' power influence outweighs China's as the amount of media coverage reflects the current state of power relations (Lee & Silva, 2017). In contrast, the picture is more mixed for Zimbabwe. Here, whilst the US has the higher average in article length, China is covered in more articles. Following the idea that more news coverage means a more powerful international presence, we can say that both countries seem to be on equal footing when it comes to their projection of power in foreign media (Lee & Silva, 2017; Wu, 2020). The mixed result for Zimbabwe emphasise this on-going competition of power projection occurring between the two states as international news coverage on China grows. However, these mixed findings also mean it is difficult to know who the public considers a more important presence for them. Thus in terms of the amount of news coverage the picture is quite mixed but translates the presence of the US and China as competing players in international politics.

In turn, this can influence what the public thinks about by presenting them with news on the US and China quite prominently. However, only looking at the amount of news coverage presents a biased picture in favour of the US, in particular for Zambia. Indeed, whilst the US is covered more, the nature of the coverage differs and offers a bleak picture for US influence. This can also impact how people think about the US or about China as they receive information selected by the news agencies (in this case ZBC and ZNBC).

To begin with, China is covered more in relation to Economics and Foreign Affairs, if we put aside the Health (Covid-19) category. This is similar for both Zambia and Zimbabwe, although the ZNBC has Infrastructure as the most prominent type of coverage. This supports the findings by Zhang (2010) when analysing Western media that China is mostly represented in coverage on foreign affairs and world affairs and on economic, trade, finance and business (2010) (p.244). This sets China up as a rising economic power and one increasingly involved in world affairs as a great power. According to Zhang (2010) this makes perfect sense as a rising economic power will be increasingly involved in foreign affairs (p. 248). Thus, this might lead the public to think about China as an economic world player due to the selected coverage they are met with and because of the agenda-setting, priming and framing media effects. For Zambia, the significant presence of articles in the Infrastructure category also shows the capacity of China to build in Zambia as all these articles relate to the building of roads or buildings by Chinese companies in Zambia. This would make the Zambian public very aware of what China is doing in their country and would help raise the salience of infrastructure issues making them more prominent in people's lives.

These findings for China differ from those of the US. For the ZNBC, and excluding the Health(Covid) category, US coverage focuses on Social/Cultural, Media and Telecommunication, Foreign Affairs and Politics. The news on Media and Telecommunication tends to centre around social media and Trump's dislike of Twitter. The most prominent category, Social Cultural centres mostly on the protests around the death of George Floyd and the civil unrest that followed. This category is also present in the ZBC coverage. However, for the ZBC, the political coverage of the US outweighs the coverage on Foreign Affairs. Contrary to China, the US is mostly presented by what is happening within its borders and centres on the internal divisions between society and the state and between politicians themselves. By making this coverage more prominent, the public is likely to give more importance and be more involved with the US' national news due to the agenda-setting and priming mechanisms (Zhang, 2010; Lee & Silva, 2017). This gives off a picture of a divided country to the public which could also bring out the incompetency of the US to get involved abroad. This is particularly so when it is contrasted with portrayal of China as a rising economic power whose presence in Zimbabwe is promoted by the ZBC.

Regarding the tone of the articles, it is important to note that more negative coverage might not mean anti-American bias, it simply means that the articles are more critical (Aday et al., 2005, p.

9). Thus, it would be wrong to assume that ZBC and ZNBC are biased against the US because they present more negative coverage. However, the portrayal of the US as divided, corrupt and presenting incompetent leaders can impact public opinion as the news media tends to frame US coverage in a negative light.

However, the positive coverage of China might lead the public to be more in favour of the country's involvement if they keep getting presented with news articles with titles resembling 'China supports African first ladies fight against the covid-19 pandemic' (Mupoperi, n.d.) . This is strong for Zimbabwe due to the lack of coverage on US-Zimbabwe relationships, which might set the agenda in favour of the China-Zimbabwe relationship in public opinion due to the more prominent news coverage. This is more mixed for Zambia where there is both positive coverage for the China-Zambia relationship and the US-Zambia relationship in one article each. Thus, public opinion might not be affected by this as there is not much difference in prominence between China and the US and their relations with Zambia.

