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China in Africa

China's media image in Zimbabwe: The Case of The Herald and NewsDay

By Blessing Vava

Supervisor: Dr. Bob Wekesa



A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Journalism and Media Studies

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own work submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Journalism and Media Studies. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any form.

Signature…….

Date……

Student Name:…….

Dedication

To my son Cde. Thabo C. Vava.

Acknowledgements

Profound gratitude to the Almighty for making this study a success despite the difficulties. I take this opportunity to salute my parents for the support they have provided over the years. Special mention to my wife, Beatrice (Mai Thabo), for the unwavering support during the course of this project, I would not have reached this far without you, God bless you. To my parents, I extend my gratitude for the support since the start of my academic journey in 1989. I also take this opportunity to thank my supervisor Dr. Bob Wekesa for the rigorous work you went through reading my texts, the valuable feedback comments and guiding this project to reach this far. The Wits Journalism School, Lesley Cowling, Linda, and Ruth Becker to mention just but a few you are amazing. Special mention to the Herald and NewsDay journalists who took time from their busy work schedules to respond to my questions. Revolutionary gratitude to the following people whose valuable input in this project I am forever indebted, Tamuka Chirimambowa, Admire Mare, Trust Matsilele, Terrence Chitapi, Tapera Kapuya, Tinashe Chimedza, Dr. Wallace Chuma, Takura Zhangazha, Gerald Mandisodza, Munjodzi Mutandiri, Mswelanto, and Dr. Ricky Mukonza to mention.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
AMH	Alpha Media Holdings
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
EU	European Union
FOCAC	Forum on China–Africa Cooperation
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MISA	Media Institute for Southern Africa
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
USA	United States of America
ZAMPS	Zimbabwe All Media and Products Survey
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZARH	Zimbabwe Advertising Research Foundation
ZIDERA	Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act
ZIMASSET	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation
ZIMPAPER	Zimbabwe Newspapers

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Abstract

This study investigates China's media image in Zimbabwe. It does so through the lens of two leading newspapers: *The Herald* and *NewsDay* during the intense election campaign period of 2013. It deploys both quantitative and qualitative content analysis of newspaper articles drawn from *The Herald* and *NewsDay* in order to investigate the image of China in the Zimbabwean media. In terms of theoretical underpinnings, it draws from various media and communication theories. These include the broad area of image studies and framing theory to understand the media-constructed image of China before, during and after the 2013 electioneering period. These communication theories are tested and applied as a means of gaining insights into how the media shape images of China in Zimbabwe and in Africa generally. The findings of this study suggests that during this period the media image of China was projected in a more positive light in *The Herald* when compared to the negative images and depictions in the *NewsDay*. It shows that the economic consequence frame dominated the coverage of China thereby portraying the East Asian country as an economic partner, donor, economic saviour, development source and investor in Zimbabwe. The study also reveals that the construction of the media image of China is influenced by an interplay of several factors such as the editorial slant of news producers, economic and political pressures influencing the polarised media environment in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 1

1.0 Introduction

Over the past two decades, China has emerged as a global power thus attracting the attention of developing countries. This is particularly so in Africa where several countries have forged strategic partnerships with the East Asian economic giant. This has led to an increasing interest in the coverage of the Africa-China phenomenon in global, Chinese and African media with an increasing number of scholarly works (Wekesa 2017:11).

The media play a central role in informing the public about what is happening in the world, particularly in with regards to countries for which audiences do not possess direct knowledge or experience (Happer and Philo 2013:321). Since the public does not have a direct personal contact with the events in other countries, the individuals' images of those countries are heavily and unavoidably, media-dependent (Manheimd and Albritto 1984). The news media not only shapes the "perceived importance" of foreign attributes and objects separately but can actually bundle the foreign objects (in this case countries) with attributes and make them "salient in the public's mind simultaneously" (McCombs 1994). For instance, interactions between China and Africa have raised alarm in the media, particularly in the west (Zheng 2010). Mawdsley (2008: 509) observes that despite the many 'favourable' images [that] exist, China's image has been presented negatively in books, plays, comics, films and newspapers.

From a scholarly perspective, the question to pose is: why is the media image of China in Zimbabwe worth our effort? One perspective is that against the background of increased contact between Zimbabwe and China, there is little by way of literature on China's image in Zimbabwe generally, and the media image specifically. Yet, a number of scholars have used media concepts to provide perspectives on the image of one country in another (Shabir, Ali and Iqbal 2011; Yan 1998; Qing, et al. 2009; Uddin 2010; Choi 2010; Merrill 1962; Saleem 2007; Peng 2004). Indeed, the present paper concurs with Li (2012: 173) that the image of a country abroad greatly shapes that country's reputation and can potentially have an influence on its economic, political and cultural associations.

The image of a country abroad – a matter in which media plays a definitive role – has tremendous impact on international relations as it shapes national reputations thereby influencing economic and political considerations (see Li, 2012:173; Merrill 1962:203; Choi 2010:392). From an international relations perspective, national images are of great interest

to governments (Kunczik 1997). Connected to this, the mass media contribute to people's understanding or misunderstanding of each other's country (McNelly and Izcaray 1986 cited in Saleem 2007:130). Seib (1997:42) argues that the media have an indirect effect of getting the attention of the political leaders by influencing public perceptions. There is a large body of literature on national image studies (Feklyunina 2009; Li and Chitty 2009; Li 2012; Wekesa 2012; Mørk 2012; Saleem 2007; (Huang and Leung 2006; Khan and Safder 2010). Li and Chitty (2009:1) argues that perceived images of nations can be identified as the pictures of other nations in the minds of people from the perspective of social psychology. The "pictures in our heads" are seminally explained as "the only feeling that anyone can have about an event he does not experience is the feeling aroused by his mental image of that event" (Lippmann 1922). Kunczik (1997) also argues that the image of a nation takes cognizance of what people recognise (or imagine) when they contemplate that nation. Against this background, it is important to pose the question of the pictures in the minds of Zimbabwean media audiences. These media-crafted images constitute the pursuit of this study.

1.1 Contextual background

The background is important in pursuing the subject of China's image in Zimbabwean media. Zimbabwe-China relations had somewhat waned but were revived after Western countries, particularly the United States of America (USA), and the European Union (EU) imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe. In 2001, the USA government crafted the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA), which sought "to support the people of Zimbabwe in their struggle to effect peaceful, democratic change, achieve broad-based and equitable economic growth and restore the rule of law" (Hodzi, Hartwell and Jager 2012:84). The USA-EU sanctions forced the Zimbabwean government to seek alternative lines of credit for economic recovery with China being a key alternative (Moyo and Mdlongwa 2015:77). As relations with the West soured, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe famously announced what came to known as the "Look East Policy", essentially a turn away from the West and towards oriental powers such as China and Malaysia (Maroodza 2011; Chun 2014; Moyo and Mdlongwa 2015; Youde 2007; Mudavanhu 2014; Hodzi, et.al 2012; Zhang, Wasserman and Mano 2016; Mbanje et.al 2011). He said: "We have turned east, where the sun rises and given our back to the west, where the sun sets" (Maroodza 2011:2). In support of the "Look East Policy", the Zimbabwean state media reported the upswing in the Zimbabwe-China relations in favourable terms while at the same time castigating supposedly "illegal Western sanctions' for Zimbabwe's poor economic performance (Hodzi, Hartwell and Jager 2012:87; Youde 2007:14; Mapaure 2014:16; Chun 2014:16). As the relations tightened on the economic and

political fronts, China's presence in Zimbabwe drew the attention of the media (Maunganidze, Chiyadzwa and Tobias 2013:76; Zhang, Wasserman and Mano 2016:2).

This brief background is important for this study because it demonstrates that the relations between China and Zimbabwe do not arise out of a historical vacuum but are undergirded by a past that informs the present.

1.2 Objectives of the study

This study seeks to fill the gap on the subject of Africa-China media and communications field, thereby providing an understanding of how China is framed in Zimbabwe from the editorial prisms of *The Herald* and *Newsday*. As a result, this study adds an important dimension on national image construction. The specific objectives are to:

- Investigate the media image of China in Zimbabwe before, during and after the electioneering period
- To examine the political and economic factors that influence the construction of the Chinese image in the Zimbabwean media
- To compare and contrast the portrayal of China by state media and private media on the to make of deductions on the interests of different political economic forces impacting the Zimbabwean press

1.3 Research problem and Justification

The study focuses on China's media image as discerned from the Zimbabwean print media during the 2013 election period. Instructively, the media image is distinct from other images, say images generated by individuals without relying on the media. As periods of intense contestation in the public sphere, electioneering brings into sharp focus matters of public interest including not least those to do with of foreign relations of which the Zimbabwe-China engagement is a case in point here.

The present study is motivated by the fact the past Zimbabwean election campaign periods have been critical moments as they occasioned foreign policy pronouncements. In the past, the West has been castigated for 'imposing' sanctions on Zimbabwe, on the one hand, while on the other hand, favourable sentiments are often expressed about the ostensibly salutary role of oriental powers such as China. For instance, an article written on February 12, 2005, in the now defunct *Daily Mirror* but archived on the *African Files* website had reportage on Mugabe's campaign rally: "What I have been saying today is contained in this manifesto and it will provide the guidelines on how we will govern after the elections," he said. He

castigated Western countries for imposing sanctions on Zimbabwe and said the government would maintain its "Look-East" policy instead. "The sun rises in the east as we wake up while it sets in the west as we sleep. The West will make you sleep while the East will make you rise, that is why we have adopted the "Look East" policy" (*Daily Mirror* 2015). China's role in Zimbabwe's previous electoral processes is well documented. In the run up the 2005 elections, China provided campaign material that included, T-shirts bearing ZANU-PF logos and the Chinese companies reportedly provided devices that were used against jamming signals of Zimbabwean opposition radio stations, (Eisenman and Kurlantzick 2006:223). Scholars also argue that China's role in Zimbabwe "complicate[d] democratic consolidation and good governance.'' Interestingly, China was the only international power to endorse the outcome of a violent and controversial re-election of Mugabe in 2005 (Eisenman and Kurlantzick 2006:223).

Therefore, campaigns constitute an invaluable platform for re-emphasizing Zimbabwe's cordial relations with China. In some cases, ZANU-PF has referred to China, as Zimbabwe's 'all weather' friend. Counter-positions have also arisen from opposition parties and civic groups who criticise China for spawning all manner of ills (Hodzi, Hartwell and Jager 2012:94). During the run-up to Zimbabwe's general election in 2013, the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) used an economic recovery blueprint, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) as its key campaign message which was launched just before the plebiscite (Matutu 2014:8). The blueprint was in part, predicated on an anticipated financial bailout from China among other countries in order to resuscitate the economy (Chun 2014:9).

Sections of the private media reported that ZANU-PF's election campaign was partly China-funded, with the party for instance ostensibly receiving one million campaign T-shirts from the Chinese government (Ndlovu 2013). President Mugabe told his central committee that China had given them money and vehicles for campaigning (Chitemba 2013). Moreover, a Zimbabwean newspaper quoted an anonymous army intelligence source alleging Chinese bankrolling of the Mugabe campaign (Sibanda 2013). ZANU-PF's electoral triumph was attributed to Chinese financial support (Tafirenyika 2014). The opposition, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) on the other hand, is perceived to be pro-West. According to Tendi (2013:964), Mugabe sees Morgan Tsvangirai and the MDC-T as 'puppets of the west' seeking to reverse the legacy of Zimbabwe's liberation war. "Rather than a 'Look East' policy, Morgan Tsvangirai (the MDC-T leader) has clearly in recent years cultivated a 'Look West' policy". For better or worse, he is seen as very closely allied with Britain and America". Be the case as it may, the ZANU-PF won the 2013 elections and thereafter, there

was a notable increase in interactions between Zimbabwe and China, marked by a flurry of state visits either way (Matingwina 2016).

From the foregoing, elections bring to the fore a clash of ideas and no less is the question of the role of China in Zimbabwe. Election periods and particularly the 2013 electioneering provide an ideal juncture to investigate the portrayal of China in Zimbabwe based on media framing. Significantly, Zimbabwe will be holding general elections in 2018 and already the government of Zimbabwe has indicated that it will only invite countries with good relations with Zimbabwe are welcome to observe the elections (Ndlovu 2017). The current study can therefore, serve as a bellwether on the anticipated role of China in the forthcoming elections and the perceptions thereof. Moreover, the theoretical and methodological framework established for the current paper can be applied to other studies in multiple ways: investigation of the images of countries other than China in Zimbabwe, investigation of China's and other countries images in Zimbabwe in past elections and the study of foreign countries images in other African countries.

1.4 Research question(s)

The main purpose of this study is to investigate China's media image in Zimbabwe. The study will address this by answering the following questions

(1) What is the media image of China in Zimbabwe?

(2) What are the similarities and differences between *The Herald* and *NewsDay* regarding the image of China in Zimbabwe?

1.5 The media landscape in Zimbabwe

It is important to understand the Zimbabwean media ecology as a prerequisite to the analysis. The Zimbabwean print media landscape is polarised and divided into two distinct poles; controlled state-owned and privately owned media. Despite Zimbabwe adopting a new constitution in March 2013, the country's media environment remains contested space with suppression and curtailment of press freedoms (Freedom House, 2016). Journalists, who report 'negatively' about the government are often harassed, threatened and sometimes imprisoned (Mpofu and Chimhenga 2013:83; Media Institute of Southern Africa-Zimbabwe 2016). The country is yet to align its laws with the new constitution that was adopted as the country's supreme law in March 2013. Repressive laws such as the Access to Information and the Protection of Privacy Act (2002) and the Public Order and Security Act (2001) are still being used to curtail media freedoms and the work of journalists (Chuma 2010:56).

