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MA Research Thesis

Two sets of truths?

*A content analysis of South African media coverage of China during the FOCAC 2015
Johannesburg Summit*

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ABC – Audit Bureau of Circulations

ANC - African National Congress

BEE - Black Economic Empowerment

BRICS - Brazil Russia India China South Africa

COSATU - Congress of the South African Trade Unions

CPC – Communist Party of China

DA - Democratic Alliance

DIRCO - Department of International Relations and Cooperation

EFF - Economic Freedom Fighters

FOCAC - Forum on China Africa Cooperation

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

NDB – New Development Bank

PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organisation

SA - South Africa

SAARF - South African Audience Research Foundation

SABC - South African Broadcasting Corporation

SACP – South African Communist Party

SOE – State Owned Enterprise

Abstract

Previous studies on South African media responses to the developing China-South Africa relationship show there is a disparity between the media representation of China versus the official tone set by the two governments for their bilateral relationship. This paper compares how two South African newspapers, *The New Age* and *The Citizen*, located at the opposite ends of political spectrum, reported on China during a six month period which approximates the duration of the Forum of China Africa Cooperation Sixth Ministerial Conference also known as The Johannesburg Summit. The aim of this comparison is to map the media factors leading to these differences.

Before delving into the content analysis, the study first reviewed the media frames of China in Africa using the political economy of media theory. The triangulation of these theories linked the frames to the political economic orientation of the chosen newspapers. A quantitative content analysis of *The New Age* and *The Citizen* was conducted focusing on topics, tones, sources and the frames which were summarised from China Africa academic literature.

Results disclosed both *The New Age* and *The Citizen* had business and commerce topics as the main point of interest. Other aspects of the bilateral relationship were not receiving much media attention despite government efforts. *The Citizen* had more coverage, although negative, of the Johannesburg Summit with diverse topics, different tones and sources than *The New Age*. Judging by application of the frames, *The Citizen* showed an editorial leaning towards the opposition of the ruling party, and economic orientation towards its elite readers. Content analysis also confirmed the government-control nature of *The New Age*. China was more positively portrayed in *The New Age*. The research proves that ownership and funding had shaped South African media representation of China.

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Introduction

1.0 Summary of the topic and research questions

As “comprehensive strategic partners”, the governments of South African and Chinese hold their relationship in high regard. However, what are the views of everyday South Africans? Hypothetically, ordinary South Africans may or may not be overly supportive of the relationship, in contrast to the South African government’s close affiliation with their Chinese counterparts.

Based on this hypothesis, it can be surmised that a less-than-supportive stance by ordinary citizens is in part due to a South African media critical of this liaison. An equally plausible supposition however is that there are South African media that may be supportive of the relationship thus portraying the relationship in positive light, thereby shaping positive viewpoints in the populace. In other words, South African media narratives may be considered as one of several factors shaping negativity or positivity towards China in the minds of the South African public. This possible top-down communication manner demands closer examination of the South African media to determine their role in shaping views on China.

Another perspective on South Africa-China relations can be seen in the public’s views on political, economic and cultural stances. This researcher begins with the presumption that the South African media is more interested in bilateral economic ties than social, cultural and political links with China. This is partly because China has been South Africa’s largest trading partner for many years – thus the presumed positive economic views. However, the political and cultural aspects of this relationship have been greatly under reported as we shall see in the intervening sections of this paper. A related assumption is the news content on China chosen by the media can build an image in line with the interests of the elites in the society but less attractive to grassroots South Africans.

This study will delve into reasons for the negative-positive reporting of China in South Africa, along with attendant exploration of factors that drives undesirable and/or desirable media coverage. As its analytical context, the research uses the Sixth Ministerial meeting of the Forum of China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) which is also referred to as the Johannesburg Summit. This event was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in December 2015.

This research is focused on how the Summit was covered by two South African newspapers, The New Age and The Citizen, guided by framing theory, and political economy of communication theory. The first produced a content analysis scheme and the latter provided an interpretive approach.

The following sections lay out the broad backdrop against which subsequent analyses will take shape.

1.1 FOCAC and China-Africa relations

Established in 2000, The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) ministerial conferences occur every three years, alternately in China and then an African country (FOCAC, 2013). FOCAC is described in China's first African policy paper issued in 2006 as "an effective mechanism for the collective dialogue and multilateral cooperation between China and Africa" (FOCAC, 2013). It is now considered an important framework and platform enabling "a new type of China-Africa partnership featuring long-term stability, equality and mutual benefit" (Foreign Ministry of China, 2006). Today, China has diplomatic relations with 54 African countries (Foreign Ministry of China, 2017) and these African countries are therefore member states of the FOCAC mechanism.

The First Ministerial Conference of FOCAC was held in Beijing from October 10 to 12, 2000 (FOCAC, 2013). The two topics of the meeting were "How to promote the establishment of a new international political and economic order in the 21st century" and "How to further strengthen Sino-African economic cooperation and trade under the new circumstances" (FOCAC, 2013).

The meeting was described as the launching point of a "new type of partnership for long-term stability, equality and mutual benefit" between China and African states. This was when the Beijing Declaration of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and Program for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development was adopted (FOCAC, 2013).

The Second Ministerial Conference of FOCAC was held December on 15th and 16th, 2003 in Ethiopia (FOCAC, 2013). The follow-up actions since the first Ministerial Conference was reviewed and the FOCAC Addis Ababa Action Plan (2004-2006) was adopted (FOCAC, 2013). The Third Ministerial FOCAC Conference and the FOCAC Beijing Summit were held in Beijing in 2006 – again with the theme of friendship, peace, cooperation and development (2013). A three-year plan, Forum on China-Africa Cooperation-Beijing Action Plan (2007-2009), together with the Declaration of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation was adopted (2013). While the previous two FOCAC meetings focused on aid and cooperation, at this conference, the term "win-win economic cooperation" was used for the first time (2013).

The Fourth Ministerial Conference was held in Egypt on November 8th and 9th, 2009 and its theme was "Deepen [a] New Type of China-Africa Strategic Partnership for Sustainable Development" (FOCOC, 2013). This Conference laid down plans for the next three years (2013). Since then, the aspects of China-Africa cooperation have diversified into environment protection and addressing climate change (2013).

The Fifth FOCAC Ministerial Conference was held in Beijing in 2012. Its theme was "Open up New Prospects for New [a] Type of China-Africa Strategic Partnership" (FOCAC, 2013). The Conference identified work priorities for the next three years and chose South Africa as the host of the Sixth FOCAC Conference (2013).

In 2015, under President Xi Jinping, the Chinese government released China's second African policy paper (Foreign Ministry of China, 2015). According to this document, since its establishment, FOCAC has grown to be an important platform for collective dialogue between China and Africa and is an effective mechanism for their pragmatic cooperation (Foreign Ministry of China, 2015). The highlighting of "pragmatic cooperation" is significant as President Xi Jinping has demonstrated a more assertive and outward-looking foreign policy than his predecessors (Taylor, 2015, p.24).

In 2004, the then South African Department of Foreign Affairs declared that above and beyond its strong bilateral relationship with China, FOCAC was able to "substantially contribute to the realisation of an African Renaissance" (Department of International Relations and Cooperation, 2004). On a practical level, it is also acknowledged much of the structured interaction between China and Africa has been through FOCAC Ministerial meetings (Landers, 2015).

The South African government identifies FOCAC as one of the most strategic partnerships between Africa and its development partners (Government Communication and Information System, 2015). With African economic development and Africa's industrial revolution on the agenda, South Africa was chosen to host the Johannesburg Summit and FOCAC's Sixth Ministerial Conference in 2015. This was decided in Beijing at the conclusion of the fifth ministerial conference of the FOCAC in 2012 (Landers, 2015).

The umbrella theme for the Johannesburg Summit was "Africa-China Progressing Together: Win-Win Cooperation for Common Development" (FOCAC, 2015). It was a two-day conference, December 4th and 5th, 2016 (FOCAC, 2015). The summit was attended by Chinese President Xi Jinping, South African President Jacob Zuma, as well as heads of state and government representatives from approximately 50 African countries (Xinhua, 2015).

1.2 Background: China Africa relations

China-Africa engagements are crucial to the Chinese government's construction of China's international image as a peacefully rising power (Alden & Alves, 2008). In this section, China-Africa relations history will be briefly reviewed before summarising mainstream academic views on China-Africa relations, from both Chinese and Western scholars.

China-Africa relations can be traced back to the fifteenth century (Taylor, 2012), long before FOCAC was ever thought of or established. But links between China and Africa can only be substantiated in the post-1949 People's Republic of China era (Taylor, 2012). Officially ties between China and African countries only began in 1955 with the first Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia (Wasserman, 2012, p.336), when Beijing realised newly independent African countries were both natural allies and a potential solution to its legitimacy problems (Alden & Alves, 2008, p.47).

When Beijing split from its then Communist ally Moscow, Chairman Mao of China adapted its 'Two Camps Theory' into a 'Three Worlds Theory'. In Mao's new vision, developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin-America would be united and refuse to align with the adversary super powers – the United States, the Soviet Union, or developed European countries (Alden & Alves, 2008, p.48).

Under the guidance of this theory and Mao's ambition to lead the Third World revolution, Africa became the terrain for ideological competition in the eyes of Chinese leaders (Alden & Alves, 2008, p.48). China poured its limited resources to Africa to support radical movements during this time (2008, p.50). After 1970, Beijing began to approach Africa in a more normalised manner by forging ties with African governments regardless of their ideological orientations. In addition, China extended aid to selected countries (2008, p.52).

Before the 1990s, Africa was less a priority in China's foreign policy than the developed world, due to its domestic modernisation program (Alden & Alves, 2008, p.52). During this time, Africa was promised mutual benefits, practical results and common development by Chinese government (2008, p.52).

Since the 1990s, a proliferation of diplomatic agreements and Chinese funded infrastructure projects have been implemented throughout the African continent. Additionally, strengthened political ties and cooperative projects have since fostered expansion of economic ties (Wasserman, 2012, p.337). Other drivers for the revitalisation of China-Africa relations are, as Alden and Alves (2008, p.53) point out, Beijing's urgent need to get out of isolation after the Tiananmen Square incident, and the need to curb Taiwan's renewed efforts to represent the whole of China.

Li Anshan divides China's African policy shifts into two periods featuring respective ideologies, diversification and co-development (Li, 2007). Li concludes the first phase occurred between 1949 and 1978, from the establishment of the People's Republic of China to its economic opening (2007). During this period, China's Africa policy was heavily influenced by ideology (2007). The second phase started with the 12th CPC National Assembly in 1984 when the Chinese domestic economic development and the pursuit of a peaceful and independent foreign policy became the focus of the Chinese African policy (2007).

During this time, Sino-African inter-party relations ensured steady relations which yielded more economic and trade cooperation (Li, 2007). Sino-Africa trade increased tenfold between 2000 and 2010 (Wasserman, 2012, p.337). In 2009, China became the continent's largest trading partner (Wasserman, 2012). It is observed the established pattern of China-Africa trade is China mostly importing African raw materials and exporting manufactured goods in return (Alden et al. 2008). Chinese companies have made investments throughout Africa, and the infrastructure sector has attracted a substantial share of the investments (Alden & Davies, 2006). However, Li notes Chinese companies have been criticised for their token contribution to local economies and

employment (Li, 2007).

As the Chinese government rebalances its economy away from investment and towards domestic consumption, Chinese demands for commodities have decreased, thus negatively impacting African exports (Taylor, 2015, p.27). Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed this slower but more sustainable growth was the “New Normal”. It features medium-to-high speed growth driven by innovation instead of input and investment (Zhang & Kangombe, 2016). What it meant for Africa was “the earlier resource-focused investment was no longer viable” (Deng, 2017).

Subsequently, a new slogan the “African Dream” emerged in the Chinese government’s African policy propaganda suggesting the Chinese government is veering towards “diversification, industrialisation, and sustainable development” in Africa (Deng, 2017). The term “African Dream”, which is about “the rejuvenation of the continent, the development of the country and the wellbeing of the people”, is closely linked to the term the “Chinese dream”. The Chinese dream depicts “prosperity of the country, the rejuvenation of the nation and the happiness of the people”. Therefore, under the “New Normal”, the China-Africa relationship is still beneficial to both sides (FOCAC, 2014). Thus, infrastructure, human capital, and investment are identified as the focus of China-Africa cooperation (Deng, 2017). But, how this promise will be kept remains to be seen (Deng, 2017).

Yang (2006, p.23) concludes that China positions Africa in a South-South Cooperation perspective. Le Pere and Shelton (2007, p.34) assert that the Chinese government’s plans to mobilise economic and political cooperation to foster the strengthening and advancement of the Global South’s political and economic agenda is a means to build a more just and equitable international order.

Alden and Alves (2008, p.43) point out that Beijing’s constant rhetoric of third world solidarity first of all provides assurances exploitation or colonisation will not be the result of China-Africa commercial ties. Secondly, it proves Beijing has been a reliable and trustworthy development partner for Africa over the past fifty years. Lastly, it answers Western concerns that China’s rise to global economic and political leadership will be peaceful and harmonious (Alden & Alves, 2008, p.56).

Grimm provides two key phrases to describe the features of Chinese engagements in Africa: “economic interdependence” and “strong development expectations” (Grimm, 2014). Grimm (2014) warns that China is facing the greatest of expectations among emerging economies, fanned by South-South rhetoric. Yet, to deliver, there are elements unable to be controlled by China. Grimm (2014) reminds Chinese policy makers that the success of development largely relies on the reform of African governments.

Fijałkowski (2011) stresses Chinese agents, who are involved in Chinese-African policy, have their own agendas. These various groups of agents include numerous government institutions, provincial agents and corporations. Fijałkowski stresses the central Chinese government needs to

ensure these agents strictly act according to general policy goals (Fijałkowski, 2011).

Alden, Large and Oliveira (2008) voice their concern of the Chinese government's insistence on its exceptional condition, "a benevolent partner for Africa in a 'win-win' strategic partnership", may not last long because of its evolving commercial and other attendant interests upon Africa (Alden, Large & Oliveira, 2008). Alden, Large and Oliveira (2008) envisage those Chinese economic activities on the continent, which are socially and environmentally flawed, would ultimately affect the relationship. Accordingly, it can be deduced if this concern becomes a reality, the media image of China in Africa, despite Chinese government's efforts, may be in sharp contrast to what China portrays itself.

1.3 Diplomatic ties between China and South Africa

Le Pere and Shelton (2006, p.34) have stated among African countries, South Africa particularly supports China's emphasis on South-South cooperation. When South Africa officially recognised China in 1998, it effectively re-orientated its diplomacy and economy away from its previous primary focus, Europe and North America (Alden and Park, 2013, p.645).

Before 1998, relations between South Africa and China were not particularly close. In 1950, during the Korean War, the then South African Air Force fought against the Chinese People's Liberation Army (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012). After the Korean War, South Africa was regarded as a major battleground between Communism and Capitalism in Africa, so under the ideological guideline, the Soviet Union and the PRC both supported the anti-apartheid movement (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012).

A faction of the African National Congress (ANC), broke away to become the Pan African Congress (PAC), was supported by the People's Republic of China. Meanwhile, the ANC was supported by the PRC's communist rival, the Soviet Union (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012). It was only after the ANC's Oliver Tambo's visit to China in 1983 that China began to shift its support toward the ANC (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012).

Since Nelson Mandela announced South Africa would sever diplomatic ties with Taiwan in 1996, China and South Africa have exchanged dozens of official visits and signed more than 50 co-operation agreements, covering nuclear energy, science and technology, health, culture, tourism and many other fields (Alden and Park, 2013, p.649).

The change in South Africa's diplomatic policy was rooted in the country's economy. To survive in an increasingly complex global economic environment, South Africa had to reshape its foreign policy to reach out, and to increase its competitiveness as a Post-Apartheid democracy (Grimm, et al. 2014, p. 6). South Africa's new relationship with China entailed an official renouncement of ties with the Republic of China (ROC, hereafter Taiwan), although these economic ties with Taiwan were not severed (Grimm, et al, 2014, p. 6).

In April 2000, the two Presidents, Thabo Mbeki and Jiang Zemin signed the “Pretoria declaration on the Partnership between the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa”. This was when the establishment of a high-level bi-national commission was announced (Foreign Ministry of China, 2017). The bi-national commission has since held five plenary meetings as well as a number of diplomatic, economic, trade, science and technology, defense, education, energy, and mineral cooperation sub-committee meetings (Foreign Ministry of China, 2017).

In 2010, South Africa and China entered into a “Strategic Comprehensive Partnership” (Foreign Ministry of China, 2017). As emerging powers within the new global geopolitical and geo-economic order, the relationship between the two countries was further strengthened when South Africa received an invitation in December, 2010 to become part of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) group of emerging economies (Seria, 2010). Once South Africa joined the group, the name was changed to BRICS.