What does this mean for power projection of China and the US in Zambia and Zimbabwe?

Following the idea that the media shapes what the public thinks about and how the public thinks about an issue, media coverage has consequences for power projection. For the US, its economic and political presence on the world stage is reflected in its amount of news coverage as has been shown by Zhang (2010) who highlighted the US as the country most covered in foreign news coverage across the countries studied. However, when it comes to the tone and the topics covered, the US seems to lose traction. The framing of US news coverage in a negative light by news agencies, whilst not an inherent anti-American bias of the news agency, does have consequences for public opinion which could lead to negative views of the US in Zambia and particularly in Zimbabwe. This could limit its ability to exercise its soft power influence in a world where public diplomacy and media representation are increasingly a sign of power projection (Uysal, Schroeder, & Taylor, 2012; Wang, 2008; Wu, 2016).

On the contrary, for China the emphasis on economical feats, space exploration and other forms of innovation posits its projection as an economic and innovative world player. For Zimbabwe, this could be attributed to China's influence in the local media. Most articles with a positive tone are either written by ZBC reporters or taken from a Chinese press agency, like Xinhua (the official news agency of the People's Republic of China). This testifies to the Sino-Zimbabwe relationship

in media processes and China's smart power strategy when it comes to media involvement. The other published articles are sourced from different news agencies ranging from the BBC to Associated Press. However, those written by ZBC reporters often highlight the benefits of the Sino-Zimbabwe relationship and how China has helped the country develop. This helps to confirm that through its smart power strategy and integration of media engagement, China has been able to integrate African media which allows it to portray itself in a positive light and influence the framing mechanisms which occur. The strategy they are using appears to be working as their influence on the media leads to favourable media coverage which influences public opinion and could make the citizens more open to Chinese presence. Thus, their control over their image is beneficial for them to keep a favourable position in Africa as this favourable media coverage can in turn influence public opinion. Whilst both Zambia and Zimbabwe portray China as a major power in international politics, the picture painted in Zimbabwe by the ZBC is much more radical and shows a tipping of the scales towards favouring Chinese presence.

The findings show that whilst the US' power projection seems strong on the amount of coverage, China is taking the lead when it comes to topic and tone of the coverage and is shown as favourable. Whilst the US' national issues, internal issues and controversial leader make up a lot of the coverage, the economic and scientific ambitions of China and its presence abroad are emphasised mostly in a positive light, unless human rights are mentioned.

VII. Limitations

Some limitations are worth noting and will need to be considered for future research. One concerns the representativeness of the data. Indeed, whilst adding 'Trump' and 'Xi Jinping' to the search terms, the prominence of Trump as a public figure and his presence in the news worldwide might bias the results towards negative news coverage. This is due to his controversial presence and ZNBC's use of BBC articles as main sources. The occurrence of the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests in June are also included in the data and might cause bias towards negative coverage due to the image they paint of the US as a decaying democracy. For ZNBC, for instance, articles on this topic were often used from the BBC and included a lot of background information, influencing the article length. Furthermore, whilst bias from the pandemic and the 2020 US elections were filtered through selecting specific months in 2020 when their influence was less felt, these major events might still shape the established categories. For instance, the

‘Health (Covid)’ category had to be added due to the prominence of coverage on Covid-19 and its consequences.

In addition, some structural limitations exist regarding external validity. Whilst the findings above are applicable to the case studies of Zambia and Zimbabwe, looking at the overall views of China and the US in Africa will require case studies for different countries. Indeed, the wide diversity found on the continent and the differences in their present histories, decolonisation and colonisation means each case will have to be considered individually before making any generalisations. Thus, further research will be needed to see if the above pattern is present in other countries. Indeed, the pattern observed for China is different than that observed in Uganda by Nassanga and Makara (2016) as more positive coverage than expected was found for both countries and in particular for Zimbabwe. Due to the lack of research for the US, the findings are not generalisable and further research is needed.