1.6 The state owned media

The Zimbabwean government through its Minister of Information is in charge of all public media institutions in the country. According to MISA-Zimbabwe (2016), the state-controlled Zimbabwe Newspaper (Zimpapers) group is the largest media owner. Zimpapers is the oldest publisher of newspapers in Zimbabwe, dominating the industry for almost 120 years. There is interference in the editorial space by the minister of information that is in charge with overall management of state-media vests giving leeway for a hands-on approach in controlling editors and the content (Chuma, 2010:55). The state, through Zimpapers, controls the major print newspapers, namely, *The Chronicle* and their weekend versions *The Sunday Mail* and the *Sunday News* (Mukasa, 2003:177). Zimpapers gets most of the government advertising and it exists to propound the state information policy. Chuma (2010:56) cites the dismissal of five editors (including deputy editors) from *The Herald* and other Zimpapers publications in 2003, which include *The Sunday Mail, Sunday News* and *The Chronicle,* as they were perceived as not aggressive enough in their defence of the government and the ruling party.

1.7 The Herald

The Herald is published six days a week from Monday to Saturday. In a survey, Zimbabwe All Media and Products Survey (ZAMPS, 2013), *The Herald* was the most read daily newspaper in Zimbabwe with 266,884 readers, three-quarters being people in urban areas. This high circulation, in addition to its being the platform of choice for Government and ZANU-PF communication informs its selection for analysis on Chinese image perspectives in Zimbabwe.

1.8 The Privately Owned Press

1.8.1 The *NewsDay*

The dominant player in the privately owned press is Alpha Media Holdings (AMH) established in 1996, and which has four newspapers in its stable namely; *The Zimbabwe Independent* (weekly business weekly published Fridays), *The Standard* (weekly general news published Sundays), and the *NewsDay* (daily general news) and Southern Eye (daily general news targeting the southern part of Zimbabwe). All these newspapers have online editions. The focus of this study is the *NewsDay*, which was established in 2010 among other factors because in the period under study, it was the second most circulated daily newspaper in Zimbabwe with a readership of 146 807 (ZAMPS, 2013). The private press also has other

players, namely notably, Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ) which publishes *The Daily News,* and *The Daily News on Sunday* and the *Financial Gazette* both being weekly newspapers. However, The *Daily News* was omitted because the study's primary focus was on the two mostly circulated newspapers in 2013 and because the online version does not have an archive for the stories that appeared in 2013. Chuma (2010) observes that the private press focuses mainly on providing dissenting opinions from civil society and aligning with special interest groups that are unanimously anti-government.

The two daily newspapers *The Herald* and *Newsday* constitute a purposive sample of this particular study. They are used to assess the construction of the national image of China in the Zimbabwean media. It is assumed that the coverage of these daily national newspapers would generally reflect the portrayal of China by the rest of the newspapers in Zimbabwe, which is dominated by state and private ownership. Although there have been studies on the media coverage of China in both the state-owned and private newspapers in Zimbabwe before (Maunganidze, Chiyadzwa and Tobias, 2013; Maroodza 2011; Zhang, Wasserman and Mano 2016; Matingwina 2016), no study has been conducted focusing on the media image of China in the specific circumstances of an election campaign period. Furthermore, there is no study explicitly probing the question of a media-shaped image of China in Zimbabwe. The election period is a time of intense media reporting thus potentially providing an ideal context for the observation of China-related issues and ultimately China's media image in Zimbabwe. The study investigates the construction of the national image in two newspapers, with the primary goal being to find out about the media image of China in Zimbabwe before, during and after the electioneering period. The study compares and contrasts the portrayal of China by state media and that of the private media in Zimbabwe. The above background of the media landscape in Zimbabwe is therefore important for setting the context in order to examine the ideological and structural forces behind the construction of the China image.

The following sections will discuss the historical connection between China and Africa, ultimately China-Zimbabwe relations to get insights of the diplomatic, cultural, political and economic relationship of the two countries.

1.9 China in Africa

According to Renard (2011:6), the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 made China to take a renewed interest in other developing countries, like Africa in particular after the Bandung Conference. Renard (2011:7) posits that this "conference was aimed at promoting Afro-Asian economic, cultural cooperation and opposing colonialism." China has

grown and developed over the last twenty years to become a global economic powerhouse, emerging as one of the largest exporter of manufactured goods attracting the attention of many developing countries (Renard 2011:7). He argues that, "China has served as a development model for Africa and an alternative source of trade and finance from Africa's traditional development partners" in particular, the West. Hodzi, et.al. (2012) postulate that the increased economic, development relations between China and many African nations have elicited hope around the continent that Beijing would present competition and alternatives to Western partnerships, but it has also led to widespread scepticism. Equally, (Mørk 2012:1) highlights how China is competing with western nations both as aid providers and as agents of business in Africa. Mørk (2012:1) notes that some scholars claim that China's increased involvement on the African continent has contributed to a media discourse giving China a widely exaggerated image as the new imperialists of Africa. Cooperation between China and Africa has been strengthened by the launch of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in October 2000, a 'vehicle for promoting China-Africa friendship and cooperation' (Hodzi, Hartwell, and Jager 2012:179).

1.9.1 China-Zimbabwe's historical ties

China and Zimbabwe relations can be traced as far as 600 years back, during the Ming and Qing dynasty. It was the era when the Chinese engaged the Munhumutapa Empire in areas of trade and cultural exchange (Chun 2014:5). However, Chun (2014:5) notes that China's contemporary interactions with Zimbabwe were initiated with its support of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle, when China helped the Zimbabwe African Union (ZANU), one of the movements that fought the liberation struggle in the early 1960s. BBC Monitoring International services 2015 report quotes Mugabe (as cited in Youde 2007:14) as saying: "A few years back, we changed course and declared a "Look East" policy. It is a policy rooted in our struggle. Let it not be forgotten that, with the exception of the former Soviet Union, the material assistance that helped us liberate this country came from China. It was the so-called Red World and not the pretentious Free, and they call it Christian, World that helped us win our freedom and regain our liberties.'' Against this historical background, Chun (2014:5) argues that the support of the liberation struggle laid the foundations of the current relationship between China and President Robert Mugabe's government. After Zimbabwe attained independence, the two countries established official diplomatic ties between the two countries were established immediately after Zimbabwe's independence on April 18, 1980 (Eisenman 2005). Since 1980, the two countries strengthened their relations through loans and projects, with China constructing hospitals, the National Sports Stadium and President

Mugabe's state visits to China (Youde 2007; Chun 2014; Moyo and Mdlongwa 2015; Matingwina 2016). Symbolic gestures have gone as far as the Chinese Embassy hosting President Mugabe's 86th birthday during which he emphasized the strong relations between the two countries. Mugabe is on record as having said: "We treasure this friendship. It is not really the relations that count; but the love, alliance and understanding" (Moyo 2010). However, some scholars are of the view that the political and diplomatic ties between the two countries have not translated into greater economic benefits despite the media reportage of massive economic deals (Chun 2014:6). As alluded to, earlier that Zimbabwe's decision to Look East was because of the souring relations with the West. A policy briefing paper titled *The 'Look East Policy'* of Zimbabwe now focuses on China explains: "In this context, China presents a series of features that make it very attractive to the current government of Zimbabwe. China is already an important economic partner for Zimbabwe since it is the single most important importer of Zimbabwean tobacco. China's recent economic success has made the Chinese economy an important provider of foreign direct investment so much need in Zimbabwe'' (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 2004:10). While the Zimbabwean government has tried to overplay the relationship with China the policy briefing observes that it is quite difficult to capture the motivation of China's receptive engagements with Zimbabwe. The report suggests that: ''There is presumably a mix of interest, some of which are specific to Zimbabwe but others are related to a broader strategy of the Chinese authorities towards the region and Africa as a whole. China's economic development depends on importation of most minerals, energy products and agricultural commodities. Whilst Zimbabwe can provide exports in two of these three categories, it is not key to Chinese economic interests in Africa,'' (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 2004:10).

Hodzi, Hartwell and Jager (2012:88) further argue that the Zimbabwe-China relations are problematic as the negotiations between the two countries are shrouded in secrecy and largely kept out of the public eye, and hence it is difficult to distinguish between the commercial deals and development cooperation inclined deals. This historical background enable us to understand the increasing interest of China in Zimbabwe over the past years in relation to how the economic, diplomatic relations have unfolded and their influence in the construction of the images and perceptions.

1.9.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the background information to the study and a description of the problem statement. It has also outlined the objectives of the study and the research questions. It has provided justification and significance of the study, research scope, and limitations.

The next Chapter will discuss the historical background, the key players in the framing of China in Africa, and the Chinese media's agenda in Africa, the key scholarly arguments and characteristics of Chinese media in Africa.

Chapter 2: Literature review and Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

The study aims to find the media image of China in the Zimbabwean daily press by analysing content contained in newspapers. The study is located in the field of media and communications in a constructivist approach to China-Africa news. This chapter will draw literature from the broad field of which there are many media and communication theories comparing it to Zimbabwe with an idea to ascertain if the same findings are applicable to this study. The literature review will explore image studies, the framing theory, and how nation's image is portrayed or framed in a foreign country.

2.2 Media and national image studies

A national image is created, gained and changed by different factors mainly as a result of peoples' reaction to elements such as media representation and international relations (Choi 2010:392). The complexity of a national image is captured by Peng (2004:53) "national image is the product of a complex historical process involving the interplay of many factors, such as the political and social realities of a particular country, diplomatic relations, and changes in the international political and economic spheres as well as symbolic representations in the mass media and popular culture."

In the same vein, Saleem (2007:130) points out that the "mass media play a crucial role in constructing the image of various societies and their peoples." Many national images studies often quote Lippmann (1922) to the effect that "images are the pictures in people's heads" (cited in Xiufang and Chitty 2009:1). In the case of China, there are contradictions between proclamations of its developing country status while at the same time projecting the image of an elite nation as well as underlying predisposing factors that work against optimal image construction (Fook and Catherine 2010). Can such factors lead to inferiority and superiority complexes in the minds of African audiences against the reality of such views that have habituated in Africa's relations with the West? Smith (as cited in Choi 2010:392) further states that in framing and creating the national image of a country, the media usually use "catch phrases, pictures, special words, and metaphors.'' Saleem (2007:136) agrees that the "image of a country" in the media is analysed through the language used by media, such as words, phrases, metaphors, sentences and adjectives (Saleem 2007:136). Scott's 1965 paper titled *Psychological and Social Correlates of International Images* highlight that the ''image of a nation comprises three layers: cognitive attributes (the perceived characteristics of the

nation), affective attributes (the liking or disliking of the object), and action attributes (the responses to the object)'' (cited in Li and Chitty 2009:5).

Alexander and Levin's 2005 study (cited in Li and Chitty 2009:2) argue that "the images or stereotypes that a nation has of another depend on three structural features of interstate relations: goal compatibility, relative power/capability, and relative cultural status, or sophistication. These structural relations will determine the sort of images that are classified as; "ally, enemy, barbarian, imperialist, and dependent (colonial) images" (Li and Chitty 2009:2). According to Yan (1998:48), a media image about a nation is a complex process, "the way language is used in news reports by journalists conceals a political agenda preferred by the status quo, and that the market has an influence in the news."

National images are concurrently national perception matters. Gadzala and Hanusch (2010) indicate that positive perceptions of China are more common but negative perceptions not too far behind. Their valuable quantitative contribution is based on a survey of 17 African countries and their hypotheses merit a full blown analysis (Gadzala and Hanusch 2010: 1) The greater the levels of Chinese foreign direct investment in African states, the greater the level of African support for Chinese involvement in the continent 2) Increasing levels of Chinese imports into Africa negatively impact upon African popular perceptions of the Chinese 3) Africans are more likely to express unfavourable views of the Chinese if they attach particular importance to matters of human rights (and) Africans who express concern over matters of human rights are more likely to favour Western as opposed to Chinese involvement in respective states 4) Africans are more likely to express negative views if they are supportive of democracy. Gadzala and Hanusch's (2010) findings of positive image tie with those of Wasserman (2011) but more importantly also dispute the dichotomous view of China as either expressly negative or positive but rather a blend of both positive views on matters economic and negative perceptions on matters political, but with the former taking the lion's share on the scale (see Wekesa 2012).

The importance of a national image study vis-à-vis the complex relations between the two countries will proffer a deeper understanding of China's media image in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the media image of China in Zimbabwe can be analysed by looking at the "words, phrases, metaphors, sentences and adjectives," as presented by the headlines of the two newspapers: *The Herald* and *NewsDay*. While exploring the media image of China in Zimbabwe, it is significant to consider the findings of other studies on national image portrayals. Liu (2009) concludes that the economic rise of China is the single most important issue motivating negative portrayal in the US media. Another factor that Liu's (2009) study

finds is that China's status as the only powerful communist country after the collapse of USSR and the perception that it (China) has superpower ambitions is another factor for negative portrayal.