South Africa hosted the first BRICS Summit in 2013, which saw the creation of the BRICS Business Council and the initial setting up of a BRICS Bank, which has since become the “New Development Bank” (NDB) (Department of International Relations and Cooperation, 2018). South Africa now is the Africa Regional Centre of the NDB (Department of International Relations and Cooperation, 2018).

The 10th BRICS Summit will take place in Johannesburg between July 25th and 27th, 2018, chaired by the South African government (Department of International Relations and Cooperation, 2018). On the global stage, BRICS gathers within the UN, IMF and World Bank on the side as a correlating working group to strategise common positions (Xiong, 2012).

Under the frame of BRICS, China and South Africa have coordinated their synergies on reforms of global institutions like the IMF and World Bank, as well as enhancing cooperation in the G20 and the WTO (Xiong, 2012). BRICS further enhances the China-South Africa cooperation in political stance and voting positions in the United Nations Security Council (Xiong, 2012). Take Sudan for example, despite an indictment of Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir from the International Criminal Court (ICC), the AU, along with China, has long shown reluctance over the endorsement of drastic actions against Sudan (Xiong, 2012). It is observed that the most salient commonality between the two countries is their evolving foreign policies which enable the duo to take particular positions, the significant commitment to the South agenda, in international forums (Matshanda, 2010).

The fact that South Africa has shifted its diplomatic policy in favour of China is likely to be of interest to the South African media. This is because, among other things, this progression reflects South Africa’s domestic political development (Matthee, 2016, p.14).

In this section, the diplomatic ties from 1949 are briefly reviewed. To begin, Chinese people have been in South Africa since the colonial Dutch period (Yap & Man, 1996). Comparing diplomatic

ties, the history of economic and cultural relations between the two countries is long, and they have shaped the image of China in South Africa over the years. The following sections will mainly focus upon economic and cultural relations since the two countries established diplomatic ties in the 1990s.

1.4 Economic relations between China and South Africa

China's heightened economic activities in Africa have been frequently reported in the African media (Wasserman, 2013). South African media coverage of China has been cautiously optimistic due to the economic ties between the two countries (Wasserman, 2012). Conversely, should trade and investment slow down, media coverage of China may also alter. In this section, economic relations between China and South Africa will be briefly reviewed.

Since 2010, China has been South Africa's largest trading partner (Chinese Embassy in South Africa, 2015). The two economies reached a trade volume of US\$35.3 billion in 2016, rising from US\$800 million in 1998 (Foreign Ministry of China, 2017). These economic engagements cut both ways since Chinese companies have a number of investments in South Africa and South Africa is one of the few African countries with investments in China (Alden et al. 2015).

China's direct investment stock in South Africa was in the order of US\$13 billion at the end of 2016 (Foreign Ministry of China, 2017). South Africa is included in China's top 20 outbound direct investment destinations of 2016 (Foreign Ministry of China, 2017). However, the bilateral trade volume has since dropped in three consecutive years since 2014 (Foreign Ministry of China, 2017).

The 2014 trade volume was US\$ 60.3 billion – down 7.6% from the previous year. For 2015, the bilateral trade volume was US\$ 46 billion – down 23.66% from 2014, and for 2016, the trade volume was US\$ 35.3 billion, down 23.26% from 2015 (Foreign Ministry of China, 2017). In 2016 China was still the top SA exports destination but in July 2017, China lost this status to Germany (SARS, 2017).

While South Africa is a major exporter of raw materials, and as such, has benefited from the growth in Chinese demand. Additionally, it has a relatively highly developed industrial sector. This means imports from China pose challenges to several South African industries such as textiles and clothing, rubber, paper and metal products (Edwards & Jenkins, 2014, p.2).

China holds massive excess capacity, especially in steel. Therefore, the recent increase in Chinese steel exports has already driven down international prices and created much anxiety in the global market (Huang, 2016, p.315). For example, in 2016, South Africa had to extend tariffs on some steel imports to counter the cheap supply from China. This was done as a means of protecting its own domestic producers (Van Vuuren, 2016).

Edwards and Jenkins (2014, p.5) concluded imports from China actually moderate increases in

consumer prices and helps to curtail production cost increases. However, conversely, competition from China has also fueled concerns about the direct effects upon output and employment in the South African manufacturing sector. These two polarised opinions have reflected the larger picture of China's impact on South Africa.

With addressing concerns from the manufacturing sector in view, assisting South Africa's industrialisation process is featured in bilateral economic agreements. Chinese President Xi Jinping visited South Africa in December 2015 and proposed to work jointly to take their bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership to new practical cooperation heights (Foreign Ministry of China, 2017).

The China-South Africa Five-to-Ten Year Strategic Program for Cooperation, was adopted at the end of 2014 when President Zuma visited China. The two governments identified the following fields as priorities for 2015:

1. alignment of industries to accelerate South Africa's industrialisation process,
2. enhancement of co-operation in special economic zones (SEZs),
3. enhancement of marine co-operation, infrastructure development, human resources co-operation, and financial co-operation (Brand South Africa, 2015).

Following the progress made in these areas, a number of new and renewed agreements were signed during Xi's 2015 visit to South Africa. This included the Action Plan on the Strengthening of the Joint Working Groups between China and South Africa, MoU on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (Brand South Africa, 2015). These agreements encompass various sections of the economy including public enterprises, technology and human resource development (Brand South Africa, 2015).

1.5 Cultural exchanges between China and South Africa

While China deepens its economic and political ties with South Africa, it also tries to close the gap in other areas of the relationship. Culturally, 2014 was the "Year of South Africa in China". It was followed by the "Year of China in South Africa" in 2015 (Chinese Embassy in South Africa, 2015). The initiative kicked off when China's president Xi Jinping visited South Africa in 2013 and both sides emphasised the need for increased people-to-people engagement (Foreign Ministry of China, 2017).

In 2017, Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong visited South Africa and launched the China-South Africa High-Level People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges Mechanism. This is the first of its kind between China and any African country (Chinese Embassy, 2017). This mechanism involves cooperation in almost every aspect of relations between the two countries but is neither political nor economic. Instead, it includes education, culture, science and technology, health, youth, women, press, think tanks, tourism, sports, and local friendship (Chinese Embassy, 2017). Chinese diplomats explain that the mechanism is aiming at gaining "popular support", deepening

“Comprehensive Strategic Partnership” and expanding “people-to-people and cultural exchanges” between China and Africa (Chinese Embassy, 2017).

Currently there are five Confucius Institutes in South African universities: The University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, Rhodes University, the Durban University of Technology, and the University of Johannesburg (Nkosi, 2015). The Confucius Institutes receive Chinese government funds to promote Chinese culture globally at tertiary education level (King, 2013). At the school level, the Basic Education ministry plans to offer Mandarin as a second additional language in a total number of 500 schools throughout South Africa by 2020 (Xinhua, 2016).

On the grassroots level, undoubtedly, immigrants from China have already contributed to the introduction of Chinese culture to South Africa throughout the years. In 2008, an estimated 300,000 South Africans of Chinese descent lived in the country (Park, 2008). South Africa is the only African country with a community of locally born Chinese (Park, 2008). The distinctive Chinese language, Chinese martial arts, Chinese medicine and Chinese food are no strangers to South Africans.

In South Africa, the Chief Director of International Relations in the Department of Arts and Culture has pointed out respective country events could assist to: raise the profile of China in South Africa and vice versa; create fertile ground for cultural and public diplomacy to strengthen bilateral relations; and to promote multi-sectorial co-operation (Wu, 2015).

Wu (2015) throws a spotlight on the fact these cultural events display governments’ recognition of the importance and need for better communication and understanding by the respective societies. Wu (2015) states that since formal bilateral relations were established in 1998, certain aspects between South Africa and China, such as business and diplomacy, have advanced further with a real understanding of values, culture and people.

Hence, the principal objective of these events was to go beyond policy circles to gain popular support. King (2013) argues that China mobilises its soft power in Africa through education. This angle stresses China’s role as a strategist rather than a partner in the discourse of South-South cooperation. However, King appears to view soft power to be compatible with the principles of South-South cooperation (King, 2013). However, how China’s soft power is perceived and received in South Africa also needs to be studied further. Stambach and Kwayu (2017) take the Confucius Institutes in Africa as an example to illustrate that on the receiving end, local governments, local universities and local students all have their own agendas when they engage with China.

1.6 Problem statement

It is hoped that the above introduction will provide sufficient up-to-date information concerning China-South Africa relations. Contrary to China’s engagement with the African continent, the

bilateral relationship only started to bloom in the 1990s. Hosting the sixth FOCAC Conference in 2015 firmly proves South Africa's importance to China's Africa policy and its African policy goal. Economically, China's insatiable hunger for minerals and other raw materials, Chinese investment in the mining sector and banking sectors, together with the rising metal price cycle have strongly supported South Africa's economy in the 2000s. Bilateral trade also leads to frictions such as local manufacturers pushing policy makers to raise tariffs on Chinese products such as steel and textiles. The initiation of cultural exchanges actively supported by governments of both countries is only beginning. However, on grassroots level, South Africans have been well acquainted with Chinese culture because Chinese immigrants have made their homes in the country since precolonial times. However, now, in the 21st century, politics, economy and culture are the pillars of China-South Africa bilateral relations.

It is argued that China's economic power has made a major impact on the global economy and geopolitical landscape (Mills & Sidiropoulos, 2004). In seeking the leadership of the global South, China has developed alliances of key countries such as South Africa. It has also positioned itself as an advocate for a new and more equitable world order – forming the BRICS, for example (Mills & Sidiropoulos, 2004).

The above mentioned perspectives have all been reflected in the South African media and have shaped the country's image of China. As a diplomatic event, the 2015 FOCAC summit has the value of promoting the Chinese government's African policy agendas. And, the Strategic Comprehensive Partnership with South Africa is an objective in which the SA media could have played a role.

Therefore, this research paper undertakes content analysis of South African media coverage of China during the FOCAC Johannesburg summit. Studies on China in South Africa have been carried out but the topic of media coverage remains understudied. The few studies that have been executed have not grounded the analysis of the reporting of the FOCAC meetings in the political economy of South Africa. Therefore, the Johannesburg summit is a significant political, economic and cultural event that provides context for the study of South African media coverage of China. This presents a means of understanding the media-based image of China in South Africa. With the hypothesis that various media shape different images of China, it is important for the analysis to be grounded in media, representing different political and economic interests.

For example, a previous content analysis of South African media shows China activates both political and economic discourses (Wasserman, 2012, p.338). It also researches the reasons for noticeable differences in the coverage, and the motivation behind editorial decisions (Wasserman, 2012, p.338). For example, during the same time period, The New Age has 100% positive coverage of China while others have lower percentages – even 100% negative coverage (Wasserman, 2012, p.337).

To understand media's role in society, it is essential to recognise the relationships between media power and state power (Wasko, 2014). The reality is distorted and manufactured by the media so much that the current situation allows only the elites managing society to serve their own best interests while presenting this as being in everyone's interest (Curran, 2002). The leadership groups, both government and non-government elites, want to use the mass media to mold the "political world view" of the citizens, by distorting the information, which is typically achieved by skipping vital information, by avoiding requests for information, and by diverting attention (Ojo, 2003). This research mobilises the framing theory to unveil the image of China in South African media, and particularly China-South Africa government relations. It also attempts to answer why the media is geared to work in a way with the guidance of the political economy theory of media.

Africa "sees" China through media. However, journalistic objectivity is often prevented by "government and large interest groups" (Schudson, 1978). A quantitative content analysis will provide evidence to solve the question: to what extent does mass media portray the same matter or event differently due to their own political economic orientations.

1.7 Justification and significance

Between news coverage and public knowledge, as the democratic process assumes, individual citizens should have the capacity to hold elected officials accountable (Curran et al., 2009). And, in practice, political accountability requires a media system to be able to deliver a sufficient supply of meaningful public affairs information (Curran, et al, 2009).

However, in reality, media will always be prevented by its own political economic orientation from achieving this goal (Curran, 2002). Guided by the framing theory, a close examination of South African media coverage of China with a quantified result is essential in revealing the disparities of media representation of China. The key focus must be on whether or not China's engagement with South Africa has been represented as the two governments wish or not are sufficiently covered in two South African newspapers – The New Age and The Citizen. A qualitative analysis using the political economy of communication theory could shed light on the reasons behind editorial decisions, as the theory critically interrogates the "dominant and overarching cultural production systems that are advanced under a framework" (Golding & Murdock, 2000).

The Johannesburg Summit provides an opportunity to look at how the complex South Africa-China strategic partnership is being represented in the media. It is one of several high-level platforms enabling interactions between political elites and the affluent from both sides. It is also a diplomatic effort which attracted intense media focus. Therefore, it serves as a perfect research object to see what messages of China have been conveyed to South Africans.

If South African readers misunderstand China, then it will be difficult for the Chinese in South Africa to integrate into local communities. This in turn creates social problems and risks, such as

vandalism of Chinese shops. Conversely, the South African public's misperception of China may cause the country to lose its competitiveness in attracting Chinese business and expertise. However, it is also important to consider that the media should also be able to be critical of both the South African government and the Chinese government.

1.8 Research aim

A content analysis will show what the South African print media has provided its readers with material about China, using the Johannesburg Summit as a news topic. In truth, this meeting was an important milestone in South Africa-China relations. The result could illustrate the discrepancy between the two "sets" of truth of the relations. One is from the newspaper which aligns itself with the South African ruling party and is financially backed by the government and the other from the privately-owned print media.

Underscored by the political economy of the media theory, this research intends to map out factors around the media leading to these differences. Based upon the most recent developments of the diplomatic, economic and cultural relations between South Africa and China, this study will first of all ascertain if China is represented in the way the two governments would like – or not – in South African media. Then these findings will be depicted in a quantitative manner with the intention of contributing new knowledge to the China-South Africa media literature.

Secondly, there have been no studies contextualising FOCAC in the South African media involving political economic factors. This is especially so considering the political environment in which newspapers operate. This study aims to fill this knowledge gap, as previous studies of China in South African media lack specific event-based discussion. The result would hopefully assist improving government communication. Lastly, the research will examine the current quality of international news in the South African print media within the Chinese context.

1.9 Conclusion

FOCAC is a continued reflection and conclusion of China's domestic development, international relations and foreign policy, and China-Africa relations by the Chinese government for every three years. Between the Fifth FOCAC meetings and the Sixth FOCAC meetings, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed a term "New Normal" to describe a slower Chinese economic growth, which meant less resource-focused trade and investment with Africa (Deng, 2017; Zhang & Kangombe, 2016). To cushion the impact on China-Africa relations, subsequently, a new slogan the "African Dream", which focuses on diversification, industrialisation, and sustainable development in Africa, emerged in the Chinese government's African policy propaganda (Deng, 2017). These new developments have also been included in the umbrella theme of the Sixth FOCAC meetings, which is "Africa-China Progressing Together: Win-Win Cooperation for Common Development". South Africa, a Comprehensive Strategic Partner of China, who had benefited from China's growth but now experiencing the bitter fruits of China's "New Normal", naturally has its own

expectations and agendas for FOCAC, which is nevertheless still recognised by South African government as an important platform for China-Africa relations under the South-South Cooperation framework (Government Communication and Information System, 2015; Landers, 2015).

FOCAC is a topic frequented by world media, including South African media, under the China-Africa theme. However, the media coverage on FOCAC can be substantially different from the government propaganda. Some of the news stories may portray China in a tone that is very different from what the Chinese government wishes to be seen in South Africa and Africa. This research paper undertakes content analysis of South African media coverage of China during the FOCAC Johannesburg summit. This presents a means of understanding the media-based image of China in South Africa. With the hypothesis that various media shape different images of China, it is important for the analysis to be grounded in media, representing different political and economic interests. This research mobilises the framing theory to unveil the image of China in South African media, and particularly China-South Africa government relations. It also attempts to answer why the media is geared to work in a way with the guidance of the political economy theory of media. The key focus must be on whether or not China's engagement with South Africa has been represented as the two governments wish or not are sufficiently covered in two South African newspapers – The New Age and The Citizen. A qualitative analysis using the political economy of communication theory could shed light on the reasons behind editorial decisions. The result could illustrate the discrepancy between the two “sets” of truth of the relations. One is from the newspaper which aligns itself with the South African ruling party and is financially backed by the government and the other from the privately-owned print media. Guided by the framing theory, a close examination of South African media coverage of China with a quantified result is essential in revealing the disparities of media representation of China. Underscored by the political economy of the media theory, this research intends to map out factors around the media leading to these differences.

Political Context of the research

2.0 The importance of political context

This section focuses on South African political parties and their relations with China, as well as how the press has covered these relations. The political economy of communication requires that a study of the press must be placed into its own political context, especially when the political parties are closely linked to the press (Hadland, 2007, p7). Alden and Wu (2016) state South African domestic elements, to wit ANC dissidents, opposition parties, as well as some elements of business and civil society, anyone whose perspectives and interests converge to a position that generally opposes the Zuma administration's foreign policy orientation towards China (Alden & Wu, 2016. p.222).