Regarding the sample size, the number of articles depended depending on the time period as the amount of coverage constituted one of the variables to highlight the prominence of China and the US in African media. However, for Zambia, this meant only considering 58 articles in the analysis with 30 for the US and 28 for China. While this appears few and casts doubts on generalisability, the larger number of articles for Zimbabwe presents similar results. Thus, there is a strong indication to say that the results might be generalisable when considering national context as a potential intervening variable. This being said, future research would benefit from looking at longer periods of time to see if the pattern persists when the sample size is increased.

Whilst the relationship between media and public opinion was simplified for this study, it is important to note that the relationship between media, politics and public opinion is more complicated and triangular (Baum & Potter, 2008; Robinson, 2001). Future research should look more closely at the different ways of interactions in specific case studies which would lay bare how much influence the public has on the media in these two countries and how much influence the media has on the public. This could benefit future studies on media effects by providing an outline of the way the media shapes public opinion in a more nuanced way.

VIII. Conclusion

In conclusion, China's strategic media engagement in Africa, echoing a smart power strategy, appears to be a source of potential favourable public opinion on the continent. The US failing to adopt such a strategy is framed in an overall negative light which does not mention its accomplishments but rather its internal divisions and conflicts. On the other hand, both countries present China in an overall positive or neutral light, more so positive for Zimbabwe. The coverage focuses on China's economic and scientific improvements as well as its involvement abroad. Aside from the Hong Kong conflicts, internal politics are not overly mentioned and mostly negatively mentioned only when it comes to human rights violations. Thus, by not integrating a smart power strategy when it comes to public diplomacy and media presence, the US is setting itself up for scrutiny in African public opinion which harms its ability to project its power. However, due to Trump's controversial international image, the question remains as to whether this negative coverage of the US due to its leader will continue with the Biden administration. China's smart power strategy gives it exclusive access to Zambia's and, mostly, Zimbabwe's news media. This enables it to control its image abroad utilising media effect mechanisms which can influence public opinion and give it more access to the local population.

As testified by previous research, this thesis confirms the importance of looking at media to assess power relations, especially in an increasingly digitalised world where online presence and representation rises in importance and public diplomacy and smart power strategies might be the new way to rise to great power status (Duncombe, 2017; Nye, 2011).

These findings have important implications for looking at great power dynamics. Visibly, the media is a valid battleground for exercising and building power. Its potential impact on public opinion can have consequences for the image of the country, and how other countries react to it through foreign policy (Duncombe, 2017; Ernest, 2008; Gadarian, 2010; Wang, 2008; Wu, 2008). Thus, policymakers and diplomats, particularly in the US, need to be aware of the power of public diplomacy and should adapt smart power strategies on this front in the future. Furthermore, the findings are also relevant for journalists as they show the potential for bias in coverage depending on power influence. It is important to be aware of this potential bias, especially if the news coverage claims objectivity.

Moreover, the findings are relevant for academia. Indeed, they confirm and thus solidify existing research all while offering a needed comparative approach. By looking at both Zambia and Zimbabwe, the thesis showed the importance of looking at individual cases, in particular when it comes to observing news coverage. Indeed, there seems to be some variance across countries. However, this variance might also be found at the level of the news agency and depending on specific policy issues (Walgrave et al., 2008). Thus, future research would benefit from looking at the representations of these two countries' different news outlets or across specific issues. It would also be interesting to see the difference between the ZBC or ZNBC and their independent counterparts which do not rely on state funding. Another possible question is to see how this media representation has evolved over time through time-series data as it might help to visualise the developments and observe how media representation has evolved for both China and the US in Africa. Finally, the interpretations made based on the results of this thesis could be verified through a public opinion survey on China and the US with consumers from ZBC and/or ZNBC.