The observation by Liu agrees with previous studies that reveal cultural and ideological biases in US media (Peng 2004). The negative portrayal of China is based on historical and cultural complexities of Chinese societies. In the same study, he alludes that on sources, the American media relies more on US diplomats, political dissidents and businesspersons in China and other in manufacturing a stereotyped opinion of China (Peng, 2004). However, the majority of the studies on national images were conducted during the 1970s and 1980s and they were aimed at finding out how the media in the Western countries portrayed Third World nations (Wei 2012:4). Wei (2012) highlights that in the 1990s and 2000s; much of the studies, especially on the image of China in foreign newspapers maintained a negative stance. Choi (2010) found that the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* shaped the national image of North Korea negatively, framing the country "through evil, enemy, blackmailer, and poor country images" Choi (2010). Wang (2003) in National image building and Chinese foreign policy found variances and convergences about China's projected image and perceptions in the US. Some of the findings are: China as a socialist country, China as both a developing country and major power, China as exhibiting hegemonic behaviours, China as an aggressor in the Asia-Pacific region, etc. Conversely, Wang (2003:6) points out the projected image of China as a peace-loving nation, as a victim of aggression and international co-operator, among other images. As such, Wang (2003) advises that the best route to Chinese image building via foreign policy is to follow words with deeds. Overall, studies on the portrayal of foreign countries in the U.S. media usually follow the government policy line to protect U.S. interests in foreign policy issues (Saleem 2007; Choi 2010). It would be interesting to find out whether the image of China in Zimbabwean media would follow in the same path as the conclusions of Peng and Choi's studies.'

2.3 The image of China in African media

The media coverage of China in African media is varied. As Jiang et al. (2016:3) point out, "there have been positive reports about the Chinese economic expansion, as well as a great deal of criticism regarding the attitude of Chinese entrepreneurs and workers in Africa." They show that corruption, lack of transparency in contracting, environmental crime stories of poaching, corruption and illegal logging dominate the coverage (Jiang et al. 2016:3). In elaborating, the frames that dominate China's engagement with Africa, Olorunnisola and Ma (2013:54) identify the partner frame, which mainly depicts China's role in Nigeria and Africa as that of an investor,

while the new power frame is depicted in the China vis-à-vis traditional Western powers perspective. Interestingly, Lim (2012:555) finds that the coverage by African newspapers framed China in a positive light ignoring the anti-Chinese sentiment in Africa. The study also highlights how newspapers like *Times of Zambia*, carried stories urging the then President Michael Sata to abandon his anti-Chinese sentiment for Zambians' national interest (Lim 2012:555). Lim's study seems to run counter to some of the studies that have found both negative and positive framing of China in African media. However, a study conducted in South Africa (Wasserman 2012:351) suggests that China cannot be entirely portrayed either in a 'starkly positive or starkly negative light.' Wasserman (2012:351) argues that the overall balance in the coverage may suggest an understanding that China's role in Africa cannot be pigeonholed as either a "bad" or "good" news story. He also predicted that South Africa's association with China as a partner country in the BRICS formation might result in the media shaping positive coverage of China in the future. Scholars (Wekesa, 2012; Emeka, 2013) have focused on the content analysis of newspapers to understand the media coverage of China in East and West Africa respectively. For instance, Wekesa (2012:33) shows that China is generally seen in a positive rather than a negative light. He concurs with Wasserman (2012) that there is a more or less balanced image of China with interplay of positive and negative frames and the margin between positive and negative framing not being too wide. Emeka (2013:75) found that China's engagement with Nigeria was predominantly framed as a mutual and win-win partnership rather than an exploitative partnership.

Drawing on the national image concepts cited above as well as empirical findings from media framing studies, the current seeks to find out if China's media image in Zimbabwe convergences or diverges from findings from media in other African countries.

2.4 China's image in the Zimbabwean media

Maunganidze, Chiyadzwa and Tobias (2013:76) posit that the private media in Zimbabwe adopted a negative stance towards China likening her to Zimbabwe's new colonial master, whereas the state media acted as a 'spokesperson' of China through their positive coverage. The study gave examples of two headlines carried by both the state-owned and privately owned newspapers: "*China ain't colonising Zimbabwe", The Herald*, October 1, 2012, and, "*Chinese ill-treating workers", NewsDay*, March 21, 2011. Zhang, Wasserman and Mano (2016:17) showed similar results with the positive public coverage by the media of the Sino-Zimbabwe relations mentioning that ''China is not only enjoying a more significant presence in the Zimbabwe public media but also a much more favourable image." The same study revealed however that private media were critical of the China, referring to the relationship as "exploitative" and long on trade but short on investment, with others describing the Chinese

as “slave drivers and cruel employers who demand excessive work from workforces, without bothering to improve their working conditions and remuneration.” Another study by Matingwina (2016) revealed that coverage from *NewsDay* portray a mistrust of China with stereotype images of China in Africa.

Although works on Zimbabwe-China media engagements have touched on China’s media image, none of them have focused on the media-framed images. However, building on these studies serves as a contribution that broadens and enriches the Africa-China media scholarship, thereby providing slightly different lenses for understanding the construction of national images in a polarised media environment.

2.5 Insights into the framing theory

The term “frame” is a popular phenomenon in the media and communications field particularly popular in and out of scholarship because of it essential makes sense of a situation or event and how it is perceived. From a psychological perspective, Minsky (1974) defines a frame as “a template or data structure that both organises various bits and pieces of information and is indicated by more concrete cognitive elements.” Entman (1993:51) adds: “Analysis of frames illuminates the precise way in which influence over a human consciousness is exerted by the transfer (communication) of information from one location to that consciousness.”

Sociologists Modigliani and Gamson (1986: 143) definition of a frame as the central organising idea or story line that provides meaning to events related to an issue has been widely cited in framing studies. The significance of their contribution is that they delineate five approaches in which frames can be used in news production namely; metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions and visual images (cited in Pan and Kociski 1993). According to Watson (2007:107) “frames make an apt metaphor for media because of their variety, and in part, because they are imprecise – allowing us a degree of flexibility of definition and use.” Hence, the notion that frames provide us with a big opportunity makes us have this feeling of imprecision and that has made researchers conceptualise the theory.

As a result, a deep interaction with the literature on framing can enable us to systematically access and make deductions to the relevant aspects of the contemporary issues related to China-Africa media and communication engagements and the future of such relations.

Scholars, Vreese, Peter, and Semetko (2001:108) illustrate the distinct variations to frame analysis of news as specific and generic. They explained: ‘’Issue-specific frames pertain to

specific topics or news events, whereas generic frames are broadly applicable to a range of different news topics, some even over time and, potentially, in different cultural contexts. An issue-specific approach to the study of news frames allows for investigation of the framing of particular events in great specificity and detail. It may capture specific aspects of selection, organisation, and elaboration that are present in news coverage and pertain specifically to a well-defined issue.'' In that explanation, they referred to specific frames such as 'specific' events and issues with the US national budget deficits as an example of issue-specific frames and the Gulf War as event-specific. Further, (citing Iyengar 1991) they illustrated the generic frames into "episodic" and "thematic" and "strategic" or "game" frame in election periods (citing Cappella and Jamieson, 1996, 1997). For instance, the "game" frame, where candidates in US elections are embodied as 'horses' in a 'horserace' and the same can be referenced to the US-China relations where the US is metaphorically seen as the eagle and China as the Dragon; the fodder for newspaper cartoons (Wekesa 2012).

The significance of Vreese, Peter and Semetko's (2001) frame segmentation for the present paper is that categorization or typology of frames can itself be an extensive enterprise and therefore problematic.

Framing in the media refers to the manner in which information is presented to the audiences (Cissel 2012:68). According to Goffman (1974:21) frames allow the user to "locate, perceive, identify and label" a seemingly infinite number of occurrences. Goffman (1974) refers to framing as "the process in which people create frames for the discursive classification, organisation, and interpretation of their daily social interactions and experiences." Kaufman, Elliott, and Shmueli (2003) explain that, "The word 'frame' can be used both as a verb (to frame) and as a noun (a frame). As a noun, frame denotes the boundary within which the whole picture is displayed (similar to a frame placed around a picture or painting), and is used as a tool for interpreting and understanding the perceptions and underlying objectives of the various actors in a conflict. As a verb, framing refers to the creation of frames, either from a simple reading of the situation or through a deliberate, analytic, or strategic process. Chong and Druckman (2007:104) posit, "Framing is also a process by which the audiences develop a certain conceptualisation of an issue or re-orient their thinking about an issue".

A frame raises the ostensible prominence of certain ideas, "activating schemas that encourage target audiences to think, feel, and decide in a particular way" (Entman 2007:164). Mørk (2012:3) argues that to a certain extent, news frames usually highlight certain pieces of information about an item, which is the subject of communication, and at times making them more noticeable or salient. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) argue that frames are used to

identify trends. Scholars use frames to identify the trends in issue definitions, at the same time comparing variations and coverage across the many types of media.

2.5.1 Framing theory concepts

That framing is a preeminent field in communication studies is incontestable. Benford and Snow (2000) have labelled its sometimes-uncritical usage as "a cliché." Pan and Kociski (1993:57) assert that "framing may be studied as a strategy for constructing and processing news discourse or as a characteristic of the discourse itself. '' Therefore, in the discourse we can include sub-themes such as framing analysis and framing effects. By exploring, the framing analysis and delving deep into the concepts and ideas would be interesting to see through the frames which China's image in Zimbabwe can be investigated and reported.

Evidently, from a "meta-theoretical" perspective, framing has been shaped by other disciplines, linking micro and macro-levels in sociology, social psychology and political psychology (see Scheufele 1999; Benford and Snow 2000). The frame analysis has also been applied to other social sciences, including linguistics. As a result, framing has been referred to as a social theory and that has to do with its multilevel nature. Essentially it can be applied between-levels, that is, frames from one news item to another; and within-levels, that are from one point to another in a news item (Scheufele 1999; Benford and Snow, 2000).

Framing analysis as a distinct field in communication can be traced to the 1974 definition by sociologist Erving Goffman often referred to as the father of 'framing' as the classification, organisation, and interpretation of life experiences so that they make sense of the world (cited in Pan and Kociski 1993). Using the basic example of a picture frame as a metaphor for the structure of experiences and the picture itself (image) as the context (or content), Goffman used the term schema or schemata as the "frames" that allow individuals "to locate, perceive, identify and label" experiences (Pan and Kociski 1993:56).

From a psychological perspective, Minsky (1974) defines a frame as "a template or data structure that both organises various bits and pieces of information and is indicated by more concrete cognitive elements." Entman (1993:51) suggests that: "Analysis of frames illuminates the precise way in which influence over a human consciousness is exerted by the transfer (communication) of information from one location to that consciousness."

It is this apparent that framing has overlapping conceptions merging the structure of the human mind (psychology) with devices that are embedded in political realities (political

science) with socially defined roles (sociology). Kinder and Sanders (1990) quoted in Scheufele (1999:106) build on the multidimensional conception of framing to distinguish media frames and individual frames (alternately as texts themselves and as audience frames, in the broad and encompassing sense).

Druckman (2001:226) suggests that framing can be defined in different circumstances as long as due "recognition of its multiple uses" is appreciated, a point of view that seems to take stock of the fact that there can be no precise, one-size-fits-all definition for an eclectic theory and concept given to widespread usage.

This blend of intrinsic and extrinsic traits has influenced framing analysis in news media research, an area to which we now turn.

2.5.2 Media frames in the news

The news discourse framing analysis perspective can be considered of as "a socio-cognitive process involving three players: source, journalists, and audience operating in the universe of shared culture and on the basis of socially defined roles" (Pan and Kosicki 1993:57). Entman (1993:52) agrees with Pan and Kociski in identifying "the four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture (universe for Pan and Kociski)."

The influence of both journalists and audiences on resultant frames is considered "frame building" while the interplay between media frames and audience predispositions is considered "frame setting" (Vreese 2005; Scheufele 1999). In a sense, audience polling and rating by media organisations is often meant to achieve congruence between frame building and frame setting, as well as the new fad of media – interactivity - in the new media field. As we shall see later, this conception of framing differs significantly with agenda building (usually the agenda of elites and journalists) and agenda setting (usually the audience 'reception' agenda).

Gamson and Modgiliani's (1987) conception mirrors that of Tankard, et al (1991): "a frame is a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration" (cited in Pan and Kociski 1993). The "central organizing idea" has been referred to as "theme" in the different features of a media product. In the specific frame analysis, "central organizing ideas", as posited by along Neuman et al. (1992, cited in Vreese, Peter and Semetko 2010) identified

human impact, powerlessness, economics, moral values and conflict as the most common frames that studies have reported in relation to the 'central ideas'. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) are proximate to Neuman et al's (1992) conception, identifying news frames as "conflict, human interest, attribution of responsibility, morality, and economic consequences."

According to Pan and Kociski (1993:57) "a news media frame (is) a cognitive device used in information encoding, interpreting, and retrieving" and can be used in "constructing and processing news discourse" and in this study, it is on one country's image in another country/region. Pan and Kociski (1993:57) explain the convergence of participants in the news discourse frame: "all engage in the process based on their socially defined roles and are linked to one another (to) design, construct, transmit, and (act)". In essence, the news text is the process(ing) locus in a cognitive process such that in research, frames can be analysed on the basis of intended and processed meaning as deciphered from a text (newspaper article, TV programme, radio item, internet blog post, etc.).

2.5.3 The framing of news by journalists

According to Pan and Kociski (1993:56) (quoting Gitlin 1980), "frames enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely to package the information for efficient relay to their audiences.'' It must be highlighted that for newsrooms in much of Africa, their reliance on foreign news agencies is an extension of the "package" conception in that, limited by resource paucity, they accept what others say of other countries and place the same on newspaper pages sometimes in the thick of beating newsroom deadlines.