In South Africa, despite newspapers attempting to avoid linkages with any political parties, they are "overwhelmed by discourse, personnel and policies" of the ruling party and its allies (Hadland, 2007, p.7). This comes as a consequence of a powerful ruling party and a weak opposition. However, unlike most other African countries, in reality, South Africa does not have national newspaper titles owned and controlled by the government (Kupe, 2014, p.29).

As for South Africa and China relations, on the one hand the relationship is affected by the divisions within South Africa itself, to wit, conflicting and multi-layered perspectives on South Africa's identity and its relationship with China. On the other hand, the relationship is affected by domestic political factors (Alden & Wu, 2016, p.203). Therefore, the relationship between China and South Africa's political parties, especially the ANC, are often topics of great interest to the press.

2.1 ANC and China

Sections of the ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) believe bilateral relations are built upon historical ties between the two ruling parties which date back to the era of the South African liberation struggle (Zulu, 2016). Although these relations were bumpy in the past (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012), they are today very close and marked by exchanges and communications between the two (ANC Today, 2016).

China as a bilateral partner with South Africa has only become a high foreign-policy priority since the political shift from the Mbeki to the Zuma Administration (Grimm, et al., 2014). Between 2008 and 2016, ANC leaders, both at the national and provincial levels visited China on multiple occasions. Jacob Zuma, President of the ANC in 2015, President of Republic of South Africa in 2015, had taken two state visits to China since he assumed office in 2007.

As Head of State, Zuma visited China a total of six times. He attended the BRICS Summit, the

fifth FOCAC Summit, the ceremony for the commemoration of 70th Anniversary of World Anti-Fascist War, and the G20 Summit in China (Foreign Ministry of China, 2017). It was during his incumbency the two countries entered into the “Strategic Comprehensive Partnership” in 2010 (Foreign Ministry of China, 2017). At that time, China became South Africa’s largest trading partner (Foreign Ministry of China, 2017).

The current ANC President, Cyril Ramaphosa, who assumed office as ANC Deputy President in 2012, was one of the co-shareholders in the Shanduka Group of companies in which the China Investment Corporation possessed a stake until 2014 (England, 2014). As ANC Deputy President, Ramaphosa openly declared China’s economic development path was a reference to South Africa. However, this course of action flies in the face of the Democratic Alliance party, the largest opposition party. Generally, the DA is quite dismissive of the China experience (Makinana, 2015). Remarks from Ramaphosa suggest economic ties with China are used by the ANC to distinguish itself from its opponents. The current Deputy President of the party is David Dabede Mabuza, and he has no public record of visiting China or receiving Chinese government officials or Party members.

The former ANC National Chairperson Baleka Mbete had also expressed the need for strengthening ties with China. Mbete visited China in 2015 and met with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang as the Speaker of the South African National Assembly (Xinhua, 2015). The current ANC National Chairperson is Gwede Mantashe, who had previously overseen the ANC and the CPC party-to-party exchange program. This program focuses on governance training for ANC leaders, at both the NEC and Provincial levels (ANC Today, 2016). On this note, Mantashe was also reported to confirm that the Chinese Communist Party had agreed to fund the ANC party school (City Press, 2014).

The current ANC Secretary General Elias Sekgobelo Magashule has a high profile of interacting with the Chinese community in South Africa. He is the Honorary President of the SA-China People's Friendship Association, a self-claimed people-to-people diplomacy organisation (SA-China People's Friendship Association, 2018).

The Deputy Secretary General, Jessie Duarte, and the current Treasurer General of the ANC Paul Mashatile have also been involved in this exchange program (Rossouw, Ndlangisa and Mboyisa, 2011). When interviewed after his trip to China in 2011, Mashatile positively reviewed the Chinese political education he had received (Rossouw, et al., 2011).

The South African press has recorded almost every visit to China made by each member of the ANC core leadership (England, 2014; Makinana, 2015; Chothia, 2015; Ngcukana, 2015; Rossouw, et al., 2011). These core ANC leaders are also included among the 86-member National Executive Committee. This body has the authority to lead the entire organisation (ANC, 2017). And, according to the State of the ANC 2012 report, 65 members of the NEC have been through a

political exchange program with the Communist Party of China (Mantashe, 2012).

The NEC is composed of the ANC Women's League (ANCWL), the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) and the ANC Veterans League (ANCVL) (ANC, 2017). These groups are connected to China through the NEC but they also have their own ties with China. For example, the ANCWL was reported to have hosted a Mandela Day event. Members of the African Chinese Female Entrepreneurs Alliance attended and made a donation (van Wyk, 2016).

2.2 Allies of the ANC

ANC foreign policies are influenced from within as well as by its allies – the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). SACP's rise to the political core is linked with South Africa's foreign policy reorientation away from the West (Matthee, 2016, p.18).

Historically, SACP and the ANC had effectively precluded China, as the Sino-Soviet split grew deeper in the 1960s. This reflects how China positioned South Africa in relation to the Soviet Union's influence on the rest of Africa. As Li Anshan put it, the first phase of the China-Africa relations featured ideologies (Li, 2007). When the influence of the Soviet Union faded in the 1980s, the SACP delegation and high-ranking PRC government officials' visits increased (Matshanda, 2010). When discussing establishing diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China in the 1990s, the partners of the ruling alliance, the SACP and COSATU were in favour of this decision (Tseng, 2008).

In fact, the influence of the SACP upon government policy was criticised by the disgruntled National Party leader who was against severing ties with Taiwan (Tseng, 2008). To date, the relationship between SACP and CPC still favours the side of the ANC-CPC relationship. In 2016, the SACP was provided with a 10-day training session in China by the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPC (International Department of the Central Committee of CPC, 2016).

COSATU, the other partner in the tripartite, as Taylor (2006, p.105) points out, has voiced concerns about the impact of China's trade on manufacturing and employment. COSATU has voiced concerns on multiple occasions about South African economic structural fault-lines that have led to dependency to China for mineral exports (COSATU, 2018). Conversely, COSATU has also voiced its support of BRICS and has been involved in one of the BRICS forums in China. On this occasion, COSATU raised the issue of the imbalanced trade structure and lack of industrialisation investment among BRICS (COSATU, 2017). Another issue of concern for COSATU is illegal imports of Chinese clothing and footwear which hurts domestic industry (COSATU, 2017). Thus, there are counter positions within the ANC tripartite, which are likely to be reflected in the media.

2.3 Opposition parties and China

The Democratic Alliance (DA), the principal opposition party, has on many occasions questioned the cooperation on cyber security between the South African and Chinese governments (DA, 2016; DA, 2015; DA, 2015). Eisenman states the CPC has a hedging strategy of keeping relations open with both the ruling ANC party and the opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA) (Eisenman, 2011, p240).

Although there is no publicly available information about the current DA leader, Mmusi Maimane, visiting China, former leader Helen Zille is reported to have visited China in 2015 in her capacity of the Premier of the Western Cape Province to “bolster trade and investment” (South African Government, 2015). As well, Solly Msimanga, DA Mayor of Tshwane, visited Taiwan at the end of 2016. This visit was made to promote trade and investment, as defended by the DA, when it was criticised by ANC that the DA Mayor breached the “One China Policy” (Africa News Agency, 2017).

Despite apparent differences between the DA and the CPC, both parties can/will bend over backwards to accommodate each other when their interests – particularly economic interests – converge. However, it would appear the interests of the DA, the CPC, and China more generally have not converged enough for the parties to formulate close relations. As a result, the media tends to depict the DA as being in opposition to Chinese interests. Additionally, the DA as an opposition party would be opposed to tight ANC-CPC ties.

In 2017, the DA issued a press release on the Parliament Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry. This communiqué outlined the scope and focus of the planned inquiry into the local procurement component of Chinese sourced Transnet locomotives (DA, 2017). The procurement agreement was entered into between two parastatal companies – Transnet from South Africa and China South Rail from China (DA, 2017). However, the press release did not call for the cancellation of procurement of these locomotives, nor did it explain whether or not the DA proposed the Portfolio Committee to make an inquiry. Nonetheless, it had generated a negative public profile online for the state-owned Chinese company which could possibly hinder its future operation in South Africa.

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), whose leader Julius Malema broke away from the ANC, is now the third largest party following the general election in 2014. With international relations, the EFF takes the position that due to the loss of trust in the US, it is looking East “for progressive relations” as opposed to West (Economic Freedom Fighters, 2014).

This strongly indicates the EFF is in favour of China. However, EFF leader Julius Malema has publicly accused China of being an even worse coloniser than its Western predecessors (Pieterse, 2011). It is reasonable to assume as an opposition party, the EFF will be against ANC’s relationship with China. However, there is no public information on China reaching out to the EFF

or vice versa.

South African civil society organisations have also been vocal about the ANC's relationship with China. The Right2Know Campaign demanded the South African Parliament must pass a law requiring political parties to disclose their funders (Right2Know Campaign, 2014). Chinese funding of the ANC's political school in 2014 for example prompted Right2Know to push for political funding information disclosure (Right2Know Campaign, 2014). The Right2Know Campaign claims to be "a movement centred on freedom of expression and access to information" (Right2Know Campaign, 2018).

Political funding to the ANC from China has also been a concern of another civil society organisation My Vote Counts NPC. This organisation has revealed that China, along with other countries with trade and diplomatic interests in South Africa, allegedly provided a minimum of R1.9 billion in foreign donations in the 1990s (South African Money and Politics Project, Open Society Foundation for South Africa, and Wallace Global Fund, 2011). The My Vote Counts NPC claims to "improve the accountability, transparency and inclusiveness of elections and politics in the Republic of South Africa" (My Vote Counts NPC, 2018).

2.4 Conclusion

It can be concluded that China's engagement with the South African ruling party, ANC, is manifestly deeper and wider than with other political forces. It is highly likely the ruling party will play a role in influencing the media to produce positive coverage of China. However, other political forces may assist the media to produce neutral or negative content.

The above section has outlined several cases where the media are closely watching the ties between ANC and China, especially in the case of the political funding from China to the ANC. The next section will focus on the South African media context.

South African media context

3.0 The South African media landscape

In order to ascertain how China has been represented in the South African media, it must be determined how news about China has been packaged and distributed as news products to the country. It is of paramount importance to understand the South African media environment.

The rebelliousness of the South African media can be traced back to the intertwined cultural, economic and technological legacies of the apartheid era (Barnett, 1999, p.649). Rumney (2014, p.39) writes that during the apartheid years, production of news was almost entirely in the hands of white ownership and the consumption of news was racially disconnected. In support, Duncan (2014, p.81) says due to the overly commercial nature of South Africa's media transformation, the resultant media system has been shaped and reshaped by income inequality, thus it fuels social instability.

Throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, the South African media landscape has experienced turbulent change. Historically, in South Africa, white private corporations and businesses owned the South African newspaper groups (Tomaselli, 1997). After the democratisation in 1994, these groups made a compromise by selling their exclusive ownership rights to black-owned media consortiums in a bid to avoid complete media system nationalisation by the African National Congress (ANC)-led government (Tomaselli, 1997).

Together with renewed foreign investment, the political pressure of black economic empowerment (BEE) has shaped ownership transformation along racial lines (Rumney, 2014, p.39). The ruling party ANC holds the opinion that racially, the lack of transformation of the print sector from white capital monopoly toward diverse ownership, is holding the industry back from freedom and objectivity (Duncan, 2011). Specifically, the ANC takes the position that increased black ownership will generate more freedom and objectivity.

Duncan does not deny the lack of transformation. However, she (2011) argues transformation should not be evaluated only by the scorecard of Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE). Duncan attributes the lack of transformation to strategies the newspapers adopt to weather recession which effectively takes away the voices of the grassroots – the poor, women and non-English speakers (2011).

Kupe (2014, p.30) also argues diversity of media should not be limited to just ownership. It must encompass the entire value chain. Kupe (2014, p.30) also emphasises the importance of having a range of images and representations to create full media diversity. The ongoing debate of the issue of black ownership boils down to one question: Should the goal be increased black ownership or should it be editorial independence in the press (Kabweto, 2017)?

After 1994, the new South Africa maintains a dual media system featuring both public service and profit-driven models. Duncan describes this as based “largely on the commercial media model with limited public service top-up” (Duncan, 2012, page.10).

The print sector in South Africa follows a profit driven market model. Four large companies dominate the print landscape in South Africa. These include Tiso Blackstar – later known as the Times Media Group as of 2015, Caxton, Independent Newspapers, and Media24, being the largest of the lot (Rumney, 2014, p.41). And finally, there is the smaller but still very influential Mail & Guardian. (Wits Journalism Department, 2014).

According to the latest report by the Audit Bureau of Circulations (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2016), there were 336 newspapers operating across the country at the end of 2016. However, at the end of 2015, 16,664,000 South Africans – less than half the adult population, age 15+ – read a newspaper (SAARF, 2015). Still, this represents impressive growth considering that in 1997, less than 5% of all South Africans read a daily newspaper (Barnett, 1999, p.649). Currently, the targeted print readership is still largely “traditional middle-class”. Nevertheless, South Africa’s blossoming tabloids targeting the “poor and working-class black majority” have gained wide-spread growth (Wasserman, 2010, p.1).

Presently the big four news companies have established a strong and easy to use online presence. Yet, despite all their efforts to expand readership, the print media sector has seen a continuing decline in circulation and revenue (Rumney, 2014, p.40). This is largely due to the transfer of advertising revenue from print to broadcasting, specifically television (Rumney, 2014, p.40).

The migration of the South African press from print media to digital-only media has been powerful. The rise of the Daily Maverick, Eyewitness News, Daily Vox, Huffington Post SA, and several other news websites has significantly eroded traditional print media readership and revenues. In 2016, the South African Press Council had 373 online media members – more than print, TV, and radio media combined (Wits Journalism School, 2017).

Consumption of content is evolving as more South Africans gain access to the internet (Vanderwagen, 2014). As people go online for their news, fewer and fewer South Africans are buying newspapers (Wits Journalism School, 2017). Consequently, for newspapers competition from the digital-only media makes funding other than advertising revenue essential to survival – for example, government funding in its various forms.

Currently, the traditional South African media view having an online presence as an extension of their existing platforms. So, over the last several years, they have created websites and social media profiles to communicate with the online audience, with the aim of enticing advertisers to their digital space (Vanderwagen, 2014).

This research prefers newspapers over digital media. This is because the more divergent the

political economic orientation of the chosen research subjects are, the more the result comparison should yield information on how the political economic orientation of the South African media might affect reporting on China. Features of the digital-only media, specifically loose ties with the South African government, do not necessarily fit with the purposes of this study.

3.1 Developmental journalism and the watchdog role

Given the government-to-government nature of the Johannesburg Summit, it is especially important to explain the South African media's relationship with the government, and the incumbent party, the ANC.

Historically, the debate around the role of the media in post-apartheid South Africa has been a contest between the ANC government and the South African media, since the ANC is highly critical of an adversarial media (De Beer et al., 2016, p.37) The government believes media should act in the "national interest" while the media industry itself is determined to enact all its freedoms and rights in the model of a liberalist, watchdog press, acting in the public interest (De Beer et al., 2016, p.37).

Still, the South African government expects media to contribute to developmental goals as well as the transformation of society to promote national unity and development (De Beer et al., 2016, p. 41). It is not surprising that when it is criticised, the government will often dismiss the media, declaring it is again sabotaging the young democracy by pandering to sectorial interests because it is predominantly owned by white capital (De Beer et al., 2016, p.38).

Either following a developmental journalism tradition or being a watchdog, the two notions of media have been regarded as binary opposites by theorists and the government in South Africa (De Beer et al, 2016, p.48). Daniels (2010, p.7) further presents ideological interpellations against an independent media. Daniels (2010, p.7) concludes speeches by numerous government officials and ANC leaders suggest ideological interpellations position "the media" as outside democracy. Daniels also (2010, p.7) warns about the ANC's media intervention of the proposed Media Tribunal and the Protection of Information Bill. Daniels argues a Media Tribunal could function as a registration body of newspapers and journalists – or even worse, as pre-publication censorship (Daniels, 2010).

In terms of print, there is no state owned/controlled print media, yet one newspaper appears to have voluntarily taken on the role of government communication tool. The New Age, founded in 2010, brands itself as the "focus on the positive side of news" and "aims for constructive criticism of our leaders in our newspaper" (The New Age, 2017). In other words, The New Age was launched to provide balanced content on subjects the ANC government viewed as unfairly reported (Rumney, 2015, p.68).