References

- Aday, S. (2010). Chasing the Bad News: An Analysis of 2005 Iraq and Afghanistan War Coverage on NBC and Fox News Channel. *Journal of Communication*, 60(1), 144-164. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2009.01472.x
- Aday, S., Livingston, S., & Hebert, M. (2005). Embedding the Truth: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Objectivity and Television Coverage of the Iraq War. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 10(1), 3-21.
- African Development Bank Group. (2020). *African economy outlook 2021: From debt resolution to growth: the road ahead for Africa*. Retrieved from <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/african-economic-outlook-2021>
- Bailard, C. S. (2016). China in Africa. *The International Journal of Press/politics*, 21(4), 446-471.
- Baum, M. A., & Groeling, T. (2009). Shot by the Messenger: Partisan Cues and Public Opinion Regarding National Security and War. *Political Behavior*, 31(2), 157-186.
- Baum, M. A., & Potter, P. B. (2008). The Relationships Between Mass Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11(1), 39-65.
- Burr, V. (2003). *Social Constructionism*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Buzan, B. (2010). China in International Society: Is 'Peaceful Rise' Possible? *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 3, 5-36.
- China International Development Cooperation Agency. (2018). *Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021)*. CIDCA. Retrieved from http://en.cidca.gov.cn/2018-09/05/c_269593.htm

Chong, D., & Druckman J. N. (2007). Framing Theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10, 103-126.

Constantaras, E. (2016). Visualising China's aid to Africa. Retrieved from

<https://www.chinafile.com/infographics/visualizing-chinas-aid-africa>

Central Intelligence Agency. (2021a, May 04). *The world factbook: Zimbabwe*. CIA.gov.

Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/zimbabwe/>

Central Intelligence Agency. (2021b, May 19). *The world factbook: Zambia*. CIA.gov. Retrieved

from <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/zambia/>

Dijk, T. (1985). *Discourse and communication new approaches to the analysis of mass media*

discourse and communication (Reprint 2011 ed., Research in text theory ; v. 10). Berlin ;

New York: W. de Gruyter.

Duncombe, C. (2017). Twitter and transformative diplomacy: social media and Iran–US

relations. *International Affairs*, 93(3), 545-562.

Ernest, J. W. (2008). Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power. *The Annals of the American*

Academy of Political and Social Science, 616(1), 110-124.

Freedom House. (2021a). Freedom in the World 2020: Zambia. *Freedom House*. Retrieved from

<https://freedomhouse.org/country/zambia/freedom-world/2021>

Freedom House. (2021b). Freedom in the World 2020: Zimbabwe. *Freedom House*. Retrieved

from <https://freedomhouse.org/country/zimbabwe/freedom-world/2021>

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, MISA, & Fesmedia Africa. (2021). *African Media Barometer: A home*

grown analysis of the media landscape in Africa Zimbabwe 2020. Namibia: Friedrich-

Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Fesmedia Africa. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/africa->

[media/17189.pdf](http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/africa-media/17189.pdf)

- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, MISA, & Fesmedia Africa. (2018). *African Media Barometer: A home grown analysis of the media landscape in Africa Zambia 2017*. Zambia: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Fesmedia Africa. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/africa-media/17189.pdf>
- Gadarian, S. K. (2010). The Politics of Threat: How Terrorism News Shapes Foreign Policy Attitudes. *The Journal of Politics*, 72(2), 469-483.
- Gilboa, E. (2008). Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 55-77.
- Goldsmith, B. E., & Horiuchi, Y. (2012). In Search of Soft Power: Does Foreign Public Opinion Matter for US Foreign Policy? *World Politics*, 64(3), 555-585.
- Ikechi-Ekpendu, C. (2016). The role of media in curbing terrorism in Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Management*, 1(9), 32-39.
- Iyengar, S., Peters, M. D. & Kinder, D. R. (1982). Experimental Demonstrations of the 'Not-So-Minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs. *American Political Science Review*, 76(4), 848-858.
- Jere, J. (2020, September 23). Is the world entering a new Cold War?. *ZNBC*. Retrieved from <https://www.znbc.co.zm/news/is-the-world-entering-a-new-cold-war/>
- Lee, A.H.Y & Silva, E.A. (2017). Newspaper representation and power relations in infrastructure projects: a case study of Hong Kong's Express Rail Link. *International Planning Studies*, 22(3), 256-272. doi: 10.1080/13563475.2016.1254600
- Liff, A., & Ikenberry, J. (2014). Racing toward Tragedy? China's Rise, Military Competition in the Asia Pacific, and the Security Dilemma. *International Security*, 39(2), 52-91.