Emphasizing, on the frame analysis and news production Pan and Kociski (1993) outline three broad factors guiding journalists: "working theories; anticipated audience theories, structures, rituals and rules (see Gans 1979, Tuchman 1978). Scheufele (1999:109), highlight factors that influence how journalists and news producers frame a particular issue or event: "social norms and values (capitalist or socialist for instance), organizational pressures and constraints (newspaper space, TV airtime limitations), pressures of interest groups (ownership for instance), journalistic routines (deadlines, news production cycles), and ideological and political orientations (developmental journalism or watchdog roles?)". In addition to the uniformity of journalistic frame building Dimitrova et al. (2005:23) point out that "the mass media can be seen as a part of a broader national system" (see Gilboa, 2009 on the jigsaw puzzle fit between media and policy making) by default, influenced by the political, economic, and social constraints of the broader systems in which they exist.

2.5.4 The structural elements in framing

Reese's (2001:11) definition is quite stark, in a two-word sentence: "frames structure" and follows this up with an explanation of how symbols and signifiers create patterns that are imposed on frames be they journalistic, source or audience. This angle of framing analysis takes cognizance of the noun and verb predicates of the term in line with Benford and Snow (2000).

Pan and Kociski (1993:59) categorized framing devices into four parts namely, syntactical, thematic, and rhetorical structure. The scholars argue that syntactical structure level is best described by the inverted pyramid structure model of news production where news items are arranged from, sometimes in varying but descending order "headline, lead, episodes, background, and closure" (Pan and Kociski, 1993:59).

Pan and Kociski argue that first the headline and then the lead, are "the most powerful framing devices at the syntactical structure level."

The second structural level in the framing devices is the script structure level. Drawing parallels with fictional accounts, news stories too have "a beginning, a climax and an end", as well as elements of "drama, action, characters and human emotion" (Pan and Kociski 1993:60). They argue that a generic version of the script structure concept of news discourse framing involves, who, what, when where, why and how, (Pan and Kociski 1993:60).

The thematic structure level is premised on the notion that; "a story contains certain hypothesis testing highlights to be specific; referred to occasions, cited sources and pronounced propositions (Pan and Kociski 1993:60). While the syntactical and script levels can be chronological in most news texts, the theme of a story is inferred or deduced in the "summary or main body represented by the headline, lead or conclusion" (Pan and Kociski 1993). This is in line with Modigliani's "central organising idea" and Benford and Snow's "ideological" conception as well as Reese's "principal" idea as seen above. These empirically determinant aspects of framing analysis call up the thematic structure as a causal characteristic of a text. The fourth level according to Pan and Kociski (1993), is the rhetorical structure level of framing analysis and it describes the ''stylistic choices made by journalists in relation to their intended effects.'' The rhetorical structure is therefore on a continuum where persuasion "touts the 'facticity' of a text obviously based on a news producer's schema (Pan and Kociski (1993), quoting van Dijk 1988).

2.5.5 Framing concepts interplay

Pan and Kociski (1993:63) argue that in news discourse: “the frame or theme of a story is the central idea collating the threads to form a coherent whole,” similarly to Entman’s (1993:53) definition of salience; “making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful or memorable to audiences.” Vreese (2004:37) concurs, “Frames make certain considerations more salient for subsequent judgments.” By ‘subsequent judgment’ Vreese (2004:38) concur about the consistency and persistency of frames with different studies having settled on the "conflict" and "economic consequences" frames as the most prominent in media. Along these lines the four frame structures; syntactical, script, theme and rhetorical can be reduced to just three; conflict, economic consequence and human impact. In the event that these four structural dimensions are promptly recognizable on the news generation continuum of news talk investigation, they should likewise apply in reverse to the news recovery at the group of audience level Rhodebeck’s (1998) conception of “reciprocity” (cited in Scheufele 1999:117). Overall, in news framing analysis, the audiences are uninvolved partakers of messages who are more acted on than acting Scheufele (1999:111. As Huang (1996) points out, media frames not only find their way into audience frames but also when media and audience frames overlap, the media and the audience accord different weights (salience) to those frames (cited in Scheufele 1999). As far as salience goes, the audience end of the continuum is the attitudinal level in that the “weight of the frame” invites certain interpretations, whether intentional or unintentional, positive, negative or weak.

Pan and Kociski (1993) posits, “meanings result from active interpretations by audiences in relation to their knowledge and their life experiences.” Literature indicates that framing analysis has therefore been concerned with not only the encoding and decoding dimensions but also the result; the “evolution of the discourse concerning an issue over a period of time” according to Pan and Kociski (1993). This is what we may refer to as holistic news framing discourse, impactful as it is to broader concepts such as images of countries or diplomatic policy formulations. According to Reese (2001: 9), studying symbols should not be an obsession for researchers, as signifiers manifest in a text might not account for the ‘whole picture’. He argues, “although framing’s symbolic aspect is important equating it with the text unduly narrows the focus”. Scheufele (1999:117) notes those journalists are oftentimes audiences of and in themselves.

2.5.8 Country/national image framing

According to Wekesa (2012:18), “specific framing is best suited to small, narrow, and explicit issues, events, and case studies.” Drawing on Wekesa’s (2012) conceptualization, specific framing would not be ideal to employ in a broad and complex topic such the media

image of China in Zimbabwe. Mørk (2012:3) argues that framing of stories may change the attitude of an audience towards an issue as it may be altered or even shaped based on exposure to certain frames. This study agrees with Mørk (2012:3) that in ‘’the process of framing social and political issues, the media can play a powerful role in determining how people perceive the world surrounding them.’’ The framing theory offers us the methodological ability to connect the study of perceived and portrayed national images. Knowingly or unknowingly, framing occurs during the process of encoding or decoding national images by either individuals or media (Li and Chitty 2009:8). In exploring, the media image of China in the United States (Peng, 2004:57) identified three dominant frames namely political, ideological and the cultural frames. Peng (2004:57) explains that “economic frames emphasise the economic development of a country other than political and ideological conflicts; political frames refer to the news frame of the media, chiefly reflecting the American government’s political agenda and foreign policy; ideological, cultural and social values combine to form this frame.’’ As shall be elaborated below, this study will leverage media framing concepts in the pursuit of investigating China’s media image in Zimbabwe.

2.6 Theoretical framework

From the literature review, media framing is found ideal for the current paper essentially because it has been found amenable to the study of national images in media texts (Li and Chitty 2009; Li 2012; Wekesa 2012; Mørk 2012; Saleem 2007; (Huang and Leung 2006; Khan and Safder 2010).

Unlike other theories such as agenda setting framing suggests more intentionally on the part of the framer and relates more explicitly to political strategy (Reese 2007:143). Borrowing from the literature review above, two theoretical approaches would be triangulated in the study of the image of China in Zimbabwe. The general literature on country or national image studies (Wekesa 2012; Li and Chitty 2009; Li 2012; Saleem 2007) provides pathways for understanding China’s image in Zimbabwe. Of interest, here is Li and Chitty’s (2009:2) identification of the three structural features: goal compatibility, relative power/capability, and relative cultural status. The framing theory is the main theoretical choice here, as it will allow for the location, perceive, identification and labelling phenomena (Goffman 1974:21). After the location, perception, identification and labelling of the corpus of articles, Li and Chitty’s; goal compatibility, relative power/capability, and relative cultural status, will be applied by way of a discussion. The content analysis will carefully look into the types of frames as revealed by the headlines from the print media coverage of China before, during, and after Zimbabwe's election held on July 31, 2013. Specifically, this study will borrow

from Wekesa's (2013:18) operationalization of generic, thematic framing to identify the positive frames and negative frames on the coverage of China during the 2013 elections period in Zimbabwe. Thematic frames enable the identification and labelling of the positive and negative frames that contribute to the image of China in the Zimbabwean press during the 2013 election campaign period. Drawing on (Goffman 1974: 21; Peng 2004:57; Semetko and Valkenburg 2000) the framing theory enables the location (publication dates and newspaper sections), perception (positive, negative or weak), identification (language use) and labelling (the themes of economic consequence, conflict, powerlessness, moral values, human interest [impact], attribution of responsibility frames), thereby providing insights into trends and patterns from the data collected from the two newspapers. In coming up with the specific frames for this study, I will first highlight the definitions of the common media frames that are related to this paper. The conflict frame, refers to ''disagreement between individuals, institutions, or countries and emphasizes the points of divergence between conflicting parties'' (Vreese, et al. 2007). Peng (2004:57) referred political frames to texts presented in a political context. The economic consequence frame reflects a "preoccupation with the 'bottom line,' profit and loss" Neuman et al., 1992 (as cited in Vreese, et al. 2007). The economic frame would be coded if the article were presented in an economic aspect and with an emphasis on financial aspects Peng (2004:61).

In coming up with the cultural frame, I will combine the human impact and powerlessness frames. I will therefore label politically related headlines under this frame since politics by nature is conflictual because it is competition for power, hence in the study anything not economic and not cultural is labelled as politics. Scholars insist that you cannot have too many frames and every headline must fit in some category headlines; therefore, I have identified three frames, economic consequence, politics, and cultural frames to determine the trends of the media image of China in Zimbabwe.

2.6.1 Headlines

From the four levels of structure in a news text as argued by Pan and Kociski's (1993) I then focus on the syntactical structure comprising the lead, episodes, background and closure, but the headlines are the most powerful framing devices. According to Goran and Karamarko (2015:150), "headlines are the beginning of the communication between the newspapers and the reader, and they affect he readers' perception of content. Dor (2002:696) reinforces that newspaper headlines are designed to optimize the relevance of their stories for their readers and they act as a textual negotiator between the story and its readers. In essence "newspaper

headlines not only have the function of indicating the topic and summarizing the main content of the news text, but they also try to help the reader grasp the meaning of the text" (Bonyadi and Samuel 2013:1). Briefly, headlines provide the first and probably most important signifier of the intentions of a news story often summarizing the contents of the story (Fredin 2002:274 in Framing Public Life 2002; Moeller 2008:7; Pan and Kociski 1993:65). It is thus imperative to focus on headlines because they provide a window into the underlying frames in the minds of Zimbabwean journalists (particularly editors as headline writers) influencing their image of China.

2.6.2 Positive, negative and weak frames

In investigating positive and negative framing of China in Zimbabwean the study borrows from Peng (2004:60) who operationalize a positive story in which the: "overall tone or prevailing elements in the story that suggest political, social and economic stability/strength, and progress and improvement, which tend to contribute to a favourable image of China. A negative story was operationally defined as the overall tone or prevailing elements in the story that suggest political, social and economic instability/weakness, conflicts, and human rights, religious and other problems, which tend to contribute." We take Chong and Druckman's position that "frequent exposure to a frame will increase the accessibility and availability of considerations highlighted by the frame." As a result, the study will find out to what extent to which positive or negative frames as well as the salience, (importance attached to the frame) are noticeable in the news content. It can be argued that there is little room for a neutral image perception; rather only a dichotomy between Chong and Druckman (2007). Therefore, the headlines that fall in neither negative nor positive will fall under the weak frames because they are not as persuasive borrowing from Chong and Druckman (2007).

The negative will determine the strength of the frame perception and positive frames will allow us to discern the overall image of China. This forms the methodical exertion effort in the data analysis section of the study. While the study's theoretical framework is the generic, thematic, economic consequences and political and cultural framing is the core of analysis of headlines in the two newspapers, hence I will bolster it by borrowing other ideas from the framing field.

2.6.3 Other framing concepts

The study will borrow some concepts from Gamson and Modgiliani's 1987 paper (as quoted in Pan and Kociski 1993) concept of "a package" of "five signifying devices that are used in

news production as discussed in the earlier sections to answer the research questions. In addition, we also report on the frames in the headlines from the perspective of frequency, persistence, inclusion and exclusion and selection and drama, action, characters and human emotion (Pan and Kociski, 1993).

2.6.4 Conclusion

This chapter explored and discussed literature drawn from the broad field of which many media and communication theories comparing it to Zimbabwe with an idea to ascertain if the same findings are applicable to this study. The literature review explored image studies, the framing theory, and how nation's image is portrayed or framed in a foreign country. It discussed different studies on media image of countries in other countries with the aim of borrowing concepts and drawing comparisons if the same results will be achieved by this study. This chapter feeds in into the next chapter which will explore the methodological approach in finding out the media image of China in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Methods

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this study is to find out the media image of China in Zimbabwe's state and privately owned newspapers. In particularly the study seeks to find out how China was framed in the media during Zimbabwe's 2013 electioneering period.

3.2 Triangulation

In this study, I utilise the framing theory in a methodological triangulation method of assessment with the aim of determining the media image of China in the Zimbabwean media. I will use the triangulation method of quantitative and qualitative content analysis including in-depth interview approaches to get to the core of how the said images play up in the Zimbabwean media. To clarify on the methodological tools, I define triangulation as articulated by various scholars. Triangulation refers to the combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods or investigators in one study of a single phenomenon to converge on a single construct, and can be employed in both quantitative (validation) and qualitative (inquiry) studies (Yeasmin and Rahman 2012:156). By using triangulation, the researcher is able to uncover some unique variance which otherwise may have been neglected by single methods of research (Jick 1979:603). In essence, 'triangulation' minimises the inadequacies of single-source research because two sources complement and verify one another, which reduces the impact of bias (Yeasmin and Rahman 2012:159). Triangulation has its own limitations in that it is time-consuming as compared to a single method and can be complex because of dealing with the vast amount of data, (Thurmond 2001:256). Other scholars such as Yeasmin and Rahman (2012:159) argue that triangulation has its own limitations in that each method should be represented in a significant way, therefore, raising the question of whether the various instruments may be viewed as equally sensitive to the phenomenon being studied.