Although, two significant South African media houses have never claimed to be "supportive" of

the government, they have drawn considerable criticism. Respectively, these organisations are the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and the Independent Media. They are often judged as being controlled by the ANC government. Their views of events are closer to that the governing party concerning investment from China. As well, these media houses receive financial support from the Public Investment Corporation (Harber, 2015). Thus, these three media houses may be more inclined to support a close tie between the ANC and China, while the other print media houses remain critical (Harber, 2015).

Duncan (2012) argues print media in South Africa features independent, critical, investigative reporting. However, some South African newspapers are accused of being insufficiently critical of the private sector and overly critical of government (Rumney, 2015, p.68). The stand-off between the South African government and the media will be explained in the following section.

How the media are controlled, structured, and subsidised should be at the center of democratic debate (McChesney, 2008). Political economy of media theory identifies that ownership, market structures, and commercial support, among other factors, shape media content (McChesney, 2008). The stand-off between the South African government and the press breeds the creation of media house like The New Age in the sense that the government tries to exert influence over the media in the name of advocating developmental journalism. This is an important element to this research because the attitudes toward journalism not only affect the tones of the coverage of China. It could also indicate the political economic orientation of the media.

For the purpose of comparison, The New Age serves as a suitable example of a self-claimed developmental journalism practice for the purpose of this research. The nature of this research subject will be discussed in detail in the following section, to be specific, the link of the funding The New Age receives from the government and the developmental role it assumes. To show the contrast, this research chooses The Citizen to represent media of other political economic orientation, and the reasons will be laid out in the next section.

3.2 The New Age and The Citizen

As journalism becomes contested terrain in South Africa, the more information available via the media houses, the more objective the discussions can become (Grootes, 2016). In this section, the economics and politics of the two newspapers will be introduced for the content analysis: The New Age practices developmental journalism benefited by government funding while The Citizen, backed by parent corporation group funding, takes on the watchdog role.

3.2.1 The New Age

The New Age, founded in 2010, brands itself as “focus on the positive side of news”, and “aims for constructive criticism of our leaders in our newspaper” (The New Age, 2017). Therefore, The New Age was launched to provide balanced content regarding what the ANC government views as

unfair (Rumney, 2015, p.68). The political stand of The New Age has led to a termination of a contract with cartoonist Jerm for not being “aligned” with the newspaper’s mission and vision (Nevill, 2012). Given the close political ties between South Africa and China, it is safe to assume the bi-lateral government’s event will be picked up by the newspaper. However, its readers may not be interested in international news.

According to the only publicly available The New Age Rate Card, half The New Age readership falls into Living Standard Measure 5-7. This means 50% of the readers earned up to R8000 per month in 2010. The South African Audience Research Foundation (SAARF) uses the Living Standards Measure (LSM) as a marketing research tool to divide the population into 10 LSM groups, 10 (the highest) to 1 (the lowest) (SAARF, 2017). A more updated Rate Card is needed to portray the number of readers more accurately. It is assumed the higher the readership LSM locates, the more interest readers have in business news and/or world news.

Before Lodidox took ownership, at the time of the Johannesburg Summit, The New Age and the African News Network7 (ANN7) were the media arms of Oakbay Investments, the holding company owned by the Gupta family in South Africa (Oakbay Investments, 2017). Lodidox is a private, start-up company owned by Mzwanele Manyi, who took a loan from the Oakbay Investments to acquire The New Age and the ANN7 (Fin24, 2017).

The Gupta family is accused of using their ties with President Zuma to influence government appointments and win state contracts (Cotterill, 2016). This phenomenon is known as “State Capture” to South African audiences. Former Public Protector Thuli Madonsela was mandated to investigate this accusation, which is widely known, as the “State Capture” case (Cotterill, 2016). The report finds that, among other allegations, the Gupta family is involved “in the removal and appointment of the Minister of Finance”, and “in the process of appointing members of Board of Directors of SOEs” (Public Protector, 2016). Another example is the opposition party EFF has publicly called for boycotting the “Gupta media” ANN7 (M&G, 2016).

The New Age has only operated in South Africa for seven years, so its position in the South African political spectrum as well as its owners call for more examination. Following democratisation in 1994, political entry barriers posed by economic factors upon the daily newspaper market tended to fall away. However, the obstacles created by the domination of the big four remain (Bauer, 2009, p.9). The fact that Oakbay Investments, with its relatively short media operation experience has been able to break through the long standing entrance barrier set up by the dominant media houses, points suspiciously to its relationship with the ANC government.

These barriers, as De Waal (2013, p.10) explains, include the major publishing houses’ monopoly of printing on which emerging press must rely, or advertising against which new comers must compete. The New Age, however, does not appear to suffer from these problems as its revenue is

guaranteed by government advertising (De Waal, 2013, p.10).

It is suspected the South African government uses its advertising budget as a tool to guarantee the political alignment of the newspaper (Nevill, 2017). Although it is common for media houses to receive government advertising, the amount assigned to The New Age, irrespective of readership, has caught the attention of the Democratic Alliance opposition party. Between 2013-2014, the newspaper received 11.2% of government's newspaper advertising budget, amounting to R10.2 million (Nevill, 2015). The DA argued that during this period, the government spent more on advertising in The New Age than the Daily Sun, even though the readership of the Daily Sun is 35 times greater than The New Age (Nevill, 2015).

Previously, the DA conducted research into The New Age's advertising and discovered roughly 77.5% of all their advertising between 31 October 2012 and 15 November 2012 came from government (Nevill, 2013). However, it is worthwhile to remember the DA may not be entirely impartial given its opposition stand to the ANC government. Yet, there is no way to determine whether the government is overspending. This is because The New Age refuses to have its circulation figures officially audited by the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC). Therefore information about its print runs and readership is not readily available (Nevill, 2015).

It thus can be inferred that the media arm of the Oakbay Investments supported the South African government and its developmental journalism concept. How The New Age practices the developmental journalism concept should be carefully studied. After all, its constructive criticism editorial policy does not mean zero criticism. Take the Chinese investment in real estate as an example. In 2014, Shanghai Zendai, a Chinese company, announced a USD\$8billion investment into a real estate development project called "Modderfontein City" in Johannesburg (Peter, 2014). The New Age framed the story with a positive angle describing it as an investment promising great potential for urban development (The New Age, 2016). However, the report did not suggest the possibility of land grabbing or any other negativity. Conversely, covering the same topic, The Citizen's report began with a South African government official defending China by dispelling the stereotype of the Chinese exploiting land in smaller, less developed countries (Mahlaka, 2014). The Citizen's story not only repeated the "China" stereotype, but also suggested the South African government was foolishly defending China.

On the China-South Africa cyber security cooperation issue, in one The New Age reported on the DA's reaction, instead of the actual meeting between South Africa and China officials, and this was highlighted in the title (The New Age, 2016).

In 2015, the two countries signed a cyber-security pact which triggered reactions from DA. In the press release, the opposition party wrote: "China has earned a reputation for suppressing freedom of expression of its citizens by clamping down on social media sites, erecting firewalls to restrict citizens' access to news and information from outside sources, and mounting cyber-attacks on

Western corporations. This is not a regime South Africa needs to align too closely with if we seek to be an active and trusted online trading partner worldwide and champion the freedom of access to information and expression championed in our Constitution” (Shinn, 2015).

The New Age used the title “South Africa-China meeting on ‘internet issues’ gets up DA’s skirt”, which suggests the DA overreacted to a run-of-the-mill meeting. These two examples show that even when opposition parties voiced their concerns publicly, The New Age chose to ignore them. However, the New Age’s pro-government stand may be unique in the South African print media landscape.

Rumney (2015, p.68) points to the launch of The New Age which signaled overt ownership-driven partisanship. A more thorough content analysis of The New Age’s China coverage needs to be carried out to study political influence and media ownership in media representation of China. The Johannesburg Summit provides an excellent opportunity to incisively understand The New Age’s stance and also to comprehend its representation of China in South Africa.

3.2.2 The Citizen

The Citizen is owned by the Caxton-CTP group, which is the only identifiable white-owned and “*unempowered*” media group in the Big Four (Rumney, 2015, p.69). Commercially, the Caxton-CTP group does not entirely rely on any government funding. It generates most of its revenue from publishing, printing and distribution (De Waal, 2013, p.10). It is the 8th largest daily newspaper in South Africa with a circulation of 44147 copies (Manson, 2017). Politically, it is not openly aligned to any political party. Together, these could lead to the assumption this newspaper is under commercial pressure to keep readership and circulation growing, delivering results expected by the parent group.

Current readership data reveals 54.9% of its readers belongs the highest Living Standard Measure group translating to 43.2% readers having a monthly income of R20000 or more (The Citizen, 2017). Accordingly, the content pillars of the newspaper are news, business and politics; sports such as soccer, horse racing and gaming; entertainment and health; classifieds, motoring, legal and auctions (The Citizen, 2017). Therefore, it can be assumed China, being South Africa’s largest trading partner, will be of interest to readers of The Citizen, especially business news readers.

Historically, The Citizen was created and controlled by the Apartheid regime (South African History Online, 2016). In 1991, The Citizen was owned by the Perskor Group, possessing strong links with the ruling apartheid National Party government (Louw, 1993, p.174). This support from the apartheid regime came mainly via non-newspaper printing orders which enabled Perskor to run The Citizen at a loss (Bauer, 2009, p.3).

In 1998, The Citizen experienced another change of ownership in a merger with Perskor and Caxton-CTP (Fourie, 2001, p.145). Available historical references suggest The Citizen has only

been owned by white South Africans from its inception. Moreover, due to its links to apartheid and white capital, it would be expected for the newspaper to be opposed to the ANC. Therefore, by extension, it would ultimately frame close links between the ANC and China negatively.

In the stable of the Caxton-CTP group's media assets, The Citizen is their only national newspaper. It is described on the Caxton-CTP website as a tabloid-formatted newspaper published weekdays and Saturdays (Caxton & CTP, 2017). The newspaper is expected to generate revenue for the group by functioning as a vehicle for local and national advertising. However, this expectation is not stated specifically in the annual financial report (Caxton & CTP, 2016).

Caxton-CTP admits that the national newspaper market is declining and it is "fortunate" that the group only has one national newspaper (Caxton & CTP, 2016). Aside from The Citizen, the group also owns 120 local newspapers (Caxton & CTP, 2017). Previous studies on Caxton community newspapers suggest that, from a media economics point of view, national newspapers incur greater production and printing costs due to their size and wider reach than community newspapers. With that said, a community newspaper can reach consumers more accurately for advertisers (Zigomo, 2009).

For a publicly listed company such as Caxton-CTP on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, owning a national newspaper is not ideal when the entire market is declining. It is worth noting the Caxton-CTP group not only involves itself in the publishing and printing of newspapers and magazines. It also manufactures and distributes stationery, packaging, labels and stationery. Beyond this, Caxton manufactures and markets printing inks. Thus, the group has been strongly motivated by profit-seeking to further extend into these areas. Whether or not financial motives and ownership structures have affected the Chinese content in The Citizen requires closer study. Under pressure of profit target, the content of the newspaper must be even more carefully selected to attract the target readers desired by advertisers.

Here, The Citizen is chosen to be studied because it has no apparent association with black elites – such as the ANC, and no government funding support. This marks a difference in the content. For example, one of main focuses of the Johannesburg Summit coverage in The Citizen is the invitation which was extended to the President of Sudan, Al-Bashir who was wanted by the International Criminal Court (Modjadji, 2015). The South African government would naturally see this coverage as a noise to the Summit which has a sole purpose of the promoting Africa-China relations. Nevertheless, the topic is in line with the content pillars of The Citizen.

3.3 Conclusion

The literature on South African media and society relations is largely critical. Scholars have examined South African media, with a focus on the shift of media ownership as well as changes in media regulation after 1994. It can be concluded the South African media, especially the print sector, is limited by its political-economic orientations. De Beer et.al. (2016) indicates the South

African press portrays itself as a source of knowledge “for all”, operating in the interest of all citizens. However, in reality the public interest in which mainstream print media operates is limited to their target audiences (De Beer et.al, 2016). Wasserman and Garman (2014, p.398) confirm the above argument, and assert media fails to pay attention to the powerless. It fails to hear them and reflect their concerns. It fails to support their desire to speak and contribute. In the final analysis, the media watchdog is not much different than the political confederate (Wasserman and Garman, 2014, p.404).

The above overview of this study of the South African print media’s political and commercial orientations might lead us to expect the mainstream print media view South Africa’s interaction with China as mostly in economic terms (Wasserman, 2012, p.341). However, the critical attitude taken by other press, for example *The Citizen*, toward the South African government could very well lead it to ignore the diplomacy attempt represented by the Johannesburg Summit. Conversely, this event also had the potential for the South African media to amplify a counter agenda using this same opportunity.

From targeting a niche market to attracting a relative mass market, this makes the South African print media an interesting sector to examine. However, the development trajectory and growing range of readership of the South African print media – mostly funded by advertising revenue – remains under constant threat of government regulation. Although in theory, the market force will restrain government capture of the media.

Therefore, for this study, *The New Age* and *The Citizen* were selected as a sample representation of South African media. *The New Age* is close to some factions in the ANC and the South African government in general. This suggests it would cover China favourably because powerful elites at the heart of the ANC are in favour of good relations with China. The opposite logic would apply to *The Citizen*.

Literature review and theoretical framework

4.0 Introduction

In order to attain a clearer picture of South African print media coverage of China in relation to the Johannesburg Summit, several steps must be taken. This researcher will have to dig deeper, particularly to investigate the problem statement of if and how newspapers favour certain news about China due to their own political-economic orientation. As well, this research adheres to the political economics of communication model while also borrowing from the framing theory.

The political economy of communication theory and framing theory will be applied to this study. Used in conjunction, they will reveal what is in actuality, the representation of China in the chosen South African newspapers. It will explore the political positioning of the publications as well as ownership and funding as potential factors impacting representation.

In this section, the following elements will be included: a brief introduction of the framing theory; media frames of China in Africa and China's media approach in Africa; the political economy of media theory and literature upon South African media and society.

4.1 Framing theory

One key objective of this research is to determine if China's engagement with South Africa has been represented in *The New Age* and *The Citizen*, two major South African newspapers. Have they performed in ways the two governments would prefer or have they not? Elements of the framing theory are therefore borrowed to answer research question number one: What are the differences and similarities in media content involving China produced by government-party aligned newspapers *Vis a Vis* watchdog journalism-inclined newspapers?

The first step is to determine what has been reported and what has been left out. Media framing theory holds that news is a window whose frame limits the perception of reality (Tuchman, 1978). The news frame functions as the "central organising idea" for the news content supplying a context and suggests what the issue is. Facts and opinions take on their meanings "by being embedded in a frame of a storyline that organises them and gives them coherence" (Gamson, 1989). In this way, media frames "define problems and issues", "diagnose causes", "suggest judgments" and "propose solutions" (Entman, 1993).

It functions through the use of "selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration" (Tankard, 2001, p.100). Media frames operate to reduce the complexity of issues and adapt it to the needs and constraints of the media and its audiences (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Media frames have the "single greatest power" of providing and activating information, and influencing public opinions (Tewksbury et. al.2000, p.805). In this way, the media may cast political or ideological influence

upon audiences by favouring a particular candidate, party, political position or interest group at the expense of another, so audiences might reach a predetermined conclusion (Hacket, 1984, p.233; Tewksbury et. al. 2000, p. 807).

There are two broad classes of frames: generic and issue-specific. Generic frames find application in various topics and cultural contests while issue-specific frames are applicable to specific topics or events (De Vreese 2005: 54). Semetko & Valkenburg (2000: 551) identified five generic ways in which journalists frame news:

1. emphasising conflict between parties or individuals (conflict);
2. focusing on an individual as an exemplar of the issue being covered and/or by emphasising emotions (human interest frame);
3. attributing responsibility, crediting or blaming certain political institutions or individuals (responsibility frame);
4. interpreting events or issues in the contest of morality (morality)
5. focusing on the economic consequences the audience may encounter (economic consequences frame).

In response to the persuasive force of frames, Chong and Druckman (2007) argue not all frames are equal in strength. The relative strength of a frame depends upon factors such as their “frequency, accessibility and relevance” (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

In their study, Noakes and Wilkins (2012) classified specific frames as “positive” and “negative”. When Palestinians are characterised as “terrorists, violent or militant, or as the cause of the problem”, these stories are categorised as negative. Conversely, when Palestinians are characterised as “victims”, or “when the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Palestinians’ struggle, or the idea of a Palestinian state were characterised as legitimate”, the stories are categorised as positive (Noakes and Wilkins, 2012). This method will be utilised in this study.

Positive frames will undoubtedly be used by the Chinese and South African governments, as well as the newspaper aligned with the South African government to describe China before and after the Johannesburg Summit, in the hope readers will be influenced to support the relationship. On the other hand, the other political forces and the media acting like an opposition political force will more likely use negative frames to influence their audiences.

There are a number of studies using the media framing theory to study China in Africa, as shown in the next section.