Mupoperi, E. (n.d.). *China supports African first ladies fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.*

ZBC News. <https://www.zbcnews.co.zw/china-supports-african-first-ladies-fight-against-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

Nassanga, G. L., & Makara, S. (2016). Perceptions of Chinese presence in Africa as reflected in the African media: Case study of Uganda. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 9(1), 21-37.

Nye, J. (2011). "What is Power in Global Affairs?" in Nye, J., *The Future of Power* (pp. 3-24). New York: Public Affairs/Perseus Books.

Östgaard, E. (1965). Factors influencing the flow of news. *Journal of Peace and Research*, 2(1), 39-63.

Powlick, P. J., & Katz, A. Z. (1998). Defining the American Public Opinion/Foreign Policy Nexus. *Mershon International Studies Review*, 42(1), 29-61.

Risse-Kappen, T. (1991). Public Opinion, Domestic Structure, and Foreign Policy in Liberal Democracies. *World Politics*, 43(4), 479-512.

Robinson, P. (2001). Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics: Models of Media Influence on Foreign Policy. *European Journal of Communication*, 16(4), 523-544.

Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 9-20

Sheafer, T., Shenhav, S. R., Takens, J., & Van Atteveldt, W. (2014). Relative Political and Value Proximity in Mediated Public Diplomacy: The Effect of State-Level Homophily on International Frame Building. *Political Communication*, 31(1), 149-167.

The World Bank (2018). Individuals using the Internet (% of population) - Zimbabwe, Zambia.

Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?locations=ZW-ZM>

Ursu, A. (2018). How the US lost: China's growing foothold in Africa. Retrieved from

<https://www.clingendael.org/publication/how-us-lost-chinas-growing-foothold-africa>

USAID. (2019). Dollars to results: USAID investments and illustrative results. Retrieved from

<https://results.usaid.gov/results>

Uysal, N., Schroeder, J., & Taylor, M. (2012). Social Media and Soft Power: Positioning

Turkey's Image on Twitter. *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, 5(3), 338-359.

Van Dijk, T. A. (1989). Structures of discourse and structures of power. *Annals of the*

International Communication Association, 12(1), 18-59.

Vreese, C. H. de (2005). News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal +*

Document Design, 13(1), 51-62.

Weaver, D. (2008). Agenda-Setting Effects. In W. Donsbach (Ed.) *The International*

Encyclopedia of Communication. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. doi:

10.1002/9781405186407

Wu, Y. (2016). China's media and public diplomacy approach in Africa: Illustrations from South

Africa. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 9(1), 81-97.

Walgrave, S., Soroka, S., & Nuytemans, M. (2008). The Mass Media's Political Agenda-Setting

Power: A longitudinal analysis of media, parliament, & government in Belgium (1993 to

2000). *Comparative Political Studies*, 41(6), 814-836.