3.3 Selection of study sample

As indicated earlier, the objective of this study is to find out the media image of China in Zimbabwe in a six months' period; the three months of the campaign leading up to the Election Day, July 31, 2013, and the three months after the elections leading to October 31, 2013 when China-related coverage was still topical. The period was particularly chosen, as elections are generally periods of intense contestation in the public sphere, electioneering brings into sharp focus matters of public interest including not least those to do with of

foreign relations of which the Zimbabwe-China engagement is a case in point here. On account of their being the leading newspapers in terms of circulation, the two newspapers under review, *The Herald* and *NewsDay*, were selected as a representative sample of the Zimbabwean media, dominated by several players. However, these two newspapers are potentially representative because their coverage encompasses issues ranging from social, economic, political, entertainment and sport. The ZAMPS survey (2013) found that *The Herald* is the most read daily newspaper in Zimbabwe with 266 884 readers, three-quarters being people in urban areas. *NewsDay* came second with 146 807. The two newspapers have an online edition that makes it convenient for accessing archived editions.

3.4 Content analysis

Content analysis has become a widely used approach in media studies to quantify and analyse texts. According to Holsti (1969) "content analysis is a multipurpose research method developed specifically for investigating any problem in which the content of communication serves as the basis of inference". Content analysis uses an observational approach, identifies, and analyses themes in the sample, providing an insight into differential patterns of tone, vocabulary, attitude, and detail employed by media establishments (Kimura 2014). Krippendorff (2004) advises that in content analysis, the researcher "views data as representations not of physical events but of texts, images, and expressions that are created to be seen, read, interpreted, and acted on for their meanings." Drawing on Siraj (2006:5), the study uses headlines as units of analysis. Media framing scholarship has long determined that headlines are key signifiers of the deeper meaning in news articles. From a structural perspective, Pan and Kociski (1993:59) point out that the "structural elements [of a news article include the] …headline, lead, episodes, background, and closure". "The signifying power of these elements varies in the same descending order … [and the] … "headline is the most salient cue to activate certain semantically related concepts in readers' minds; it is thus the most powerful framing device of the syntactical structure" (Pan and Kociski 1993: 59, see also Wekesa 2012:19 Aalberg et al. 2011:174, 178). According to Goran and Karamarko (2015:150), "headlines are the beginning of the communication between the newspapers and the reader, and they affect the readers' perception of content. Dor (2002:696) argues that newspaper headlines are designed to optimise the relevance of their stories for their readers and they act as a textual negotiator between the story and its readers. In essence "newspaper headlines not only have the function of indicating the topic and summarising the main content of the news text, but they also try to help the reader grasp the meaning of the text" (Bonyadi and Samuel 2013:1). Briefly, headlines provide the first and probably most

important signifier of the intentions of a news story often summarising the contents of the story (Fredin 2002: 274 in Framing Public Life 2002; Moeller 2008: 7; Pan and Kociski 1993:65). It is, however, notable, that headlines can sometimes be misleading as they are crafted with "selling" newspapers in mind. This challenge is overcome by collecting a big corpus of news stories, therefore, reducing the potential for the data to confound the analysis Riffe et al., 1993 (as cited in Luke, Caburnay and Cohen 2011:78).

3.5 Data collection

Articles were retrieved from the websites of *The Herald* and *NewsDay*. The individual news articles were the unit of analysis and the search term used ''China" as the key word to harvest all China-related headlines. The period is from 1 May 2013 to 31 October 2013. All articles with the headline/code "China" or "Chinese" or words with a strong Chinese link were downloaded and categorised using the theoretical framework of location, perception, identification and labelling.

3.6 Data analysis

The study used a code sheet to categorise the most telling details in the content, the themes and frames and the location of the stories from the newspaper sections: political; editorial/opinion/comment; and business/economy. Several coding categories were designed to answer the research questions.

3.7 The coding scheme

To find out the image of China in *The Herald* and *Newsday*, the study explored the themes in the coverage. According to Wei (2012:7), "themes are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation of selection, emphasis, and exclusion." In this study, the headlines were categorised according to economic, political, and cultural frames. For my content analysis, I created a code sheet structured as follows; headline, location, date, perception, and the writer/source of the article. This coding procedure allowed me to locate, identify, and label the headlines. The articles were also categorised according to the placement of the articles: local, international, opinions and editorials in that order. Borrowing from Wekesa (2012:21), I placed the data into different slots to be able to label the specific frames in the content analysis. Wekesa (2013:21) argues that by placing the content into different slots it will enable me to analyse the data and manipulate in various ways to understand the perceptions on the portrayal of China in the Zimbabwean newspapers. The coding scheme borrows from Peng (2004) in that the political frame is recorded if the story is presented in a political context and framed in line with the Zimbabwe's government political

agenda. As explained in the theoretical framework, the economic consequence frame reflects a "preoccupation with the 'bottom line,' profit and loss" Neuman et al., 1992 (as cited in Vreese, et al. 2007). The economic frame is also coded if the article is presented in an economic aspect and with an emphasis on financial aspects Peng (2004:61). The cultural frame places attention on the cultural interactions between China and Zimbabwe in areas such as tourism, sport, art and exchange visits. Drawing on Peng (2004:60) the study defines the portrayal as below:

> A positive story was operationally defined as the overall tone or prevailing elements in the story that suggest political, social and economic stability/strength, and progress and improvement, which tend to contribute to a favourable image of China. A negative story was operationally defined as the overall tone or prevailing elements in the story that suggest political, social and economic instability/weakness, conflicts, and human rights, religious and other problems, which tend to contribute to an unfavourable image of China.

However, as argued in the theoretical framework there is little room for a neutral image perception; rather only a dichotomy between positive and negative. Chong and Druckman (2007). Therefore, the headlines that were neither negative nor positive were coded as weak because they are not as persuasive, borrowing from Chong and Druckman (2007). I analysed the trends of the coverage, perceptions, location, and source of the articles and arranged the data into pie charts, graphs and tables. This enabled the researcher to present the findings more clearly for further analysis.

3.8 In-depth interviews

After conducting the content analysis, the researcher conducted 7 in-depth interviews with key informants, namely editors, journalists from the two newspapers, media academics and media rights activists to complement the content analysis. In-depth interviewing by definition is ''a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation (Boyce and Neale 2006). The in-depth interviews were conducted during a field visit to Zimbabwe, in Harare by the researcher in December 2016, and some through *Skype* to get insight and an interpretive description on what influences the framing of China image in the media.

3.9 Conclusion

This section has discussed the triangulation method; it has outlined the sample size and insights from content analysis procedures and framing devices. It has discussed how the

coding procedure was done, in a bid to “locate, perceive, identify and label” the data for analysis. The next chapter presents an in-depth analysis of the findings of this study.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research methods employed by this study. This chapter presents the findings from the articles collected from the content analysis in order to investigate the media image of China in Zimbabwe's two daily newspapers, *The Herald* and *NewsDay* from the May 1, 2013 to October 31, 2013. The focus is on the headlines of news articles collected before, during and after Zimbabwe's harmonised elections held on July 31, 2013. I will present each of the findings from the content analysis and compliment the discussion with the in-depth interviews conducted with the editors, journalists and media scholars to understand the trends in the coverage. The trends will be presented in the form of pie charts, bar graphs and tables and a brief discussion on each of the trends.

4.2 Selection sample

Using the search word ''China'' on the two websites *The Herald* and *NewsDay* the sample consisted of a combined total 163 consisting of headlines with "China" or "Chinese" or words with a strong Chinese link. The coding used the criteria mentioned in the earlier chapters to explore the different frames in the in the two newspapers. The findings will answer the two research questions:

(1) What is the media image of China in Zimbabwe?
(2) What are the divergences and convergences between *The Herald* and *NewsDay* regarding the image of China in Zimbabwe?

4.3 Framing of China's image

Noting the frequency of coverage by both papers, I asked the respondents on how they see trends from the content analysis and provoked a salient question…What influences the coverage of China in the Zimbabwean media? The responses were quite telling in understanding the various pressures and factors that are at play in the coverage of 'controversial' topics, such as those related to China. The author's first interview was with *The Herald* political editor, Mr. Tichaona Zindoga in Harare (December 24, 2016). I asked him what informs the coverage of China in *The Herald* and why the paper has a greater number of articles on China compared to *NewsDay*. He explained:

> Our coverage is informed by the editorial policy of the newspaper; *The Herald* is a government mouthpiece by virtue of the 51% ownership being held by the government. Therefore, the government is bound to have a lot of voice about relations such as China.

The practice of news and the concept of news values, the idea of proximity, Zimbabwe has an ideological, political, and diplomatic proximity to China and whatever concerns China is bound to interest *The Herald*. *The Herald* among other state media will always have a front seat in terms of coverage because they get instructions from the shareholder that is government to cover such activities and relations such as China (ibid.)

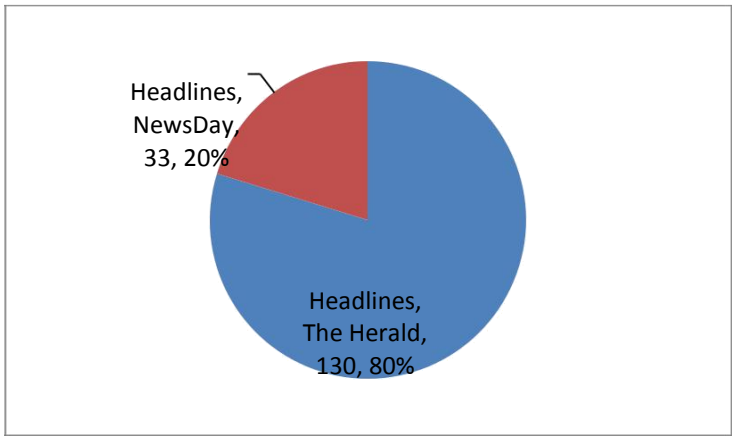


Figure 1: Distribution of stories between the newspapers

In the same vein, former *NewsDay* editor Mr. Constantine Chimakure (December 21, 2016) said that they covered events as they happened and there was no policy to cover or not to cover China. He quipped: "our coverage on China-Zimbabwe relations was based on what was happening, however, if you look at *The Herald* you will notice they covered as much about China-Zimbabwe relations compared to *NewsDay.* Purely because they have unfettered access to state functions involving Chinese officials.'' In a separate interview a journalist at *NewsDay*, Tapiwa Zivira (December 22, 2016), said their coverage of China was informed by the newspaper's pledge: "*NewsDay'*s coverage is informed by our editorial policy hence we have no specific focus on China, we cover events, and our perceived newsworthiness of the said events" (ibid). In explaining this trend, Dr. Wallace Chuma a senior lecturer in Media Studies at the University of Cape Town in a *Skype* interview (February 17, 2017) said: ''As a government mouthpiece *The Herald* naturally had to give salience to the government's 'look east' policy. The many trips Mugabe and state officials has made to Beijing have attracted media coverage. The idea is to present the look east policy as a success story and therefore give back to back coverage to all things Chinese, especially where they concern Zimbabwe.'' The responses by the journalists confirmed the interplay of the economic and political pressures that have a bearing in the polarized media environment in Zimbabwe. The rest we shall see as we look at the different trends in the coverage of China in Zimbabwe.

4.4 How is China's image portrayed in *The Herald* and *NewsDay*?

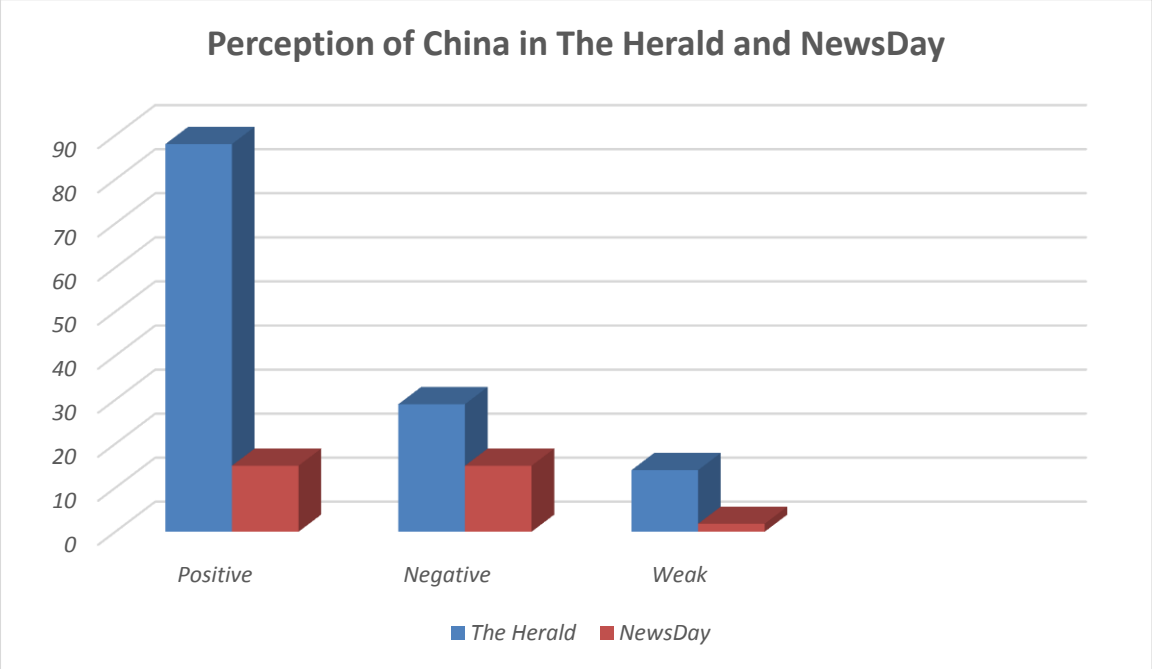


Figure 2: Distribution showing the perception of China in *The Herald* and *NewsDay*

4.4.1 The Herald

The above graph shows the overall perception on the coverage of China in *The Herald* and *NewsDay*. The graph indicates a combined total of headlines including the locally generated stories and those sourced from international news agencies. In both newspapers, the image of China is rather positive than negative or weak. *The Herald* has an overwhelming percentage and a high number of positive stories, 88, which constitute 68.4 % of the stories. The paper contributes a positive image of China. The results showed that 29 headlines at 20 % of the headlines were coded as negative. The results also found out those 20 headlines, 14 % contributed to the weak framing of China in The *Herald* during this period. The weak headlines were neither negative nor positive to the contribution of China's image; rather the headlines in this category revealed can be seen as either positive or negative depending on the interests of the reader. The researcher asked a senior reporter at *The Herald*, Lloyd Gumbo, who has travelled a lot to China with President Mugabe and other government officials as a journalist visit to China on how he views the coverage of China in Zimbabwe. He said:

> At *The Herald*, we consider China a friend of Zimbabwe so for that reason; we are naturally inclined to cover them positively. Nevertheless, we can criticize where we feel they are not doing well. The public media covers China positively while the private media covers that country negatively. This is mainly informed by the political economy of the media where the public media is guided by the

> government's stance on China while the private media is against government's foreign policy towards China. In short, public media follows the government's Look East policy while the private media is pro-West (interview, December 23, 2017).