4.2 Media frames of China in South Africa and Continental Africa

A rich body of literature exists on China’s media representation in Africa. Alden (2006) finds three basic portrayals of China within Africa:

1. China as a development partner, appreciated by Africans for its “no conditionality” policy,

- anti-colonial solidarity as well as its model of economic development;
- 2. as a competitor displacing local business with its cheap exports;
- 3. as a hegemony harbouring imperialist designs on the African continent (Alden, 2006).

Under the above umbrella of portrayals of China in Africa by Alden (2006), most media literature on China in Africa can be categorised.

De Beer and Schreiner (2009) determine that contrary to the conventional North-South news flow hypothesis, China's involvement in South Africa receives media attention matching its intensity. The reason for such an extraordinary volume of media coverage is China's involvement in Africa activates both political and economic discourses (De Beer & Schreiner, 2009). This finding is relevant to the research in the sense that it explains why Chinese content is appearing in South African newspapers at any given time of the year, regardless of the political economic orientation of the media houses.

De Beer and Schreiner also discovered coverage of China in Africa is a new form of news flow with keen emphasis on South-South news movement. This, in general includes more news and more positive news coverage of a "Southern" actor. In other words, it is framed positively and under a South-South frame. Wasserman links South-South news flow to development journalism (Wasserman, 2012, p.70). According to him, the term "South-South", a geo-political term emphasising ideology before the turn of the millennium, did not speak of media independence or the role of media in society (Wasserman, 2012, p.70).

In this study, the close ties between the South African government and The New Age, has already raised questions about its editorial independence (Nevill, 2012). Both the Chinese and South African governments put the relationship in a South-South frame (Yang, 2006; Le Pere & Shelton, 2007). Hence it is anticipated that the South-South frame will be frequented by The New Age because it is politically aligned with the ruling party. Findings of de Beer and Schreiner (2009) and Wasserman (2012) explain why The New Age, a newspaper advocating development journalism may carry positive news on China. The result of content analysis of The New Age is expected to reflect these findings. It is worth noting that in the early 2000s, development journalism was re-conceptualised to public service instead of the South-South news flow (Wasserman, 2012, p.71). That is to say, in South Africa, development journalism does not commonly associate with the South-South frame.

Botma approaches debates about China's involvement in Africa from a viewpoint of cultural imperialism (Botma, 2013 p.6). Additionally, Botma (2013, p.20) explains that African responses to China's expansion display similar divisions as debates about globalisation and media imperialism. According to Botma (2013, p.6), resistance to Chinese involvement in Africa may be rooted in fears Western imperialism might merely be replaced by Chinese imperialism.

Botma (2013, p.6) also warns of Chinese efforts to deploy soft power in Africa and this will be

strongly coloured by the experience and legacy of Western colonialism. In line with Botma's argument, one factor contributing to the media framing of China as a coloniser of Africa is the history between African and Western countries. This could also apply in South African context. China has already been accused of being a coloniser by the radical EFF opposition party. This media frame is likely to be picked up by the news media as a counter argument to the government's rhetoric describing China-South Africa relations.

Imperialism as a frame has also appeared in Zeleza's study on media coverage of the China-Africa relationship (2008, p. 74). Zeleza discovered another two frames associated with "imperialism" – "globalisation" and "solidarity" (Zeleza, 2008, p.74). According to Zeleza (2008), the imperialist frame originates mostly from Western comments.

Defenders of the relationship offer solidarity with China as a developing country with no history of imperialism and an example of South-South cooperation (Zelaza, 2008). The globalisation frame describes focuses on trade flows and investment, as well as the marginalisation of Africa (Zelaza, 2008). This research builds on Zeleza's findings and further investigates the relations between the South African media and these frames.

The frames used by media have a direct impact upon public perception. Hanusch reveals that in Africa, the most positive impression of China comes from China's success in poverty alleviation and Chinese Foreign Direct Investment to Africa (Hanusch, 2012). This perception is closely linked to Alden's "development partner" portrayal (Alden, 2006). The most negative impression comes from how Chinese imports impact the local economy, as well as the lack of Human Rights (Hanusch, 2012). This view is also common in media coverage of the African continent as well as South Africa (Alden, 2006; Shinn, 2015). In South Africa, Wasserman (2012, p.346) finds China is not represented in a starkly positive or starkly negative light. Instead, there is a cautiously optimistic attitude (2012). Wasserman also finds that within the BRICS alignment, the China-South Africa relationship received the most media attention (Wasserman, 2012).

4.2.1 China's media approach in Africa

The mechanism of the FOCAC signifies China has become a vigorous actor in international relations. China's development assistance, its win-win trade policy, and its non-interference in domestic affairs policy frequently appears in China's communications throughout Africa (Wasserman, 2016; Li & Rønning, 2013; Fijałkowski, 2011). There are also Chinese media in Africa carrying these messages to the continent. For example, on FOCAC, Read (cited in Finlay, 2013) finds that the Forum was framed more favourably due to Chinese sources in the reporting. Yet the self-portrait China wishes to depict is still difficult to imprint in South African media.

Li & Rønning (2013) make note China's media presence has increased greatly throughout all of Africa. The state-owned news wire service, the Xinhua Agency, produced news articles, news photos, and video clip in greater abundance than its counterparts Associated Press, Reuters and the

Agence France-Presse (Li & Rønning, 2013). Furthermore, in December 2012, the largest English language Chinese newspaper, the China Daily, launched a weekly African edition, circulating in countries such as Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Tanzania (Li & Rønning, 2013).

China Central TV (CCTV) was launched in Kenya in 2012, while China Radio International had earlier expanded into Nigeria in 2009 (Li & Rønning, 2013). In East Africa, Wekesa (2013, p.72) reveals China flooded local media with opinion pieces from Chinese officials during FOCAC V. In a sense, the local media has become China's Soft Power public relations practice platform (Wekesa, 2013, p.72).

Also on the research topic of Chinese media in Africa, Marsh unveils that editorially speaking, in the content comparison analysis between CCTV's Africa Live and BBC's Focus on Africa TV, the Chinese program had a positive "China rising" official narrative, and no alternative news agenda, while the BBC's program was more rooted in Africa (Marsh, 2016). The dependence of news agency content is also highlighted. The research finds that news agency materials, which are generally produced according to Western journalistic specifications, and Western news values, had found its way to the CCTV program (Marsh, 2016).

In 2014, a Chinese company bought shares in South Africa's Independent Group owned by the Sekunjalo Consortium (Wasserman, 2016). The head of the Sekunjalo Group is Dr Iqbal Surve who has close ties with the ANC government (Wasserman, 2016). This link to the ANC is suspected to be the preliminary condition for the acquisition of stakes in the Independent Group made by the Chinese (Wasserman, 2016). Chinese involvement in the South African media sphere is viewed as a threat to South African's freedom of expression (Wasserman, 2016).

Wasserman also discovers very little Chinese media content is used by the South African media (Wasserman, 2016). Media professionals' reluctance arises from two primary concerns: Chinese media houses lack credibility and secondly, content produced by the Chinese does not appeal to the South African media consumers (Wasserman, 2016). Hence, despite extensive media messages being produced, the chance the South African media will pick up these frames is very slim (Wasserman, 2016).

Regarding the existing coverage of the China-South Africa relationship, Wasserman has determined South African journalists attribute second-hand sources as cause for the media's inability to portray complexities and nuances of an evolving story (Wasserman, 2016). In conclusion, Chinese media presence in Africa and South Africa in particular, has not been able to influence reporting. In fact, foreign news wires rather than Chinese media have played a greater role in shaping the African and South African media representation of China. Sautman and Yan (2009) disclosed Western media exposure is more likely to influence Africans' perceptions of China than the Chinese media.

In conclusion, the literature elaborating on Chinese media frames in Africa has largely been broad-

based. There are both positive and negative frames associated with various topics involving China in Africa. These frames in the literature will provide guidance to this research in the sense that the frequency of certain frames emerging could accurately indicate the political economic orientation of all South African media houses. Linking frames to the political economic orientations of newspapers is the intended contribution of this study to China-Africa media studies.

4.3 Political economy of media theory

To understand the media's role in society, it is essential to understand relationships between media power and state power (Wasko, 2014). Curran (2002, p.239) warns reality is distorted and manufactured by the media to such an extent, the current situation allows only the elites managing society to serve their own best interests while presenting it as something in everyone's interest. The media representation theory can answer why the media strives to have an impact on society. Yet, this theory does not answer why the media is geared to operate in this way (Golding & Murdock, 2000). This study predicts the government and ruling party of South Africa, as well as the opposition and other interest groups will push forward their differing, if not opposite views of China via their various relationships with the media.

The political economy of media theory may offer insights into political and economic structures informing media production (Fourie, 2001). Critical political economy media theory questions the "dominant and overarching cultural production systems that are advanced under a framework" (Golding & Murdock, 2000, p. 70). Therefore, it is both empirical and theoretical (Golding & Murdock, 2000).

Golding and Murdock believe the capitalist market system has unequal consequences which will be reflected in the range of discourses and representations in the public domain, as well as in audiences' access to them (Golding & Murdock, 2000). The political economy of media theory will be applied to research question two: What are the political and economic factors influencing the chosen two newspapers in their representation of China?

McChesney (2003) explained how the political economy of media theory examines media ownership, the media market, and commercial support and how they shape/influence processes of representation. Additionally, the political economy of communication theory comprises at least eight interrelated aspects. These include:

1. historical and social context of a medium;
2. institutional roles of the media and their freedoms to do so;
3. media ownership and management;
4. funding and financing;
5. production and media producers;
6. content or representation of reality;
7. audiences;

8. media policy and regulation (Kupe, 2014, p.30).

The political economy of media theory also aggregates multiple factors that influence the media. For this research, the elements of media ownership, funding and financing will be used to interpret the findings. Reasons for selecting this model are laid out next.

Herman and Chomsky state “money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalise dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public” (1988, p2). Dearing and Rogers (1996) also agree the attention given to an issue by the media often indicates the power of certain individuals or organisations over the news process. Curran explains ownership has a “large degree of control over operations, the recruitment and reward of cultural labour and, ultimately, media content” (2000, p.26).

Ownership questions “tend to focus on corporate agendas, both in terms of the economic power corporations wield through media ownership, and in terms of political power concentrated media ownership confers on corporations and the people who control them” (Graham, 2006). In relation to this research, the ownership of The New Age in 2015-2016 is tied to the ANC ruling party. As for The Citizen, it is historically linked to the National Party of the apartheid era and this may still have an impact upon its editorial practice today. Currently, The Citizen claims not to be aligned to any political party.

The funding of media corporations also has significant impact on their output (Fourie, 2001). Fourie links this to the ideological power of the media, which is “mainly vested in those who own the media and who have the financial means to own and manage the media” (2001, p.122). Income from advertisers wields a significant amount of power over content, as Louw explains:

“More importantly, within commercial news organisations, newsroom practices are necessarily entangled with the needs of the advertising department. This is not because of direct advertiser pressure upon editors – although such pressure may occur – but because commercial media must collect, package and deliver audiences to advertisers. The task of every editor in a commercial medium is to generate and package the sort of material that will appeal to the audience advertisers are interested in” (2001, p. 158).

Profit seeking is the basis of the business model privately-owned media applies. Media content is the product produced by the media houses which are mandated to make a profit (Chomsky, 2003). Chambers points out news content is increasingly treated like commodities and judged by its potential to make profit (Chambers, 2000). This complicates media’s role in society because it must meet the needs of the owners, advertisers, employees and the reading audience (Gandy, 1997; Picard, 1989).

Literature on the political economy of media may lead to a hypothesis where, under commercial pressure, The Citizen will package China content in a manner most appealing to its targeted readers, who are described as enjoying the highest LSM in the country. This study will determine

if the editorial content of The Citizen is packaged to appeal to audiences while also differentiating itself from government rhetoric. Another hypothetical consideration is: would The New Age package news in such a way to appeal to its benefactors – the government and the ruling party?

4.3.1 Literature on South African media and society relations

The literature on South African media and social relations is largely critical. Scholars have examined the above mentioned eight aspects of South African media, with a focus on the shift in media ownership and changes in media regulation, both emerging after 1994. Therefore, it can be concluded the South African media, especially the print sector, is limited by its political-economic orientations.

De Beer et. Al. (2016) concur the press portrays itself as a source of knowledge “for all” and operates in the interest of all citizens. However, in reality, the public interest in which mainstream print media operates is limited to their target audiences. Just as with the political process. Wasserman and Garman (2014, p.398) confirm the above argument, and assert the media fails to pay attention to the powerless; fails to hear them and reflect upon their concerns, and fails to support their desire to speak and contribute (Wasserman and Garman, 2014, p.404).

The Caxton group of publications has been a focus of media study research. Previous studies of the Caxton group reveal its community newspapers are able to serve both the needs and interests of the advertisers and the communities even when a commercial focus is being pursued by community media operators (Zigomo, 2009). However, another study indicates the content in Caxton-owned community newspapers has a market-driven orientation (Mwangi, 2007).

The content analysis illustrates newspapers use their print space for advertising more than consequential news (Mwangi, 2007). Another critique of the group is their newspapers follow a reporting approach that is typical of mainstream media. So, as a result, readers who require educational and developmental support to grapple with most issues are neglected (Tsingo, 2009). Currently, scholarly literature pertaining to The New Age is too scarce to make a balanced discussion. However, this study should fill The New Age knowledge gap.

4.4 Conclusion

On China-Africa, Sautman and Yan prove that local politicians’ agendas are a factor able to sway the public perception of China in Africa (Sautman & Yan, 2009). The media are positioned to favour certain frames over others and to draw audience attention to certain parts of the China-Africa news story, as shown in the study of literature.

On media content specifically, Curran (2002, p.165) writes that the media can persuade, change and mobilise. However, the principal way in which the media influences the public is through routine representations of reality. Both media framing and the political economy of media theory recognise the elites of a society utilise the media to broadly influence. The media representation

theory is able to explain how the media endeavour to influence. Additionally, the political economy of media theory can answer why the media is geared to work in this manner. Combined, the two theories will uncover the political economic reasons behind the coverage of China in South Africa.

Coverage of China during the Johannesburg Summit represents a “show of force” for both supporters and opponents of China-South Africa relations. The positive officially-approved frames, geared to invoke support of Sino-South Africa relations, will mostly be “China as the development partner”, “China as a model for developing countries” and “China as an influential economy power house” (Alden, 2006; Hanusch, 2012; Wasserman, 2012). Geopolitically, these frames may find roots in South-South cooperation. Economically speaking, these frames are commonly seen in the African and South African press reporting on engagements driven by interests of the elite, especially the ANC, which enjoyed its legitimacy brought along by the economic ties with China (Finlay, 2013; Alden & Wu, 2016).

On the other hand, negative frames such as “human rights abuser”, “business competitor” and “neo-coloniser” are also found in the political, geopolitical, and economic discussions about China in Africa. This stance is advocated by oppositions, counter-elites and/or other societal groupings. (Alden, 2006; Hanusch, 2012; Botma, 2013; Alden & Wu, 2016).

To conclude, the literature review reveals the media framing theory as a viable tool to unpack media representation of China in South Africa. Recent media framing and political economy of media studies have tended to investigate the image of China in Africa, and the South African media respectively. This research builds on this prior work by offering a triangulation of readings on the media representation of China in South Africa.

Research questions

5.0 Research questions

The comparative analysis of print media coverage of China in South Africa and the Sixth Ministerial Conference (Johannesburg Summit) endeavours to answer the following questions:

1. What are the differences and similarities in media content about China produced by government-party aligned newspapers Vis a Vis watchdog journalism-inclined newspapers?
2. What are the main issues influencing the representation of China in the South African media?

Methodology

6.0 Introduction

This research will use quantitative content analysis to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the differences and similarities in media coverage of China produced by government-party aligned newspapers Vis a Vis watchdog journalism-inclined newspapers?
2. What are the main political and economic issues influencing representation of China in the South African media?

A quantitative content analysis will provide measurable answers to the first research question. A qualitative approach will then be applied to explain the political economic origins of the differences. Thus a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods will be adopted. The strengths and limitations of the two approaches will be laid out in following sections.

Content analysis will deploy the frames developed by previous researchers and the coding method will draw on the experiences of other content analysis of international news, which will be explained in detail in the following passages. The time period is chosen to approximate the duration of the Johannesburg Summit duration. This is because the period between September 2015 and March 2016 is the critical time for China and South Africa to leverage the Summit to promote the image of China.

This research examines the coverage of China in *The Citizen* and *The New Age*. These two sources are chosen because they represent the supportive and the oppositional or critical media in relation to the South African government. The *Citizen's* text is extracted from the Sabinet database ([http://www. Sabinet.co.za](http://www.Sabinet.co.za)) and *The New Age* text retrieved from the LexisNexis database. The term "China and or Chinese" is used as search terms. However, the Sabinet database, where *The Citizen* text was extracted, did not include word count information. The Lexisnexis database, where *The New Age* text was obtained, provided word count information but didn't include page information. So, for the purpose of comparison, these variables were ignored in the coding.