- Wang, Y. (2008). Public Diplomacy and the Rise of Chinese Soft Power. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 257-273.
- Wu, H. D. (2000). Systematic Determinants of International News Coverage: A Comparison of 38 Countries. *Journal of Communication*, 50(2), 110-130.
- Worldometers. (2020). 7 Continents. Retrieved from <https://www.worldometers.info/geography/7-continents/>
- Zhang, W. (2007). Tapping Soft Power: Managing China's "Peaceful Rise" and the Implications for the World. In S. Guo, & S. Hua, Shiping (Eds), *New dimensions of Chinese foreign policy* (pp. 109-131). Lanham, MD: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group.
- Zhang, C., & Wu, R. (2019). Battlefield of global ranking: How do power rivalries shape soft power index building? *Global Media and China*, 4(2), 179-202.
- Zhang, L. (2010). The Rise of China: Media perception and implications for international politics. *The Journal of Contemporary China*, 19(64), 233-254.

Appendix A – Media clause in the China-Africa cooperation plan

Important elements relevant to this thesis are highlighted

5.2 Press and Media

5.2.1 The two sides will establish a China-Africa media cooperation network. China will continue the China-Africa Press Exchange Center program. China will continue to hold training and capacity building seminars for African countries' media officials and journalists, promote more exchanges and mutual visits between Chinese and African media personnel and support more exchange of correspondents by media houses.

5.2.2 China will actively provide technical support and personnel training for the digitization of radio and TV and the development of the industry in Africa. The African side welcomes the investment and cooperation of Chinese enterprises in the building and operation of radio and TV transmission and broadcasting networks and the marketing of programs, and their contribution to local employment and human resources capacity-building.

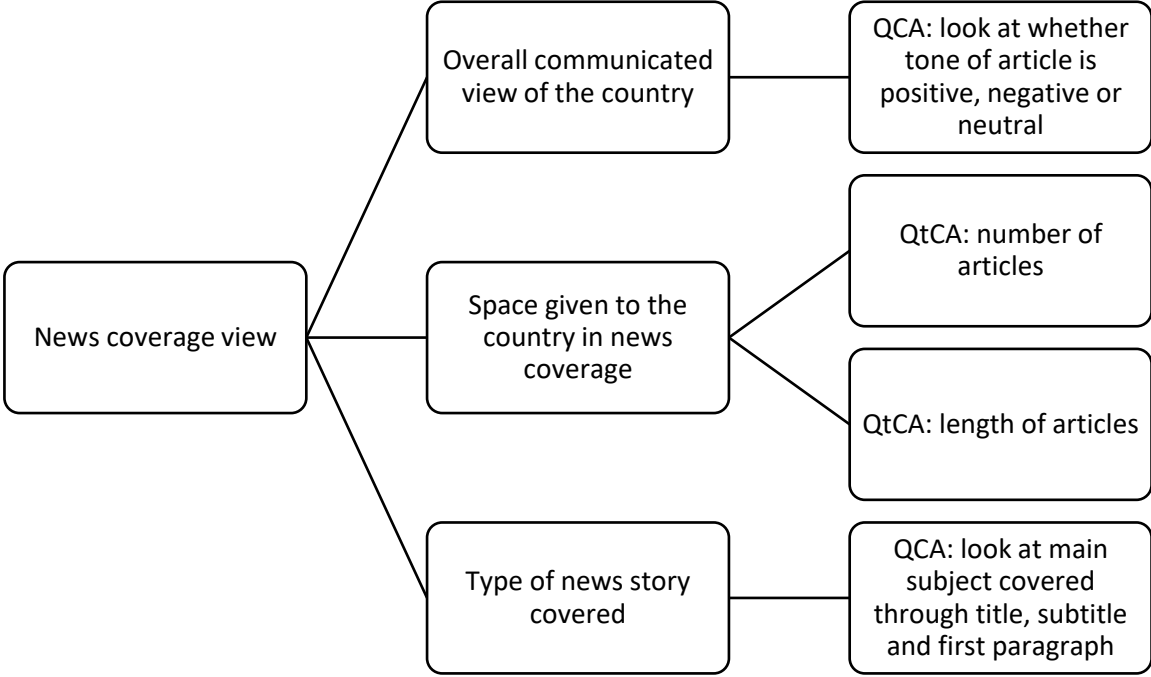
5.2.3 The two sides will provide films and TV programs to each others' national broadcasting agencies. The two sides will explore models for long-term cooperation, continue to participate in film and TV festivals and exhibitions held by the other side, and encourage joint production of documentaries, films and TV programs. China will support African countries' production of TV programs, enhance exchanges with Africa and introduce more African films and TV programs to China.