However, Tichaona Zindoga believes that the soft power initiatives are also contributory factors towards the positive image of China in *The Herald*. Zindoga said the media exchange programs have seen a number of journalists from the state media being invited to China, to "understand and appreciate the culture, the politics, history and other important aspects of the Chinese people in the hope that the story of China may be better understood on Zimbabwe and Africa." He also highlighted the donation of computers to *The Herald* from China in 2010. ''I think that naturally, these public diplomacy initiatives have had a cementing effect on the relationship with and the framing of China, like any commercial entities these exchanges apart from the corrupting effect they tend to enlighten recipients (ibid.) so we can conclude that the positive image of China in *The Herald*, is not more objective but rather based on the political economy of the state media in Zimbabwe.

4.4.2 *NewsDay*

On *NewsDay*, the data reveals that the overall image of China is slightly positive. Of the data, collected 15 articles contributed 45% contributed to the positive headlines in the *NewsDay* compared to 14 stories that contributed 42 % of the negative image of China. In a variant, only four articles, 12 % were categorised as weak frames. In an interview with the author, a sub-editor at *NewsDay*, Garikai Tunhira (December 22, 2016) said that the trends showed that the *NewsDay* is fair in their coverage of issues and China is no exception: ''our policy is that we do not take sides, but every newsroom has its politics, even in the first world. Hence, with China, we just take it as it is, or as they make the news. If they are in the bad, we craft a headline along those lines, if they do well; we give them credit through a corresponding headline.''

However, in an interview with Takura Zhangazha (December 27, 2016), a former director of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA-Zimbabwe) said the trends were actually surprising in that *NewsDay* had more positive headlines of China than they were negative. He said: ''Over the years, the private media has been against China-Zimbabwe bilateral engagements, so such trends are surprising but for the state media it is downright bias'' (ibid). Zhangazha also pointed that the funders and owners of the newspapers always try to have their own direction in terms of editorial but he believes that it lacks ''fair, accuracy and

balance'' hence the media did not do a public interest service. Concisely, we can deduce that the coverage of China in the *NewsDay* is fairly balanced, but however with subtle negative undertones, especially in the editorials as we shall see later in the trends.

4.5 The headlines by location

	Local News	**International**	**Opinion**	**Editorial**	**Total**
The Herald	27 **(20.7%)**	96 **(73%)**	6 **(4.6%)**	1 **(0.7 %)**	130 **(100%)**
NewsDay	8 **(24 %)**	21 **(63.6 %)**	3 **(6%)**	1 **(3%)**	33 **(100%)**

Table 1: Frequency according to location of headlines

The table shows the total number of headlines from both newspapers with a breakdown of where the stories were sourced. The findings reveal that *The Herald* and *NewsDay* rely on foreign agencies on the coverage of China. *The Herald* had 73 % of its news stories sourced from agencies namely *Xinhua, AFP* and *The China Daily*, only 27 news stories were locally generated, with two taken from *Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation* and the other *New Ziana.* Under the editorial, only 1 headline, (0.7%) of the total headlines coded by the content analysis, *Why PM dislikes Chinese VP'S visit* (May, 24). The results recorded six headlines under the opinions sections, amounting to 4.6% of the total coverage. What was revealing about the opinion section was that a majority of the articles were sourced from Chinese government officials and senior members of the Communist Party. An examples of the articles are: *China's spells out new diplomatic offensive* (September, 5) authored by Yang Jiechi, the state councillor and director of the office of the Foreign Affairs leading group of the CPC Central Committee, three opinion articles were from the Embassy of the Republic of China, and written by the Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, the examples are: *The Chinese economy reform and innovation for sustained and healthy development*; *China will stay the course on sustainable growth published both articles on the same day* (September, 15) and *Chinese economy poised to maintain growth: PM* (September, 16). Interestingly, the two headlines mentioned above, *China will stay the course on sustainable growth published* (September, 15) and *Chinese economy poised to maintain growth: PM* (September, 16) are almost similar and the same author wrote them.

Comparatively, *NewsDay* also had a majority of the headlines sourced from international news agencies, with 21 of the headlines constituting 63% of the coverage of China. Most of the articles were sourced from *Reuters.* Only eight (24%) of the

headlines were sourced from internal journalists, with the remainder 3 opinion articles and one editorial. The content analysis also revealed that 1 opinion article written by Li Keqiang, with the headline *China will stay the course on growth* (September, 11) was wrongly placed in the newspaper, it was placed under the news section instead of the opinion section. The study also observed that the two newspapers republished similar opinion articles, with almost the same headlines, an example is an opinion article written by Dr. Mercy Ahun appeared in *NewsDay* under the title *Africa, China: Walking together toward a healthy future*, (August, 21) and in *The Herald*; *China: Walking together toward a healthy future* (August, 30). Another example is the article in *NewsDay* with the headline: *China will stay the course on growth* (September, 11) and written Li Keqiang the Chinese Premier, a similar headline and same author appeared in *The Herald* under the headline: *China will stay the course on sustainable growth* (September, 15).

To understand why the newspapers were sourcing most of the articles from the agencies, Zindoga said that for *The Herald*, it is mainly because Zimbabwe has an ideological, political, and diplomatic proximity to China and whatever concerns China is bound to interest *The Herald*. He further explained why they source most of the articles from *Xinhua*:

> *Xinhua* has been assertive and growing in terms of its messages in challenging the hegemony of established media houses like Reuters which carry the west voice, and because Zimbabwe is looking for an alternative voice and one which speaks directly to its aspirations and inclinations there is no better source of news than the Chinese media (interview, December 24, 2016).

Zindoga added: ‘’It is also informed by proximity, be it geopolitical or diplomatic the Zimbabwean government feel closer to China than any other global power because of the affinities born out of politics and history. Therefore, even if China were to sign an agreement or involved in some deal that does not concern Zimbabwe we would carry the story. In addition, Zimbabwe is cognizant of the rising influence of China. China has become more assertive on the global stage and therefore it is a story that cannot be ignored (ibid.)

He further points out that Zimbabwe would be appearing to cheer on China in its quest for global hegemony and so there is no better channel apart from the established diplomatic channel than through the newspapers it is an expression of tacit support through the media. In explaining this trend, the respondent, Zivira (December 22, 2016) said: ‘’For *NewsDay,* selection of foreign stories is usually by line editors who are not so much high-level editors as such perhaps the visibility of China stories is by mere coincidence rather than design and there is no deliberate action by high-level editors to sanction a China-related story.’’

Despite Zivira denying the coincidence in the consistent use of agencies like *Reuters*, former editor Mr. Chimakure confirmed that they were careful in their selection of stories from agencies. He said: ‘’We selected international stories from *Reuters*, largely because of interest, that is what matters the most, we would not obviously take stories from *Xinhua* as it is a propaganda media house and they always portray China in a positive light’’ (interview, December 21, 2016). In view of the sourcing of articles from international news agencies, Zhangazha explains that it was not a new practice but it is based on the editorial interests and at times the partnerships with foreign news agencies. He said: ‘’Previously they have been partnerships between the local press and foreign media houses, for instance, *The Herald* used to have inserts from *China Today*, while a private newspaper the *Financial Gazette* had inserts from the *Financial Times*. So it then alludes to the editorial bias between the state and private media, vis-à-vis the geopolitics of the east and the west (interview: Zhangazha 2016). However, Dr. Wallace Chuma (February 17, 2017) had a different perspective, he notes ‘’Zimbabwean newsrooms were operating on shoestring budgets and barely have funds and staff to assign to cover major stories; therefore, they tend to rely on a mostly free copy from the wire services. This is obviously not a good reflection on both papers, but that is what has become the norm in Zimbabwean media.’’

4.6 Perception and recurrent frames in *The Herald*

Table 2: Frequency of frames according to perception and location in The Herald

The Herald		**Headlines Location**		
Perception	**Frame**	**Local**	**International**	**Total (100%)**
Positive	Economic	19 **(14.6%)**	42 **(32.3%)**	61 **(46.9 %)**
	Political	3 **(2.3%)**	18 **(13.8%)**	21 **(16.1%)**
	Cultural	2 **(1.5%)**	3 **(2.3 %)**	5 **(3.8%)**
Negative	Economic	1 **(0.7%)**	22 **(16.9%)**	23 **(17.6%)**
	Political	1 **(0.7%)**	4 **(3%)**	5 **(3.7%)**
	Cultural	1 **(0.7%)**	0	1 (0.7%)
Weak	Economic	0	2 **(1.5%)**	2 **(3 %)**
	Political	0	5 **(3.8%)**	5 **(3.8%)**
	Cultural	3 **(2.3%)**	4 **(3%)**	7 **(5.3%)**

The table above shows the trends and distribution of the frames in *The Herald* during the period under study. It links the perception, location, and identity of the headlines based on

the three frames being employed by this study to discern the image of China. The aim is to find out which of the frames dominate and influences the coverage or rather the image of China. The content analysis took into cognizant the three frames, economic consequences, political and cultural frames to see the trends that dominate the portrayal of the image of China in Zimbabwe's print media. The results revealed that China is portrayed positively in *The Herald* with the 88 headlines contributing 67 % of the positive portrayal of China. The economic consequence frame enjoyed the bigger chunk of the positive image of China with 61 headlines contributing 46.5% of the positive image of China in *The Herald*. The headlines from articles sourced from the international news agencies provided 42 headlines making up 32% positive portrayal of the image of China with 19 locally generated headlines making up 14.5% of the articles under the economic consequence frame. Examples of the headlines in this category (international news) with positive economic themes: *Promising future for Chinese firms* (June, 4), *Xi Jinping praises China-Africa co-op* (June, 26), *China to become world's biggest net oil importer* (August 14), *Chinese economy poised to maintain growth: PM* (September, 16). The headlines projected China as a fast growing economy. The local news category had headlines which basically projected China as a donor and economic partner for Zimbabwe: *China extends US36 million loan for projects* (May, 23*), Zim-China relations, co-operations to get boost* (June, 5), *Sino-Zim facelift to boost cement output* (July, 4), *China, Africa eye a healthy future* (August, 30), *China to invest in Zim* (September, 11), *Sino-Zim trade set to scale new heights* (September, 27).

The political frame is second in the positive portrayal of China, with a total number of 22 headlines making up around 16.9% of the positive construction of the image of China. Under this frame, headlines of stories sourced from international news agencies contributed more headlines, 18 (13.7%) compared to 4 headlines, 3% from the locally generated stories. Some of the headlines coded in the international news category under this category showed China's diplomatic relations and its portrayed as a powerhouse in the world politics: *China support Palestine: President Xi* (May, 6), *Chinese president meets Israel PM, Pledges efforts for peace in Middle East* (May, 8), *China welcomes resumption of Israel, Palestine talks* (August, 1), *China to support ongoing electoral process in Guinea-Bissau* (August, 21), *China reiterates political solution in Syria* (September, 4), *China urges resumption of Korean-Peninsula six-party talks* (September, 13), *Chinese leader supports Russian proposal on Russia* (September, 14) and *China calls on ICC to head Africa's pleas* (September, 19). The local headlines showed China's interest in Zimbabwe's election: *Chinese observer team dismiss MDCT rigging claims* (July, 31), *Zuma endorses poll outcome, All urged to accept result, China, Kenya echo facilitator's sentiments, MDC-T leader gangs up with handlers* (August, 5) and *China, Korea congratulate President* (August, 10). The cultural frame

contributed 3.7% of the positive portrayal of China with two headlines locally generated and three headlines under the international category.