6.1 Quantitative and qualitative approach

The qualitative approach emphasises the qualities of entities and processes as well as meanings not experimentally examined or measured – if measured at all – in a quantitative manner of amount, intensity, or frequency (Denzin and Yvonna, 2000). Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints shaping inquiry (Babbie, 2010).

Quantitative research emphasises objective measurements and statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data. Qualitative researchers seek answers to questions that stress how social

experience is created and given meaning (Denzin and Yvonna, 2000). In contrast, quantitative studies emphasise the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes (Muijs, 2010). Qualitative forms of inquiry are considered by many social and behavioral scientists to be as much a perspective on how to approach investigating a research problem as it is a method.

Quantitative research deals in numbers, logic, and an objective stance (Singh, 2016). Quantitative research focuses on detailed, convergent reasoning rather than divergent reasoning (Brians et.al, 2016). Quantitative methods presume to have an objective approach to studying research problems, where data is controlled and measured, to address the accumulation of facts, and determine the causes of behavior (McNabb, 2017). As a consequence, the results of quantitative research may be statistically significant but are often humanly insignificant (McNabb, 2017).

Quantitative data is more efficient in testing hypotheses, yet it may ignore contextual detail (Singh, 2016). Results provide less detail on behavior, attitudes, and motivation (Brians et al, 2016). This research will adopt the quantitative approach first to analyse the frames used in the chosen stories. Next, the link between these frames and the media houses' political economic orientation will be established through a qualitative discussion. An objective and standard data collection method will ease the comparison between the chosen newspapers.

Quantitative research designs are either descriptive or experimental. In the descriptive approach, the subjects are usually measured just once. In the experimental model, the chosen subjects are measured before and after treatment (Babbie, 2010). A descriptive study establishes only associations between variables while an experimental study establishes causality (Babbie, 2010). This study does not require any treatment so it will utilise a descriptive method.

The design of a qualitative research is "naturalistic, emergent, and purposeful" (Berg, 2012). The collection of data often occurs through observation and interviews under which circumstances, researchers have direct contact with and get close to people and their ever-changing situations (Denzin and Yvonna, 2000). The analysis is inductive, holistic, context-sensitive and assumes each case is unique. In the process, the researcher is not ever 100% objective. Rather, "the researcher's focus reflects a balance between understanding and depicting the world authentically in all its complexity and of being self-analytical, politically aware, and reflexive in consciousness" (Rossman, 1995; Merriam, 2009, p.45). The strength of this approach lies in its ability to allow the researcher to describe existing phenomena and current situations, as well as to interpret collected information (Berg, 2012).

For the aim of this research, the limitation of this method is that it is difficult to show the differences in the quality and quantity of information obtained from different sources (Denzin and Yvonna, 2000). This research will discuss the findings from the content analysis in a qualitative manner. Therefore, the results of content analysis will not only be meaningful statistically, but also

humanly.

6.2 Content analysis

Krippendorff (1980, p.21) has explained content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context”. Content analysis is based on the assumption that analysis of language in use reveals meanings, priorities and understandings, as well as ways of organising and viewing the world. Hence it is a very commonly used media research method (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003, p.68).

As stated earlier, the approach to content analysis of media content can be either qualitative or quantitative. The choice is determined by the purpose of the study (Berelson 1952). Qualitative content analysis is concerned with analysing emerging themes and issues in media content while quantitative analysis applies numerical values to certain categories and units (Berelson 1952). This study employs quantitative content analysis because objective and reliable data collection methodology could facilitate comparison of the two newspapers chosen for content analysis. The core tool of any content analysis is its system of categories specifically designed for the material while employing theory-guided procedure. The rule-guided process of assigning categories to text is crucial for quantitative content analysis.

6.3 Deductive frame analysis

Most researchers use news reports and occasionally visual components as material of frame analysis (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). To identify these frames, communication researchers have traditionally opted for inductive and deductive methods (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015). The deductive method is based on predefined frames because it is more replicable and therefore, ideal for comparative analyses (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). The deductive frame analysis will be used in this research to indicate the political-economic orientation of the chosen newspapers. This research does not intend to generate new frames.

6.4 Coding

The author created a codebook detailing nine variables to be coded in the content analysis.

- **Title.** Tankard proposes eleven framing devices: “headlines; subheads; photos; photo captions; leads; source selection; quote selection; pull quotes; logos; statistics and charts; and concluding statements and paragraphs” (Tankard, 2002). Given the importance of the headline and the news lead, or the first four paragraphs, this research first examines the frequency of articles with the term “China” in the headline or first four paragraphs appearing in *The New Age* or *The Citizen* during the study period. These stories are considered relevant to the research and the titles are recorded and coded.
- **Whether or not search terms “China” and or “Chinese” appear in the title.** As stated

above, headlines are the most important framing devices so the appearance of the search terms in the headlines indicates the weight of content of China to the newspapers. This item is coded as either “y” or “n”.

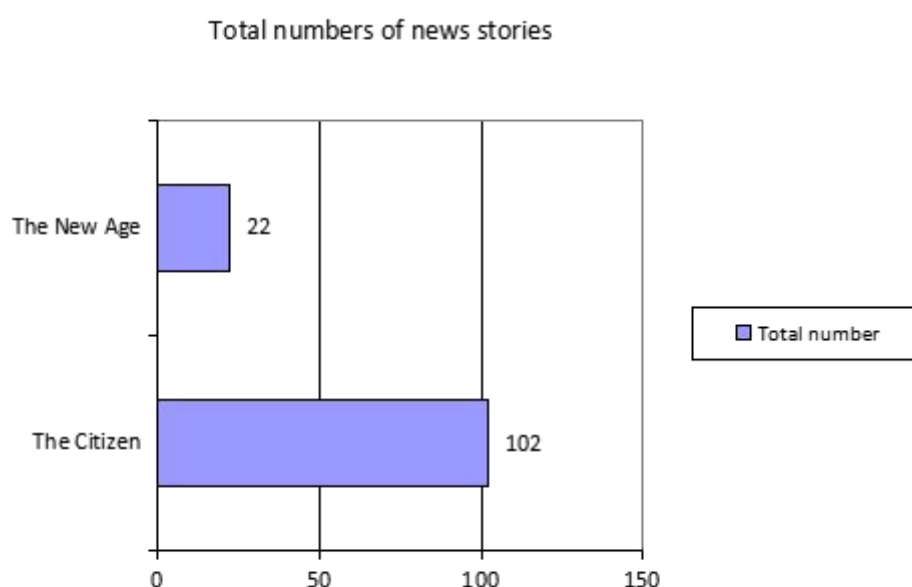
- **Date.** Dates are coded in the format of date/month/year ranging from 2015/9/1 to 2016/3/31. These dates are used to highlight the frequency of China content in the chosen newspapers.
- **Byline.** This is coded to reveal the ratio of productions from news wires such as Reuters, AFP, ANA and Bloomberg. It is categorised into “From the news agencies”, “Non agencies”, and “Information unavailable”.
- **Topic.** The selected news stories are coded according to topics. The list of news topics was based on 21 common themes successfully used in other content analysis of international news: Business & Commerce; International politics; Internal order; Trade; National politics; Culture; Accidents & Disasters; Censorship; Sports; Human interest, Health and Social Welfare; Education; Science and Technology; Military and Defense; Communication and Media; Transportation; Housing; Population; Energy; Environment; Social relations; Other (Willnat and Metzgar, 2012).
- **Source.** Similarly, the list of news sources was divided into 19 different types as well as commonly used categories including: Presidents, head of state; Members of national government; Members of provincial government; Diplomats; Representatives of international organisations; Internal order (police and justice); Business, Commerce and Industry; Military; Transportation; Health, Welfare, and Social Services; Population; Education; Media; Environment; Science and Technology; Sports; Culture; Religion; Citizens; Other (Willnat and Metzgar, 2012). An article may have multiple sources so only the sources offering information or comment on China are coded in this research.
- **Tone.** Value judgments are based on whether an event is reflected positively or negatively related to China as a nation, the Chinese government, or the Chinese people (Willnat and Metzgar 2012). In cases where no value judgement could be made, not predominately positive or negative, the event is judged as neutral (Willnat and Metzgar 2012). In the literature, when a mention is factual, or it has mixed messages, it will be treated as neutral (Freyenberger, 2013; Sheafer, 2007). In this research, when a mention is factual, and/or mixed, leading to no value judgement determined, it will be treated as neutral.
- **Frame.** For this research, when China is characterised as “a South-South development partner, an influential economy power house (trade partner and investor), and a development model for developing countries”, the stories are expected to be positive. Conversely, when China is characterised as “a vicious business competitor, a human-rights abuser, and a coloniser”, these stories are deemed to be negative (Noakes and Wilkins, 2012; De Beer& Schreiner, 2009; Botma, 2013; Hanusch, 2012; Wasserman, 2012). It is also noted that the

chosen articles will likely fall out of the pool of these six frames. In cases where stories cannot be categorised, the stories will be labeled as “others”.

- **Mentioning of FOCAC 6.** By mentioning the summit, it can be argued the newspapers recognise the importance of this event. This is coded as either “y” or “n”.

Ideally the codebook should also include a page where the stories are placed and the lengths of the stories provided. These two variables indicate the significance of the news to the newspaper. Therefore they should not be omitted.

Sampling procedures and the result of sampling is listed in Table 1, Total numbers of news stories



During the chosen time period, 24 article headlines from The New Age were found in the database. However, two out of the 24 had no text. One of the 24 had no title but the article itself was available. The New Age carried 22 news stories about the Johannesburg Summit. However the search yielded 103 headlines from The Citizen but one was an advertisement, which was irrelevant to the aims of this research. Therefore, the The Citizen generated 102 news stories.

The difference in the number of articles using the search terms “China” and/or “Chinese” in the headlines and or in the first four paragraphs could be attributed to the size of the World News section in each newspaper. The Citizen had a full page dedicated to World News while The New Age had only half a page with a primary focus on African news (The Citizen, 2017; The New Age, 2018). Another factor was The Citizen used news wire service whereas The New Age did not. This will be explained in detail in Table 2.

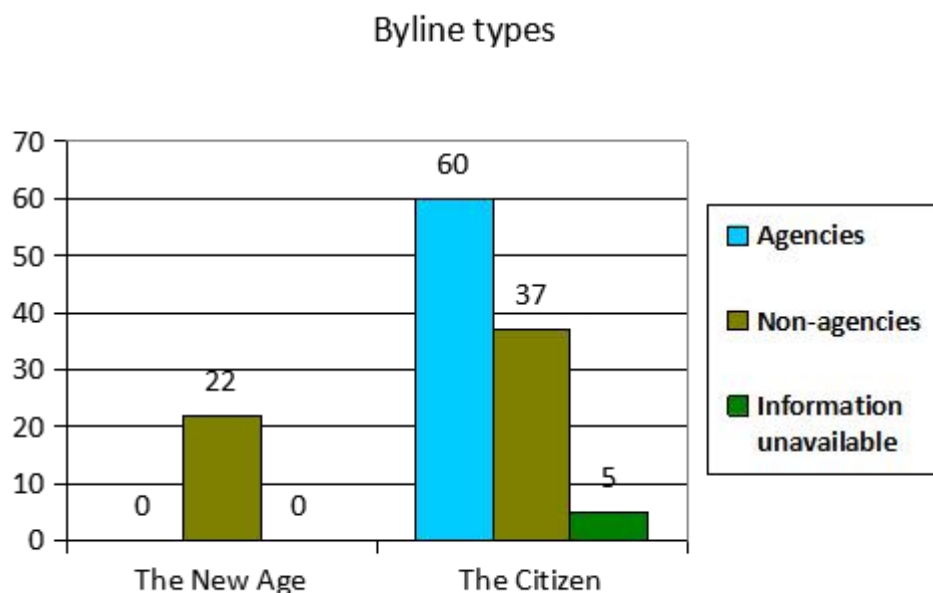
Findings

7.0 Introduction

The content analysis revealed substantial differences between The New Age and The Citizen in terms of byline types, tones of stories, topics of analysis, frame analysis, sources analysis, count of mentioning of FOCAC, and news distribution over the chosen study period. There were also some similarities, including the strong focus on business and commerce topics.

7.1 Byline types analysis

Table 2

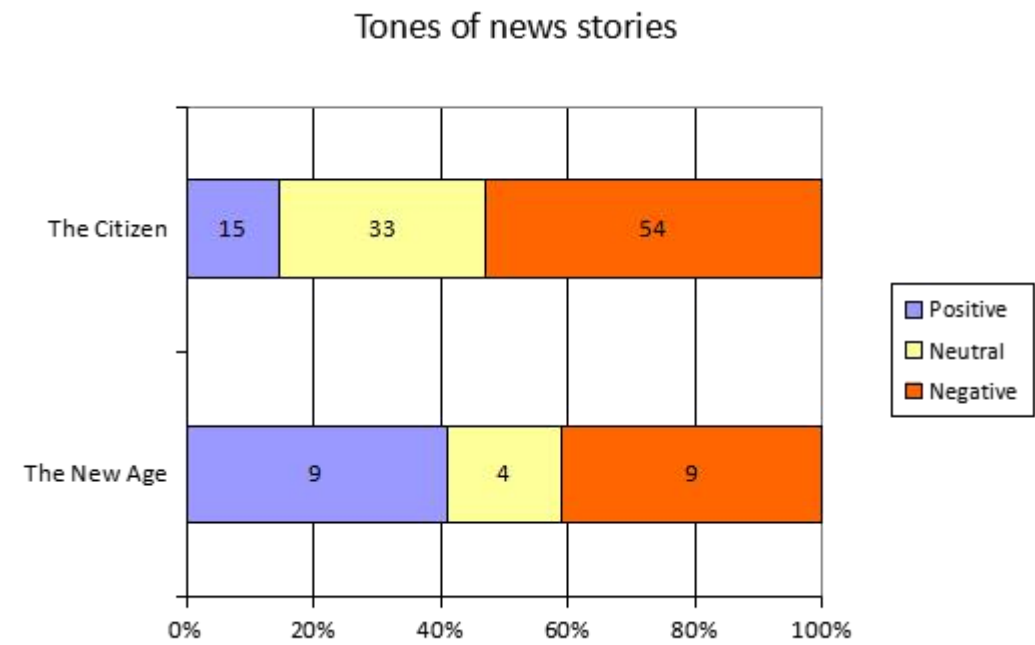


Out of the 102 articles from The Citizen, 60 originated from news agencies including Reuters, Bloomberg, AFP and ANA. Only 37 articles were produced by South African journalists, commentators, citizen journalists and readers – all non-agency contributors. And, there were another five stories which did not have byline information in the database. The New Age used no news agency what so ever, which resulted in less content on China.

More consequences of using agency articles will be shown in the following tables.

7.2 Tones analysis

Table 3

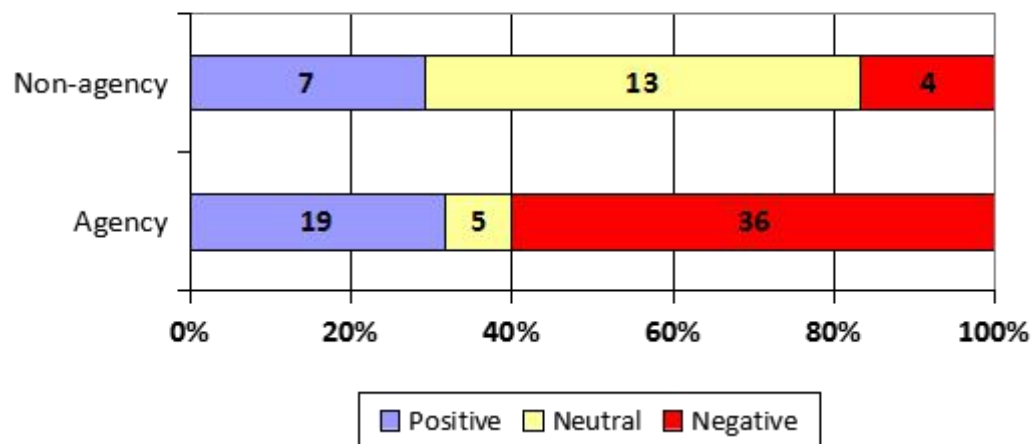


During the chosen time period, which approximated the Johannesburg Summit duration, the prevailing tone of The Citizen was negative, while The New Age articles were more balanced. More than half The Citizen’s articles took on a disparaging tone. Naturally, given the political stance of this newspaper, it is not unexpected most of the content on China would be critical. The result of the content analysis was consistent with the expectation. However, the result of the tone analysis of The New Age was somewhat inconsistent. The content was more negative than expected.