5.2.4 China will actively promote exchanges and cooperation with Africa in the field of press and publication, carry out cooperation on the publication of books in commonly used African languages, and organize Chinese publishing houses to participate in major African international book fairs. China will encourage donation of Chinese publications and Chinese language textbooks on such topics as health care, agricultural technology, culture, and education by Chinese publishers to renowned public libraries, and libraries of universities and secondary schools in Africa.

Appendix B – Zambia & Zimbabwe Fact Sheet (CIA, 2021a; CIA, 2021b)

	Zambia	Zimbabwe
Geography	Africa, Southern Africa, (Landlocked)	Africa, Southern Africa, (Landlocked)
Capital	Lusaka	Harare
Population	19,077,816	14,829,988
Population growth rate	2.93%	1.94%
Climate	Tropical	Tropical
Area (total)	752,618 km ²	390,757 km ²
Real GDP per capita	\$3,470 (2019 est.)	\$2,836 (2019 est.)
Government Type	Presidential Republic	Presidential Republic
Head of state/Head of government	President Edgar LUNGU	President Emmerson Dambudzo MNANGAGWA
Independence	24 October 1964 (from UK)	18 April 1980 (from UK)
Most prominent ethnic groups	Bemba 21%, Tonga 13.6%, Chewa 7.4%, Lozi 5.7%, Nsenga 5.3% (2010 est.)	African 99.4% (predominantly Shona and Ndebele)
Most prominent religion	Protestant	Protestant (Apostolic)

Appendix C – Overview of Research Design



QtCA = Quantitative content analysis

QCA = Qualitative content analysis

Appendix D – Categories developed by Nassanga and Makara (2016) in their analysis of news coverage of China in Uganda (subject of story focus in the articles)

Education

Media, communication, telecommunication

Soc/Cultural

Infrastructure

Energy

Oil/Minerals

Agriculture

Politics/Foreign Affairs

Environment

Others

*Justification of the modification of categories for this paper:

- Environment: excluded due to lack of articles on the topic and therefore coded as ‘Other’
- Oil/Minerals: lack of articles, 1 article on the topic is mentioned in the category ‘Other’ (ZBC, China)
- Energy: excluded as no articles were found on the topic
- Politics/Foreign Affairs: separated to have a closer look at national vs. international issues and due to the smaller number of articles involved in the study
- Categories added for this study as articles did not match existing categories: Health (Covid), Sports, Entertainment, Economics, Tech/Science

Appendix E – Explanation coding subject/issue covered

Articles were coded in each category depending on the category which came through in the title and in the first paragraph of the article.