On the negative frames, the content analysis recorded 29 headlines, about 22.3% negative headlines of China in *The Herald* distributed among the political, economic and cultural frame. However, the economic consequence frame had much of the negative headlines, 22 amounting to 17.6% as compared to the political frame with 5 articles attributing 3.7% with the cultural that recorded 1 headline. The examples of the negative headlines include: *China's Bo gets life sentence* (September, 23), *Chinese embassy attacked in Syria* (October, 1). The bulk of the negative headlines are coded under the international category, 22 headlines making up 16.7% of the total headlines collected by the data. The negative economic consequence frame revealed that most of the headlines were to do with natural disasters that were occurring in China and the country's performance on the world financial activities. Some of the headlines are: *Rainstorms leave 28 dead in China* (July, 11), *89 dead, 5 missing in China quake* (July, 22), *China issues heatwave warning* (August, 1), *Bloomberg shakes China* (May, 19), *China faces anti-dumping duties* (June,4), *China's annual inflation rises* (June, 9), another interesting headline was: *Ghana arrests Chinese nationals for illegal gold mining* (June, 12). The negative political frame recorded 5% of the headlines, and the international news category recording 3% from the four articles. Locally generated content had one headline under the political frame, *Why PM dislikes Chinese VP'S visit* (May, 24) and one coded under the economic consequence frame: *China denies exploiting Africa* (October, 24). Cultural frames did not contribute any negative headlines of China's image in *The Herald.*

The weak frames contributed 12 % of the headlines in the overall image portrayal of China in *The Herald*, a majority of these headlines 5.3% had to do with sports and were noticed in the cultural frame category: *Azarenka beaten at China Open* (October, 2) *Cara unstoppable in China* (October, 4). The weak frames were recorded in the economic themes category 4 headlines sourced from agencies making 3% of the headlines.

4.6.1 Perceptions and recurrent frames in *NewsDay*

NewsDay		Headlines Location		
Perception	**Frame**	**Local**	**International**	**Total (100%)**
Positive	Economic	3 **(9%)**	10 **(30.3%)**	13 **(39.3%)**
	Political	0	0	0
	Cultural	1 **(3%)**	1 **(3%)**	2 **(6%)**
Negative	Economic	2 **(6%)**	11 (33.3%)	13 **(39.3%)**
	Political	1 **(3%)**	0	1 **(3%)**
	Cultural	0	0	0
Weak	Economic	1 **(3%)**	**1 (3%)**	2 **(6 %)**
	Political	0	0	0
	Cultural	1 **(3%)**	1 **(3%)**	2 **(6%)**

Table 3: Frequency of frames according to perceptions and location in NewsDay

The table above shows the distribution of the frames in *NewsDay.* The results reveal that overall; China is portrayed positively in *NewsDay* as with the case with *The Herald* but the difference is too little. I will discuss the trends according to perception, positive and negative according to the recurrent frames in the study, the economic consequence, political and cultural. The data shows that 15 headlines contributed 45.3% in the positive portrayal of China's image more than the 14 headlines contributing 42.3 % in the negative framing of China. Surprisingly, the results revealed the economic consequence frame both contributed the same number of headlines, 13 about 39.3% in the positive frames category. Examples of headlines coded in this category include*: IDBZ engages Chinese Development Bank* (May 6), *Ethiopia to sign mobile network deals with ZTE, Huawei* (June 3), *China remains Zimbabwe's top investor* (July 3), *Africa, China: Walking together toward a healthy future* (August, 21), *Mugabe, Chinese minister meet on ties* (September, 26) and *Zimbabwe government to engage China in building school infrastructure* (October, 26). As explained in Wekesa (2012:29) the mention of Chinese companies as an extension of the Chinese state is both an opportunity and risk for China's image, and in this instance, Chinese companies, ZTE and Huawei contributed in the positive framing of China's image. The results did not record any headline under the positive theme. Only one positive headline was recorded in the cultural frame *Chinese dance company in splendid act* (August, 23). Much of the positive headlines under the economic consequence frame were sourced from international news

agencies that had 10 stories thereby contributing 30.3 % of the positive framing of China under this category. The locally generated story only contributed three headlines, which was an equivalent of 9%.

The results also revealed that a majority of the negative headlines were recorded in the economic consequence frame are similar to the number of positive headlines recorded under the economic consequence frame, 13 articles occupying 39.3% of the coverage in *NewsDay*. Most of the headlines portrayed China's economic woes, and China's bad labour practices, environmental degradation caused by Chinese companies. The negative tone is exhibited by the tone used in the following headlines: *China April factory output disappoints, clouds outlook* (May, 14), *Exploitative Chinese companies warned* (May, 23), *Dollar bulls in form, Aussie slips on weak China trade data* (July, 11), *China-Zim relations 'set to sour' over cash seizure* (July, 16), *China inflation at 7-month high (*October, 15) and *Plans to engage Chinese contractors noble, but…* (October, 28). The findings also revealed an overuse of agencies as only three headlines were locally generated. Only one negative political headline was recorded under this category, *Mugabe graft rage and China's trial of Bo* (October, 1). The weak frames recorded two headlines in both the economic and cultural frames category, making up 6% of the overall frames. From this instance, I will remove weak frames from further analysis because they neither contribute too strongly nor too weakly in the image construction of China.

4.7 Overall recurrent frames in *The Herald* and *NewsDay*

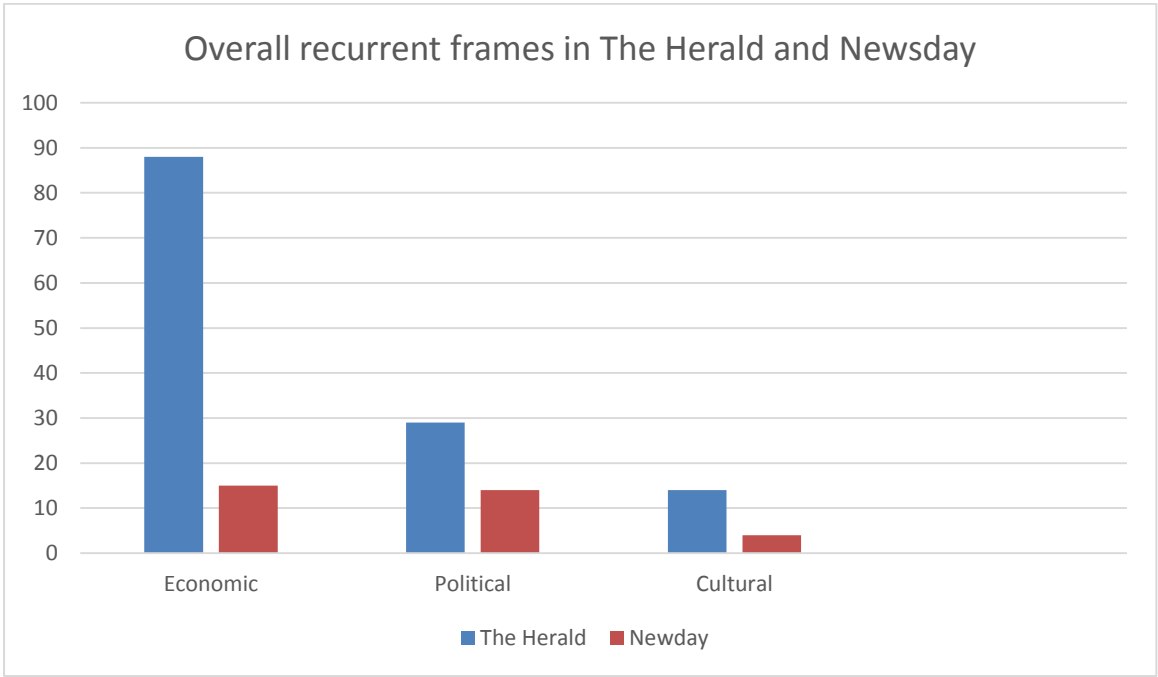


Figure 3: Frequency of the recurrent in *The Herald* and *NewsDay*

The economic consequence frames are the major contributor in the overall framing of China's image in *The Herald* and *NewsDay*. However, the political frame is dominant more in *The Herald* than NewsDay, with the cultural frame being dominant in both newspapers. On one hand, *The Herald* political editor Tichaona Zindoga (December 24, 2016) explained why the economic consequence enjoys the lion's share of the coverage: ''Zimbabwe is somehow under the patronage of China, it pins its survival in the world of geopolitics and economics to China. Consequently, Zimbabwe has a role model in China for aspirational purposes. Once the story of China is told, it is a feel-good story about a country rising from under development to the fastest growing economy and possibly the largest. '' He points out that the headlines about assistance, aid from China are an affirmation of the close relationship enjoyed by Zimbabwe and China:

> We obviously have to celebrate because Zimbabwe was not getting any form of promises or material assistance from any quarter and for the state media, this is something positive. In addition, we must not separate how China is developing in Africa, what it was doing was not just in Zimbabwe but other African countries. This was the story of the continent and a story that would carry little negatives generally because China is seen as a new messiah and a fair player in terms of engagement diplomatically and economically so that informs the optimism (interview: Zindoga 2016).

Tapiwa Zivira (December 23, 2016) stated that: "China's presence in Zimbabwe is based on perceived or real efforts to help Zimbabwe's economic transformation, and is generally silent (at least in public) on human rights, corruption, and other governance issues, while the West is more vocal about rights and governance, so I think in the end, the story about China in the media become so largely about its presence in the economy of Zimbabwe.'' Academic, Wallace Chuma (February 17, 2017) is not surprised about the dominancy of the economic consequence frame. He argues that it is largely because China has taken the place of the United Kingdom and the west in particular in terms of trade between Zimbabwe and the world outside of Africa. He believes that the bilateral relations between China and Zimbabwe in the previous years had largely been economic, ranging from mega loans, mining, mega construction projects (including Zimbabwe Defence College) and naturally these activities attract media attention. Lloyd Gumbo (December 23, 2016) from *The Herald* agrees that the coverage is influenced by the fact that China's presence in Zimbabwe is mainly driven by business interests. He however argues that the media is not doing enough in their coverage of China. In addition, he says: ''China is portrayed as an economic partner, but we know for real that the two countries are not equal partners because both of them have different economic strengths, which makes China the most powerful one in the relationship. While it has given grants to Zimbabwe on several occasions, one cannot define China as a donor because their

donations are meant to consolidate Beijing's relationship with Harare but the ultimate goal is for China to be given preference in business opportunities'' (ibid.)

4.7 The frequency of coverage by time

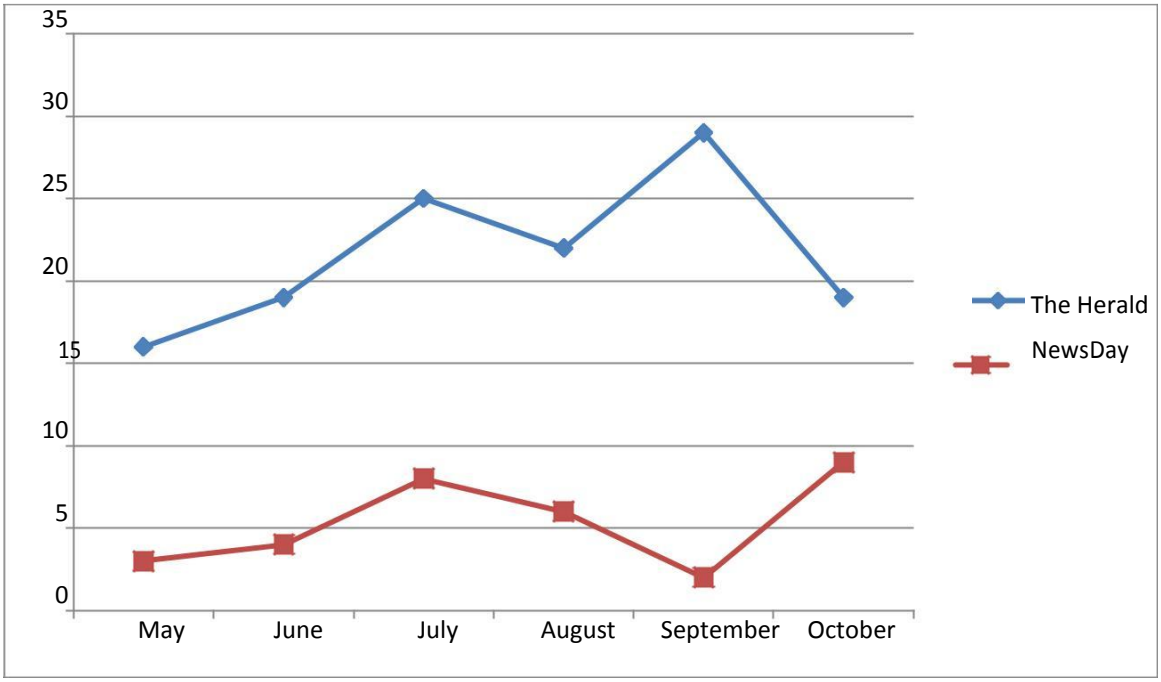


Figure 4: Frequency of coverage by time

The graph above shows the frequency of the coverage during the six months' period under study. The results showed that there was a sharp increase of the coverage in July in both newspapers as this was the period of intense campaigns. Surprisingly, of the 25 headlines recorded in July, only three were locally generated. There was an interesting headline in *The Herald*, titled: *Chinese observer team dismiss MDCT rigging claims* (July, 31) on the Election Day, showing China's interest in Zimbabwe political affairs. This is despite China's stance of non-interference, especially on political matters. The graph also indicates a steady increase in the number of headlines in the month of September that were mostly positive, and this period was after the elections. Some of the positive headlines projected China as an economic source and trading partner with Zimbabwe. The examples are: *China to invest in Zim* (September, 11), *The Chinese economy reform and innovation for sustained and healthy development* (September, 15), *Chinese water engineers to help upgrade Harare water delivery system* (September, 18), *Sino-Zim trade set to scale new heights* (September, 27), *Chinese fund solar project* (September, 28). In *NewsDay*, the trends are equally interesting; an increase in the coverage is witnessed in July, which was also the month of the elections. However, one interesting headline recorded that month was *China-Zim relations 'set to sour' over cash seizure* (July, 16).