7.2.1 Tones of agency news stories from The Citizen and non-agency news stories from The Citizen comparison

Table 3.1

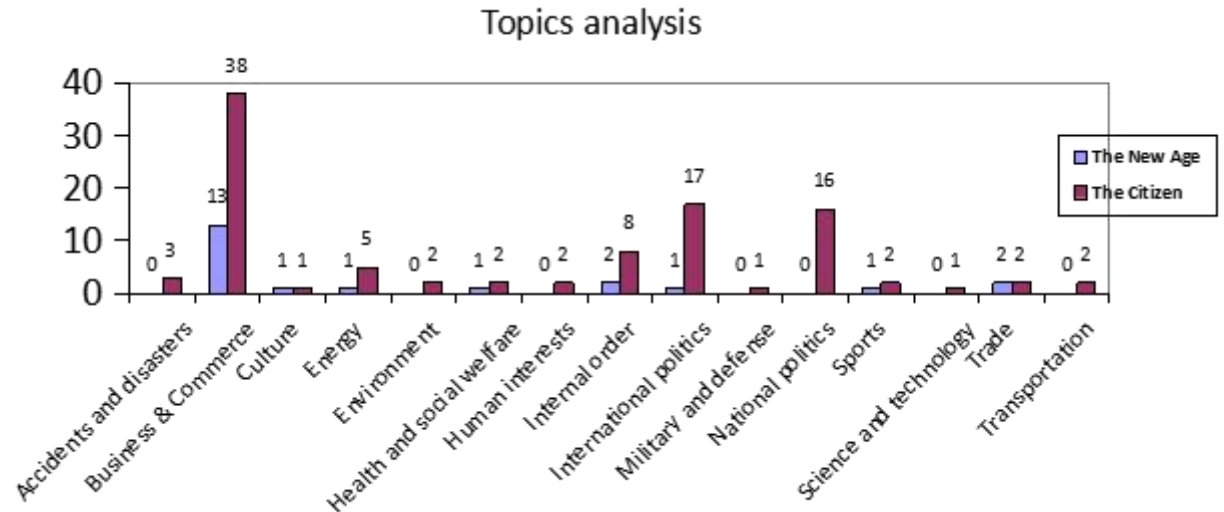
Tones comparison : agency and non-agency (The Citizen)



A breakdown of The Citizen's agency and non-agency contribution showed agency content was much more negative than non-agency material. Content from the agencies was 60% negative while non-agency articles were less than 20%. The Citizen subscribes to AFP, ANA, Bloomberg and Reuters. Only the ANA originates in Africa while the other three are either European or American news wires. How these topics were related to the tones of the articles will be illustrated in Table 4.

7.3 Topics analysis

Table 4



In terms of topics, there was one similarity between the two newspapers. Both obviously focused on business and commerce. This finding was consistent with Wasserman’s research result which stated: at in the beginning of 2011, economic issues topped the list of topics reported in the South African media (Wasserman, 2012, p352). This research proved newspapers from differing political stands, targeting a different readership LSM, could still have a “pragmatically minded” character in common (Wasserman, 2012, p352).

The differences were also clear to see. First of all, The Citizen covered more diverse topics than The New Age. This coverage included accidents and natural disasters, the environment, human interest stories, military and defense, as well as science and technology. It was expected more coverage would naturally lead to more topics.

Secondly, both publications had eight topics in common where there were omissions of international news. Both The Citizen and The New Age did not cover development issues in any way – including three of the most important topics: education, housing, and social relations.

7.4 Frame analysis

Table 5

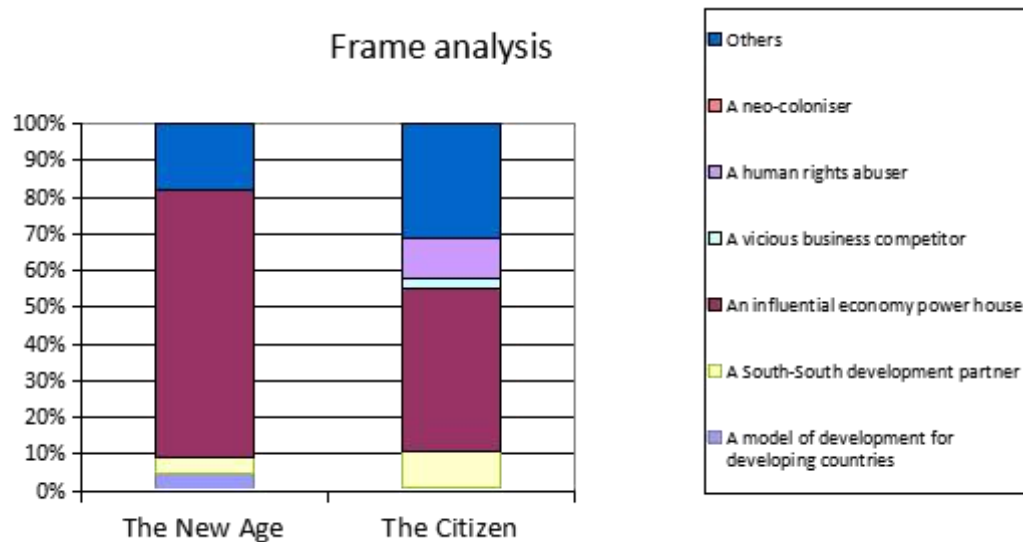
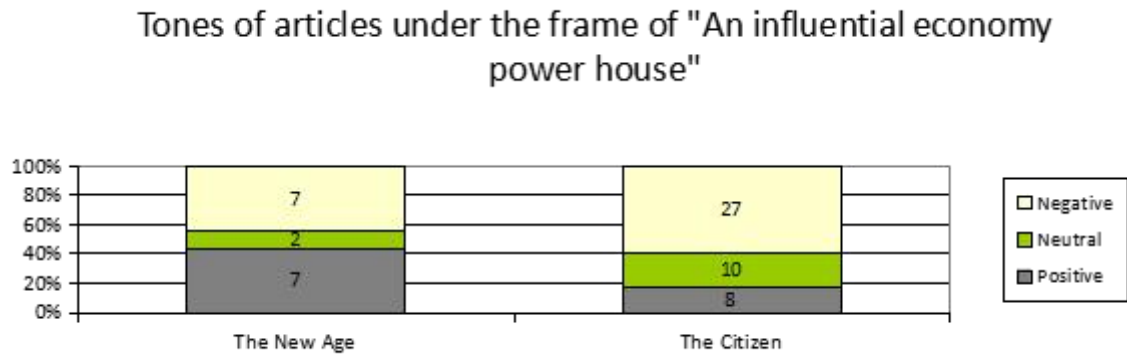


Table 5 illustrates The New Age only deployed frames in line with the Chinese government's African policy propaganda which were also endorsed by South African government. The Citizen on the other hand, also deployed frames that did not reflect on China positively. The most frequently used frame for both newspapers was "an influential economy power house".

This frame was activated in a context where China's slow economic growth had a negative impact on South Africa's economy. As a result, the tones in these articles were negative. This is explained in detail in Table 5.1. During this time, neither of the newspapers broached the frame of "a neo-coloniser". Lastly, there are more than 20% of the total articles from both newspapers which fell outside the six frames summarised in the China-Africa literature.

7.4.1 Tones analysis of news stories under the frame of “An influential economy power house”

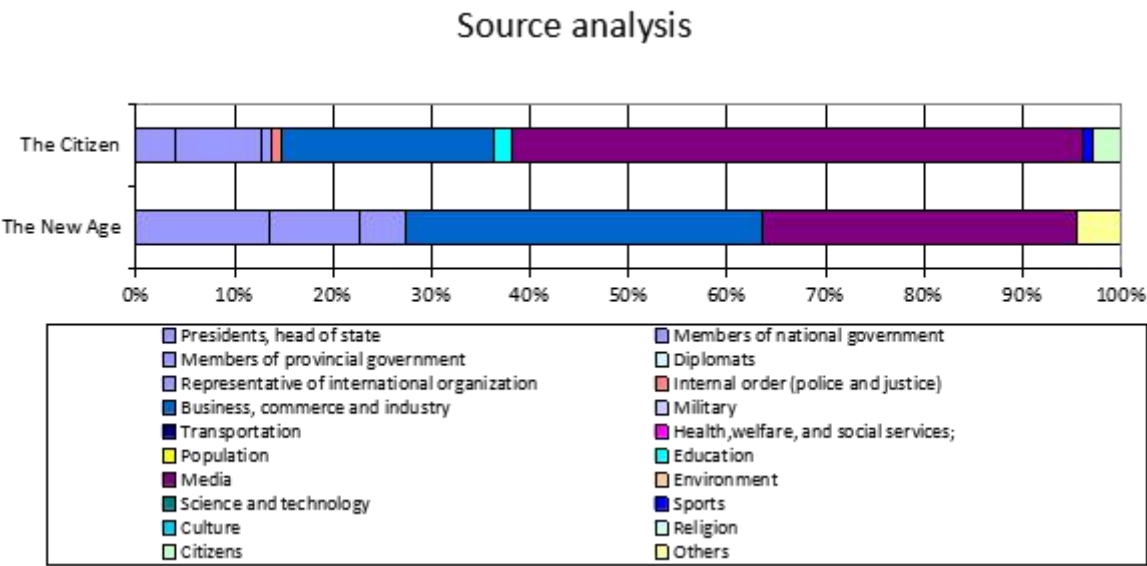
Table 5.1



When the frame “An influential economy power house” was activated to describe China, neither of the newspapers had more than 50% positive coverage. To an extent in this case, the differences in the political economic orientations of the two newspapers were not particularly obvious. Most of the negative coverage pointed to the fact China’s powerless growth led to weak performance of South African exports and South African companies. Nevertheless, The New Age was more balanced than The Citizen under this frame.

7.5 Source analysis

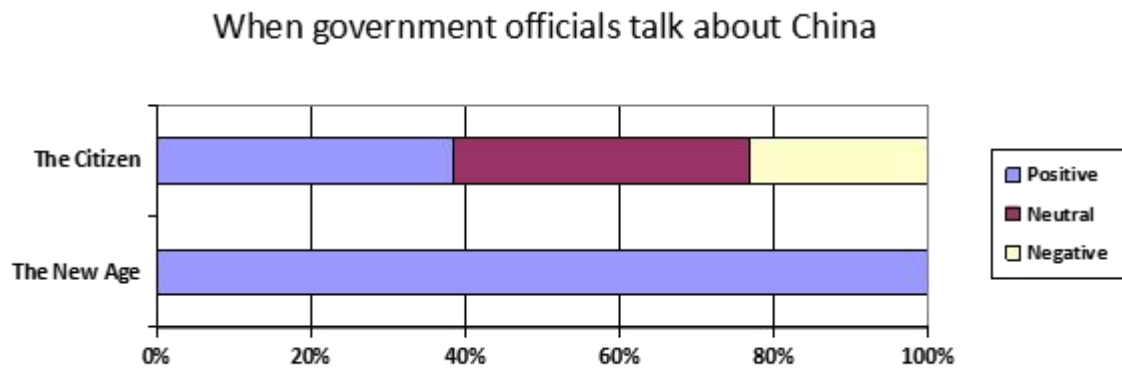
Table 6



It was clear government officials, business sources, commerce, industry, and the media comprised the source list of the two news publications. These main sources for this research were identical to the elites that Curran identified in the society (Curran, 2002). The most significant difference between the two newspapers lay in the fact that government officials were given more attention in The New Age than in The Citizen.

7.5.1 Source analysis of government officials

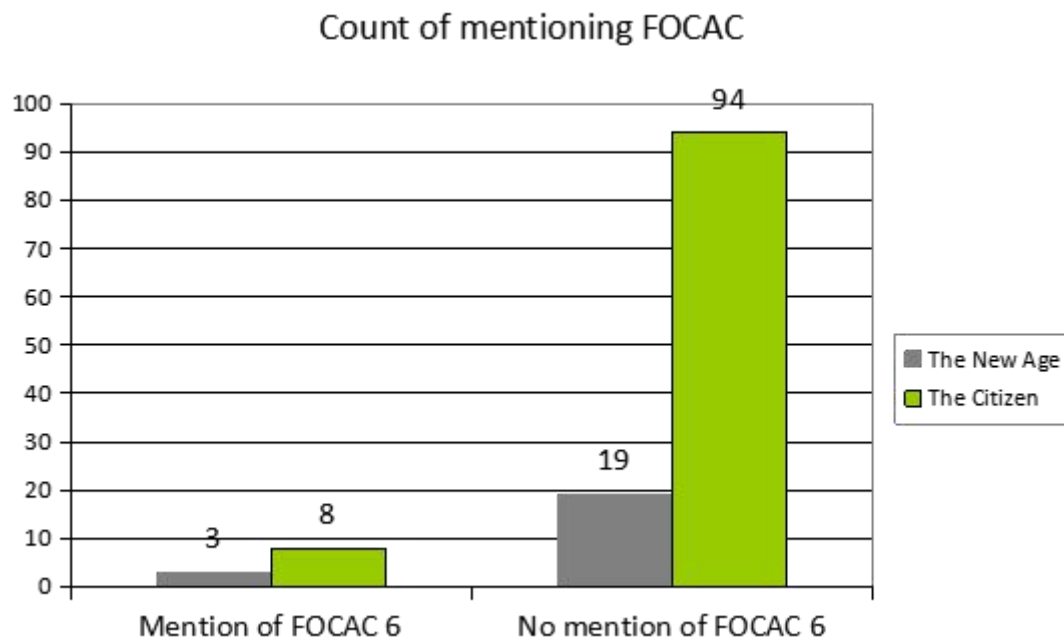
Table 6.1



The The New Age featured 100% positive coverage when government officials were quoted in one specific article. It was evident government officials from both South Africa or China spoke highly of the relationship when they were quoted by The New Age. The Citizen carried less than 40% positive coverage.

7.6 Count of mentioning FOCAC

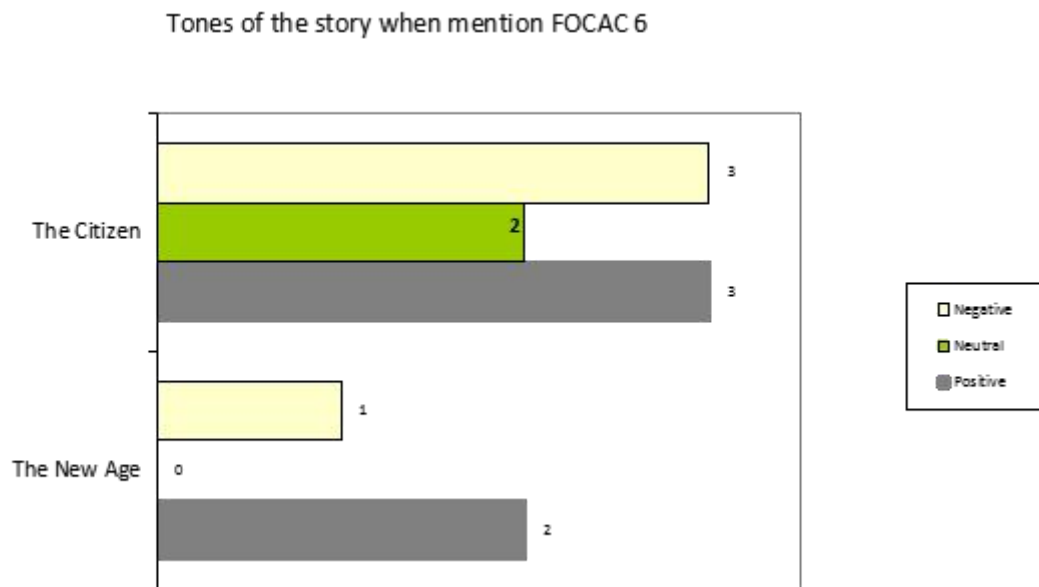
Table 7



By mentioning “FOCAC”, the media houses acknowledged the newsworthiness of this mechanism the Chinese government utilised to leverage its foreign policy toward Africa. Both the chosen newspapers mentioned “FOCAC” during the study period; and The Citizen mentioned more times than The New Age. Yet the tone analysis of the stories containing “FOCAC” revealed that although the newspaper was educating its readers about FOCAC, the tone suggested it was not in favour of China, see Table 7.1.