Category	Explanation	Example
<i>Health (Covid)</i>	Articles talking about Covid-19 and its consequences on health and medicine, medicine,	ZNBC: “Covid-19: china’s qingdao to test nine million in five days” ZBC: “Flu virus with 'pandemic potential found in China”
<i>Foreign Affairs</i>	Articles addressing political relations between countries (does not included articles talking about Covid-19 aid)	ZNBC: “Afghanistan War: Trump Got Written Briefing On ‘Russia Bounties’, Reports Say” ZBC: “Trump ends preferential economic treatment for Hong Kong”
<i>Politics</i>	Articles relating to national politics of the country, local elections and political conflicts Mention of a politician as subject of the article	ZNBC: “China Parliament Passes Controversial HK Legislation” ZBC: “Biden predicts Trump will try to postpone US election”
<i>Soc/Cult.</i>	Articles looking at social and cultural issues like racism, immigration, civil unrest With dominant voices of civilians or focusing on the social or cultural issue at hand	ZNBC: “George Floyd Death: Trump Threatens To Send Army To Quell Unrest” ZBC: “Divorce, harassment and organ donors: China to debate new civil code”
<i>Media/Telecom.</i>	Articles relating to media, social media, and telecommunication	ZNBC: “WeChat: Judge Blocks US Attempts to ban downloads of Chinese App” ZBC: “Facebook in turmoil over refusal to police Trump's posts”
<i>Entertainment</i>	Articles mentioning a pop culture celebrity in the title or who talk about the film, music, or performance industry	ZNBC: “Spike Lee Calls Trump A ‘Gangster’ After Protests Response” ZBC: “Macau casino tycoon Stanley Ho dies aged 98”
<i>Economics</i>	Articles which address monetary issues, economic performance, aid, sanctions, finance, business, trade	ZNBC: “EAZ Backs Chinese debt deferment” ZBC: “China's economy continues to bounce back from virus slump”

<i>Infrastructure</i>	Articles talking about infrastructural feats or improvements provided by the country	ZNBC: “China geo to work on feeder roads”
<i>Sports</i>	Articles mentioning sports in the title as the main subject or a sports personality	ZNBC: “Deontay Wilder: American Blames Ring-Walk Costume for Tyson Fury defeat” ZBC: “New NBA China boss faces tough task after tweet row, say media”
<i>Agriculture</i>	Articles pertaining to horticulture, farming or livestock	ZBC: “Zim-China Manjin Company ventures into horticulture”
<i>Education</i>	Articles pertaining to education of students from or inside the country	ZNBC: “Zambian Students Return from China” ZBC: “A student Visa Made My American Dream Possible. If Trump Gets His Way, Other International Students Could Be Shut Out”
<i>Other</i>	Any article not pertaining to any of the categories above	ZNBC: “Third Body of Chinese found” ZBC: “Tourism leaders, Chinese envoy back ban of mining in national parks”

Appendix F – Explanation of coding for tone of article coverage

Articles were coded in each category depending on the category where they presented the most elements.

Tone	Characteristics	Examples/Possible Indicators
<i>Positive</i>	<p>Subject: Article demonstrates achievements of US/China or praises their economic capacities or positive aid contributions; or paints country as victim of another country’s behaviour</p> <p>Testimonials/voices: the dominant voice is praising the country and seeks to justify its actions/ rally support for certain policies</p> <p>Language: largely positive, words of praise and positive changes to come, words painting the country as a victim of circumstances or of another country’s behaviour</p>	<p>‘prestigious’; ‘supporting debt suspension’; ‘acted swiftly’; ‘sound relationship’</p> <p>‘China has always firmly supported Zimbabwe’</p> <p>‘friendship between Zimbabwe and China’</p> <p>‘Republicans are pushing for quick action to reassure financial markets’</p>
<i>Negative</i>	<p>Subject: stories of corruption, internal conflicts within country leadership, racism</p> <p>Testimonials/voices: the dominant voice is critical of the country, seeks to undermine it</p> <p>Language: use of strong negative or violent language to describe US or China’s actions and that of their leaders</p>	<p>‘threatened’; ‘accused’; ‘bitter spat’</p> <p>‘The US government has gone rogue at a time of humanitarian emergency’</p> <p>‘under-pressure Trump has blamed the WHO’</p> <p>‘Hong Kong’s sweeping new security law is a frighteningly open-ended tool to suppress political agitation’</p>
<i>Neutral</i>	<p>Subject: stories which stick to the facts</p> <p>Testimonials/voices: All points of view are given equal space in the article, the quotes used are equally integrated in the article and come from varying view points</p> <p>Language: use of factual language, no strong and emotional language, no irony, few adjectives</p>	<p>No emotional language like in the positive/negative categories</p> <p>Equal representation of views/opinions</p>