The month of October also witnessed an increase in the coverage of China related stories, with nine headlines. They were however, two interesting headlines: *Zimbabwe government to engage China in building school infrastructure* (October, 26) *and Plans to engage Chinese contractor's noble, but . . .* (October, 29).

Headlines spelling out China-Zimbabwe relationship and the majority of the headlines recorded during that month were from international news agencies.

4.8 Sources as contributors of the frames in the headlines

The data also revealed the sources that contributed to the image construction of China in both newspapers. On one hand, the findings from *The Herald* found out that in the international news section, Chinese president Xi Jinping was mentioned 7 times in the headlines, and in two articles, he was referred to as Chinese president. About seven of those headlines contributed to the positive image of China, while two headlines were recorded as weak frames. Locally, the visit by the Chinese vice-Premier in May contributed four positive articles together with another visit by Chinese engineers in September, all contributed to the positive portrayal of China. However, China's Minister of Commerce, Bo Xilai and American Edward Snowden are mentioned in the headlines and they both contributed to the negative portrayal of China. An editorial mentioning Zimbabwe's Prime Minister was also negative: *Why PM dislikes Chinese VP'S visit* (May, 24). Another headline was phrased: *Ghana arrests Chinese nationals for illegal gold mining* (June, 12) contributing to the negative image of China. The other headlines did not mention names of individuals' per say but they had Chinese affiliated sources, namely Chinese officials; firms contributing 25 headlines in the positive portrayal of China in *The Herald.* On the other hand, *NewsDay* mentioned Mugabe twice with one article contributing negatively while the other was positive. American president Obama also contributed to the negative construction of China's image under the economic consequence frame. A critical observation at this stage is how leaders of the two countries Mugabe and Xi Jinping contribute to the image construction of their countries. Journalists frame such headlines to raise the salience of the subject, and most likely reader's minds will be captured by such a headline rather placing the importance of such an article.

4.9 Headlines construction

The immediate sections present the data from the content analysis and the interpretation of the journalists and media scholars in explaining the trends that inform China's image in the two newspapers. The author also asked the journalists during the in-depth interviews on how

they construct headlines on China-related stories to understand the underlying frames in the minds of Zimbabwean journalists (particularly editors as headline writers) influencing their image of China. In an interview with *NewsDay* journalist Zivira (ibid.) said that as reporters they are "urged" but not compelled to write a suggested headline then the sub-editor reworks it, and the editors finalise in consultation with each other. The sub-editor of *NewsDay*, Garikai Tunhira also explained the process: ''a line of people, decides the headline at times it is the line editor (business editor, news editor, sports, editor, entertainment editor).Tichaona Zindoga told the author how a headline is crafted at the Herald:

> For hard news are generally a responsibility of sub-editors who construct a headline based on the story and the slug suggested by the reporter. Sub-editors construct headlines that best capture the essence of the story or make impact on the reader but in conformity with space and style requirements. It follows that the chief sub-editor may instruct guide or indeed refine sub-editors' suggested texts or headlines. The editor has the final say on what eventually comes out. It is important to note that for the first page of the Herald, the chief sub-editor crafts headlines in consultation with the Editor. In other sections such as features, analysis and opinions writers and desk editors mainly construct their own headlines that may be maintained or slightly changed by sub-editors (ibid.)

Therefore, the response shows that the construction of headlines starts from the suggestions by the journalists with editors having the final say.

4.10 Summary

The section above presented the findings from the content analysis of the two newspapers, *The Herald* and *NewsDa*y in the six months' period. The content analysis reveal that China's image is positive in both newspapers, with the economic consequence frame occupying the greater percentage of the headlines followed by the political frame. This finding agrees with Vreese (2004) in that the consistency and persistency of frames with different studies having shown that the "conflict" (in this case political) and "economic consequences" frames as the most prominent in media. The findings also resonate with Wekesa (2012) who investigated China's image in East African newspapers and found out that China is generally seen in a positive rather than a negative light. However, the interplay of coverage in the state-owned newspaper *The Herald* shows a wider gap in terms of framing China in a more positive light with a few negative headlines.

The findings also resonate with Wasserman (2012), there is a more or less balanced image of China with the interplay of positive and negative frames and the margin between positive and negative framing not being too wide. The economic consequence frame dominated the coverage of China probably to portray China as an economic partner, donor, economic

saviour, development, source investor to Zimbabwe. This period was during the campaign period hence the positive headlines to give an impression of how China is already assisting Zimbabwe with funds. Going back to the literature review this phenomenon was explained by Alexander and Levin's 2005 study (cited in Li and Chitty 2009:2) argue that "the images or stereotypes that a nation has of another depend on three structural features of interstate relations: goal compatibility, relative power/capability, and relative cultural status, or sophistication. These structural relations determine the sort of images that are classified as; ally, enemy, barbarian, imperialist, and dependent (colonial) images." Thus, a look at the headlines under positive economic consequence frames and co-operation between the China and Zimbabwe in *The Herald* can be interpreted in relation to the goal compatibility were the status portrays equal power making the image of China framed as an ally, but rather power lies in China. In *NewsDay*, the structural analysis shows a goal incompatibility on the relations of China and Zimbabwe as portrayed by the media texts, with the economic consequence frame depicting a 'dependent' or 'exploitation' of Zimbabwe by China.

Based on structural framing, the economic consequence and political frames are more established than the cultural thereby showing an imbalanced relationship. In elaborating this point, I use the analogy of a house, when building a house the pillars ought to be on the same level otherwise the roof will fall. Therefore, the imbalance in the structural framing of China in the Zimbabwean print media might affect the relationship in the future.

This period was during the campaign period hence the positive headlines to give an impression of how China is already assisting Zimbabwe with funds. The period after elections had optimistic headlines: *China to invest in Zim* (September, 11), *Sino-Zim trade set to scale new heights* (September, 27), *Chinese firm to invest in Chrome smelter* (October, 30). The headlines continue framing China as an economic saviour, development source ready to assist Zimbabwe.

The visit by the Chinese vice Premier in May got a lot of coverage to show the importance of the diplomatic ties between Harare and Beijing, *Chinese VP expected tomorrow* (May, 19), *Chinese VP meets President* (May, 20*), Chinese VP jets in, Chinese Premier leaves* (May, 23). Under the political frame, 4.8 percent of the headlines showed China's interest in Zimbabwe's political affairs contrary to the held assumption of non-interference. On the day of the elections, July 31, 2013, *The Herald* carried a headline: *Chinese observer team dismisses MDCT rigging claims,* before the results were even announced. The other headlines which portrayed China as a political ally: *Zuma endorses poll outcome, All urged to accept result, China, Kenya echo facilitator's sentiments, MDC-T leader gangs up with*

handlers (August, 5) and China, Korea congratulate president (August, 10) and a reader could deduce China's vested interest and preference in Zimbabwe's elections, despite its stance of non-interference. An editorial titled *Why PM dislikes Chinese VP's visit* (May, 24) showed contradictions in Zimbabwe's inclusive government. The headline's framing reaffirmed the assumption that the other political party in government the MDC led by Prime Minister of Zimbabwe was pro-West and anti-China.

Overall, the Herald portrayal of the image of China is overwhelmingly positive, with a few negative headlines thus questioning *the Herald's* policy of adhering to the basics of ethical journalism of reporting fairly, balanced and accurate.''

The cultural frame had four stories, representing 4.8 percent of the headlines: *China's new tourism frontier* (October, 23), 20 teachers set to visit China (June, 18). In the analysis, the economic frame was a frequent topic in the portrayal of China's image. This was important during the period of election campaigns. The economic frames meant more economic opportunities for Zimbabwe from China in line with ZANU-PF's campaign manifesto ZIMASSET. The headline illustrates that China is now boosting Zimbabwe's tourism sector, which has mainly been an attraction for western tourists. On the other hand, the privately owned media, *NewsDay* carried a few headlines of China for the period under study, however, we identified two frames; economic, political and cultural frames. The goal incompatibility analysis can be employed in the negative economic consequence frames in *NewsDay,* for Zimbabwe, it is portrayed as dependent on China for resources. The potential image constructor will portray 'control or exploitation' of Zimbabwe by China: *China-Zim relations 'set to sour' over cash seizure* (July, 16) and *Zimbabwe government to engage China in building school infrastructur*e (October, 26) *China remains Zimbabwe's top investor* (July, 3).

The stories sourced from international news agencies with China headlines were dominated by the economic frame, and for instance, *The Herald* had about 40 stories from Xinhua, a majority of them positive. The majority of the headlines portrayed China as an economic powerhouse and spelling out China's relations with other countries like Russia, Syria, and the United States. Borrowing from previous studies, Shambaugh (2007:44) Xinhua's reportage is meant to disseminate Chinese Communist Party and state propaganda as in this case.

The findings also resonate with Wei (2012) in that the coverage of social problems, crisis and diseases portrayed unrest, unjust image of China, such as corruptions from government

officials to ordinary people, the widening gap between rich and poor, threat of food like baby milky, forced demolition in urbanization, natural disasters like earthquake and flood.

The findings concur with Wu (1989) in the sense that trade; economic interactions determine the amount of coverage one country receives in another country's media. On the other hand, *NewsDay,* had much of its international news stories from *Reuters*, and the headlines portray China negatively. This can be interpreted as a counter-narrative by the private media and sensitivity to the government's cordial relations with China. The framing of China and other countries contributes to the negative framing of China in the *NewsDay*.

In conclusion, the findings agree with (Pan and Kosick 1993) that the news discourse framing analysis perspective is "a socio-cognitive process involving three players: source, journalists, and audience operating in the universe of shared culture and on the basis of socially defined roles" (Pan and Kosicki 1993:57). The in-depth interviews confirmed that China's image construction is rather based on editorial policies, political interests and ownership structures.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and summary of findings

The findings of the study correspond with the results of other studies on China's image as portrayed by the African media. In Zimbabwe, the media image of China is rather positive in the state-owned newspaper *The Herald.* The study explored concepts from the national image studies and framing theory providing a methodological approach to investigate the media image of China in Zimbabwe. An analysis of the structures of theme, syntax, script and rhetoric of, this study draws conclusions that the economic consequence presented China positively in *The Herald* and negatively in *NewsDay.*

However, the subtle negative images, especially in *NewsDay* editorials and opinions draw from the anti-East and pro-West narrative associated with the private media. Respondents on what influenced the coverage of China in both papers confirmed this.

In assessing some local headlines in *NewsDay,* the image of China, though not significant is slightly negative, though however some headlines which are either negative or positive. The conclusions resonate with similar studies (Zhang, Wasserman, and Mano 2016) that the state media portrays China in a positive image as compared to the private media and that stories in the private media took their slant from Western news agencies such as *Reuters*. However, the coverage of China and editorial policy in *The Herald* relies much on the government's cordial relations with China. In addition, the private media's less coverage of China, particularly, their failure to cover bilateral visits between the Zimbabwean and Chinese authorities, the visit by the Chinese Premier and that of Chinese engineers might be interpreted as a way of downplaying the China's influence in Zimbabwe.

However, from the in-depth interviews, it shows that *The Herald* had more leverage in terms of covering such issues because of their proximity to the state whereas private journalists were barred from covering such events. Though *NewsDay* had more positive headlines than negative, the difference was too minimum, with the local headlines being more negative than they were positive. One can easily deduce the negative stance by *NewsDay* especially the editorial that expressed scepticism towards the Zimbabwean government plans to engage Chinese contractors. Therefore, the study can conclude and agree with Sikuka (2013) that private media in Africa tend to be sensitive to anything supported or aligned with the government like the relationship with China, while the public press is more open to China-Africa relations because most African governments control the public media. The study's revelation of the dominant economic frame portraying China as an economic partner/saviour will get readers' minds with a perception that Zimbabwe-China relations are already bearing

fruit. Consequently, the journalists, ownership factors, state/private control and ownership vis-à-vis the economic and political factors in the Zimbabwean media (Wei 2012) influence the construction of the media image of China in Zimbabwe. The media image of China in Zimbabwe from both the state and private media is a reflection of China's economic and political interests in Zimbabwe. Analysis from the in-depth interviews with the journalists confirms what Scheufele's (1999) calls the five factors that influence how journalists frame a given issue: "social norms and values (capitalist or socialist for instance), organizational pressures and constraints, pressures of interest groups (ownership for instance), journalistic routines (deadlines, news production cycles), ideological and political orientations (developmental journalism or watchdog roles?)". News producers are influenced by such factors in their constructing of images in news discourse; they 'frame' topics, subjects due to the various forces and factors as highlighted above.

In addition to the uniformity of journalistic frame building, Dimitrova et al. (2005) point out that the mass media portrayed as a part of a broader national system (Gilboa 2009) by default, influenced by the political, economic and social constraints of the broader systems in which they exist. Consequently, China funded the ZANU-PF campaign with T-shirts, money, and vehicles could be seen as having influenced the construction of a positive image in the state media, *The Herald.* This can be interpreted as one of China's soft power initiatives, image enhancers to improve their national image in Zimbabwe.

5.1 Limitations

The study only examined two newspapers in a country with a number of publications that may have covered China. A study into a wide selection of newspapers would have provided a bigger sample of the construction of the image of China in Zimbabwean media. The other limitation was the period; it would have been interesting to look at the coverage in previous elections as a means of validating the results in this study.

5.2 Recommendations for further research

Since the study focused on headlines as a means of understanding the frames that construct the image of China in the Zimbabwean media, further research could analyse the body of the articles to get a more detailed analysis on how the stories are structured, the authors of the articles, the tone of sentences, and the sources who contribute to the framing of China's image. It would be interesting to do further research that investigates the public perceptions on the coverage of China the print media and see if the same findings will be achieved.

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