7.6.1 Tones analysis of news stories when mention FOCAC6

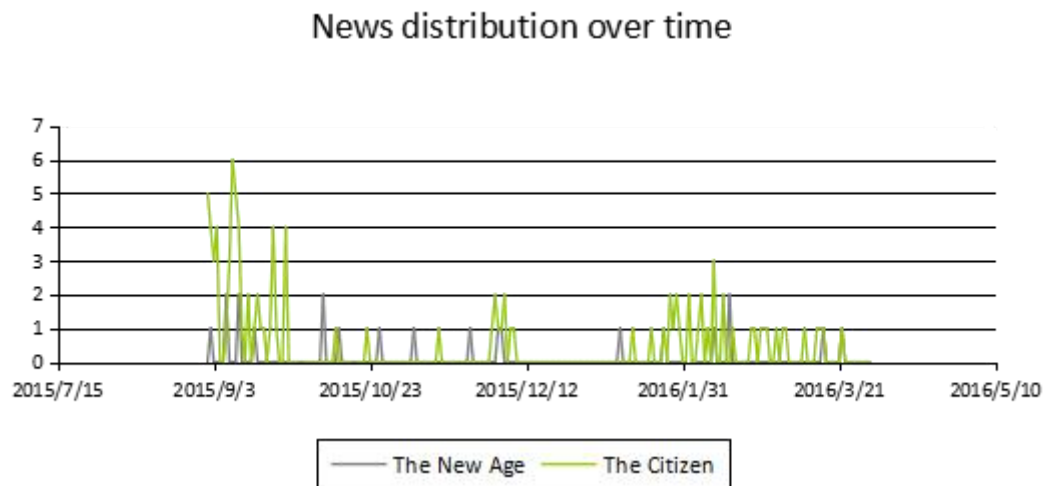
Table 7.1



The result of the tone analysis revealed when “FOCAC” was mentioned, The New Age had published stories with a more positive tone, while The Citizen had a more balanced tone. All The Citizen’s negative coverage was concerned with Sudanese President Bashir’s invitation to the FOCAC 6 in Johannesburg.

7.7 News distribution over chosen study period

Table 8



In terms of news published over the November 30th to December 6th, 2015 period – the week the FOCAC summit took place – there were fewer articles containing “China” and “Chinese”. Therefore, it can be concluded this Summit was not the most news worthy for either publication. However, both newspapers made mention of FOCAC during that week.

There were times when both newspapers carried articles on China, such as the beginning of September, 2015. Yet taking a closer look at the topics showed The New Age only carried content on the South Africa economy when “China” and or “Chinese” were mentioned. The Citizen’s coverage not only carried articles on the same topics, it also published human interest stories, articles on internal order as well as other topics. This variety of topics could very likely be attributed to using news wire services which have correspondents throughout China and Asia.

Discussions

8.0 Introduction

The differences of the two newspapers are clearly showcased in the above section. Based on the China-South Africa media literature, there are a few points that can be extended from the content analysis findings. This section is dedicated to answering the following questions in a qualitative manner:

1. What are the similarities regarding the content on China from the two chosen newspapers?
2. Are the newspapers influenced by the government's narrative of China-Africa?
3. What are the internal and external influencing forces?

8.1 The focus on economic issues

The resulting content analysis reveals both newspapers published articles with economic topics more than political topics. Considering the differences in funding, in relation to the South African government and the ruling party's influence upon editorial leaning, and in the readership LSM between The New Age and The Citizen, the similarity in favouring economic topics over political ones is significant. This observation is meant in the sense the above mentioned political-economic factors did not alter the actuality that during the Johannesburg Summit, the South African media provided more economic coverage on China than political news.

The fact that the newspapers chosen for this research favoured economic news over political news is consistent with Wasserman's content analysis result in 2012. Wasserman explains that mainstream South African print media view the relationship with China mostly in economic terms. This occurred because of such news is of interest to their affluent audience (Wasserman, 2012). Economic and political elites in South Africa may not share the same political view, but on the topic of China, they find a common interest in economic benefits. Political elites seek legitimacy from economic developments and the economic elites seek pragmatic gains (Alden & Wu, 2016). It is worth noting that even the opposition political parties also refer to China as an economic development partner (South African Government, 2015). By framing China in an economic perspective, the focus of the coverage of the chosen newspapers has been set with reference to the interest of the elites.

The key point is – when China was involved in a political discourse in the chosen newspapers during the study period, the content analysis showed an apparent difference. Among the many frames The Citizen took over the Johannesburg Summit coverage. For example, it focused on the view of “China as a Human Rights abuser”. This negative frame was linked to Sudanese President Bashir's invitation to the FOCAC 6 in Johannesburg. The Sino-Sudan and South Africa-Sudan

relationships have been questioned on several occasions by Westerners. Also, it is public record that neither China nor South Africa endorsed the indictment of Sudanese President Bashir from the ICC (Xiong, 2012). The negative frame The Citizen took echoed the Western point of view. This demonstrated a trace of the political orientation of The Citizen. The New Age did not carry any content under the frame of “human rights abuser”.

Other topics of the bilateral relationship, such as cultural topics, had not attracted as much media attention. Despite the efforts made by the Chinese government to promote Chinese culture in South Africa, judging by the little media attention, neither the political elites nor the economic elites behind the media saw it as a newsworthy topic, compared to topics of business and commerce. Cultural exchanges between the two countries are expected to involve more average South Africans in the bilateral relationship. The topic itself is entertaining and the threshold of reading the news is lower. Hence it is potentially a topic rich in content. However, the media responded coldly. Another example is the lack of coverage of topics such as health and social welfare, which could evoke empathy of average South African readers. In this case, the concerns of the less affluent were excluded in the media representation of China. The result of the content analysis showed that both the The New Age and The Citizen frame China in a way that is somewhat irrelevant to average South African readers. The ownership and funding of The New Age and The Citizen demand China only to be a political force and an economic partner.

8.2 Government influence on China content in South Africa

It is positive that the South African government has had an influence on China content published. As Alden and Wu (2016) explain, re-aligning South African foreign policy to be congruent with China is a manifestation of South African development needs. This provides a source of legitimacy for the Zuma government. This is an elitist vision of why a new South African should more and more look to China for support in meeting its own development aspirations (Alden & Wu, 2016). The New Age truthfully captured this elite vision within the frame “China as an influential economy power house”, just like “a picture frame guides attention to some details while relegating other piece of information to the background” (Tuchman, 1978).

However, by choosing this frame, The New Age effectively cropped out other elements, both positive and negative such as China-South Africa engagements to highlight the government and the ruling party’s concern over economic issues. Content analysis of The New Age proved ownership, funding and financing of the newspaper took an effect – perhaps a dominating effect – on its coverage of the Johannesburg Summit.

Content analysis can be of reference in determining the political leaning of newspapers. One supporting argument is The New Age spent more time with government officials than The Citizen, and the tone of all those articles were positive. This coverage faithfully reflected South African government rhetoric. Although, it is questionable why no other factors impacted the tone of the

news when government officials were quoted. In all, the New Age did carry more positive news than The Citizen. The newspaper brands itself as the publication which focuses on the good side of the news (The New Age, 2017). Thus, the result was agreeing with the branding.

The Citizen demonstrated how news sources were merely lumped among many other factors, such as topics having impact on their coverage. The result of these multiple factors acting simultaneously should have been reflected in the tone of the coverage. One can also argue that the voices of the opposition parties were ignored by both newspapers. In general, South African party politics did not show up in the content analysis. A possible reason could be during the chosen study period, these two particular publications did not publish stories on China pertaining to partisan topics.

However, The New Age carried less than 50% positive news during the chosen time frame. The New Age coverage of China from September 1st 2015 to March 31st 2016 can be described balanced, if not slightly negative. This contrasts with the hypothesis that The New Age will paint China positively because it is politically aligned with the ruling ANC party which promotes closer ties with China. Most negative coverage was related to economic issues, under the frame of China as “an influential economy power house”. The year 2015 saw a sharp decline in bilateral trade in terms of both volume and value, negatively impacting business and the South African economy. This was the result of China’s economic structural reform which caused a decline in demand for South African goods.

Hoogvelt (2001, p. 122-123) describes this as an almost domino-effect when the lives of people in different parts of the globe are affected by events happening in another country. This was mirrored in The New Age’s coverage of China. The frame of China as “An influential economy power house” implies “Economic Interdependence” and “Strong Development Expectations”. These phrases are pinpointed by Grimm (2014) in the study of Chinese engagements in Africa.

Grimm foresees when China faces strong expectations, risks loom because these expectations may not be fulfilled (Grimm, 2014). This frame implies China is capable of “pragmatic cooperation” with African countries. This is a phrase highlighted by the Chinese government in describing its policy with African countries (Taylor, 2015, p.24). However, the fragility of economic ties between China and South Africa reflected during the study period does not substantiate the Chinese government’s capability.

8.3 The influence of the news agency

The Citizen gave more attention to China because it relied heavily on news agencies during the chosen study period, while The New Age published no news agency articles. The dependence on newswire services also led to negative coverage of China. An interview with the editors of The New Age would determine whether or not the newspaper subscribes to any news service and why. Without conducting an interview, this research can only rely on conjecture to answer the question

based on previous studies of global news agencies and the South African media.

News wire articles appearing in *The Citizen* – Reuters, Bloomberg, and AFP –either originate in Europe or America, and they are part of the Western liberal media system. These agencies enjoy a monopoly over news flow in the sense that they ultimately determine the global news schedule (Boyd-Barrett and Thussu, 1992; Jansen, 2010). In the global flow of news, these services set the definition and standard of international news (Jansen, 2010). The professionalism of their practices is welcomed by South African newspapers which significantly rely on these agencies for news (Jansen, 2010).

Reuters for example, is an independent global news agency not controlled by any government. The primary source of news for Reuters comes through its own network of journalists located all over the world (Jansen, 2010). As shown in the above topic analysis, because of the contribution these agencies provided, *The Citizen* was capable of providing a more comprehensive image of China to its readers than did *The New Age*. Another possible explanation for *The Citizen*'s reliance on news agencies is Reuters is a world leader in financial reporting. No news agency, let alone local news media, has been able to match Reuters' global reach (Jansen, 2010). This means by using Reuters' services, *The Citizen* could quench readers' thirst for commercial and financial news related to China. Therefore, the readership LSM justifies subscription to news agency services.

Equally, previous studies (Boyd-Barrett, 2000; Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992) criticise news agencies for creating imbalances in news flows, referring mainly to the monopolisation and bias of developing nations compared to developed nations. The reason why imbalances exist in global news flows is that despite the independence they advertise, these media organisations mirror the broader socio-economic and political relations under the system of global market capitalism (Jansen, 2010).

Previous studies of news content and the selection practices in Western media confirm the tendency to focus overwhelmingly on issues of devastation, violence, political coups, crime, poverty, and corruption when reporting on developing societies (De Beer & Steyn, 1996; Jansen, 2010). However, criticism of Western media contradicts with *The New Age*'s editorial leaning. This shed light on why *The New Age* did not use news wire articles. In the end, *The New Age* did not succeed in bringing diversity into their media representation of China simply because they declined to use Western news wire services. This was clearly demonstrated in its scarcity of topics and in-depth coverage.

Conclusion

9.0 Conclusion

News is not neutral. In essence, news is not simply reflecting facts about an event or an issue; it is about the ongoing dimensions of power relations (Jansen, 2010). Facts are framed for the purpose of influencing public opinions (Hackett, 1984, p.233). The reason why media is geared to influence audiences in a particular way lies in its political economic orientations, as described by Herman and Chomsky: “Money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalise dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public” (1988, p2).

This research chose the FOCAC 6 as a focal point to reveal how two South African newspapers portrayed its government to government nature in China during that period. Hosting the FOCAC 6 in 2015 firmly proved South Africa’s importance to China’s Africa policy and its foreign policy goal (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012). Domestically, China’s engagement with the South African ruling party ANC is manifestly deeper and wider than with other political forces in the country (Alden & Wu, 2016).

Previous studies demonstrate the South African media, especially the print sector, is limited by its political economic orientations (Wasserman and Garman, 2014). The two newspapers, *The New Age* and *The Citizen*, were chosen to represent the difference in South African media political economic orientation. *The New Age*, whose ownership in 2015 was closely linked to the ruling party and the South African government, relies on government funding. Thus, it politically aligns itself with the South African ruling party and the government (Nevill, 2012; Rumney, 2015). *The Citizen*, whose ownership once was associated with the Apartheid regime, now relies on its commercial operation and parent group funding. It is among the publications regarded by the government as adversarial (Louw, 1993; Daniels, 2010). A literature review is then conducted to identify various frames and tones resulting from the differences in ownership, as well as funding and financing of the newspapers.

Positive literature review describes China as a development partner in poverty alleviation, a model for developing countries, and a powerhouse for African economic growth (Alden, 2006; Hanusch, 2012; Wasserman, 2012). Negative reviews paint China as a malicious competitor who damages local economy and a ruthless manager who abuses labour laws and human rights (Alden, 2006; Hanusch, 2012; Botma, 2013; Alden & Wu, 2016).

These positive news frames resonate with both the Chinese and South African governments’ propaganda. Negative frames reflect political forces which are against the ruling party’s relations with China. In this way, the application of these frames can be an indicator of the political

orientation of the media houses in South Africa.

Literature on the political economy of media theory suggests the attention given to an issue by the media often indicates the power of certain individuals or organisations over the news process (Curran, 2002). This study's literature review section also examines how media ownership, funding and financing could affect media representation of China. On ownership, Fourie writes the ideological power of the media is "mainly vested in those who own the media and who have the financial means to own and manage the media" (Fourie, 2001, p.122). On funding and financing, Louw writes: "the task of any editor in a commercial medium is to generate and package the sort of material that will appeal to the audience that advertisers are interested in" (2001, p. 158).

Tasked with discovering if the editorial content of The Citizen is packaged to appeal to audiences and differentiate itself from the government rhetoric, and whether or not The New Age packages news in such a way as to appeal to its benefactors – the government and the ruling party, a quantitative content analysis was conducted and result revealed that during a six month period, China coverage from the above mentioned newspapers consisted of different topics, sources, and tones. However, both newspapers recognised the newsworthiness of the Johannesburg Summit, which the Chinese government utilised to leverage its foreign policy toward Africa.

Pro-ANC newspaper, The New Age, had a balanced tone in its articles containing "China" or "Chinese". The topics were mostly related to business and commerce, and the frame frequently used was "China as an influential economy power house", as well as rhetoric from both the South African and Chinese governments.

The New Age only deployed frames in line with the Chinese government's African policy propaganda which were endorsed by South African government. The New Age captured this elite vision of China truthfully, just like "a picture frame gives attention to some details while relegating other pieces of information to the background" (Tuchman, 1978). Source analysis revealed The New Age quoted government officials more often than The Citizen. And, all these news articles quoting government officials were positive. It shows the South African government played a role in influencing the media to produce positive coverage of China. Therefore, it can be concluded pro-ANC is an understatement of its government-controlled nature because the market force could not restrain government capture of this media.

Conversely, The Citizen took a critical stand on South African relationship with China, and had a mostly negative tone in its coverage. Topics and frames were more diverse than The New Age but quotes were mainly replications from other media reports. The heavy reliance on Western news agency services suggested North-South news flow was mixed in the South-South news flow. However, the "Southern" factor did not prevail in the contested South African media landscape.

Still, The Citizen's reporting was not limited to the economic discourse. Tone analysis of the

stories containing “FOCAC” revealed that although the newspaper was educating its readers about the FOCAC, its tone suggested it did not cover the topic in China’s favour. The negativity in The Citizen’s coverage was mostly concerned with Sudanese President Bashir’s invitation to the FOCAC 6 in Johannesburg. At the time, Bashir was accused of being a “human rights abuser” and this was invoked in The Citizen’s coverage.

Judging by application of the frames, a conclusion cannot be drawn on the political orientation of The Citizen but it has shown an editorial leaning toward the opposition of the ruling party. The Citizen was a contested opinion field where opponents and supporters, used the Johannesburg Summit as an opportunity to influence their audiences with their political views. The ownership-driven partisanship was truthfully reflected in the content analysis.

Although the governments on both sides try to bring the people closer by organising cultural events, the South African media showed little interest in this. There was barely any content aiming at a better understanding of Chinese values, culture and people, as shown in the result of the content analysis.

9.1 Ideas for further study

In truth, South African newspapers are only utilised by the most affluent population. If the selection of media content analysis be could expanded to radio and TV, then the added audience – LSM and other political orientations – could bring greater depth to the analysis. Further study should also expand the study period so that over time, the change of world power dynamics could be captured. The short study period in this research has limited representation of China in South Africa by framing it at a time of weak Chinese economic growth. There might have been an entirely different representation of China had its economy had been strong. Chinese media in South African and in African continent is another factor which likely played a role in the South African media representation of China. Therefore, a content analysis of news stories produced by the Chinese media outlet and published by the South African media should also be considered. Further study should also consider an audience survey which may also help to unveil how South African audiences interpret the China-South Africa relationship.

Future research should consider the applicability and generalisation of the triangulation of media framing and political economy of media to other areas of South Africa-China and Africa-China relations. For instance, can the pairing of media framing and political economy of communication apply or be generalised to the South Africa-China relations on the global stage? Can the triangulation be used to study South Africa and China in Western media?

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Appendix

Coding Sheet (see attached Excel file)