

# **China in Africa - Changing frames in Chinese and British media discourse**

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M.A. Thesis in KIN 4593 –  
Chinese Society and Politics

30 ECTS

Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages

University of Oslo

01.06.2012



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2012

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<http://www.duo.uio.no/>

Trykk: Representeren, Universitetet i Oslo

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# Summary

This thesis is a comparative analysis of Chinese and British media coverage of China in Africa. The study is aimed at researching how China is framed in the respective country's media, and to determine whether the frames are changing in the years between 2006 and 2011.

News frames tend to highlight certain pieces of information about an item which is the subject of communication, thereby making them more noticeable or salient. In the process of framing social and political issues, the news media can play a powerful role in determining how people perceive the world surrounding them.

For this study I have chosen to analyse *the Guardian* and *the Economist*, selected on the basis of their importance as national agenda setters and extensive coverage of the Sino-African relations. From Chinese media, I have analysed how the official party-paper, *Renmin Ribao*, and the Guangdong-based investigative weekly, *Nanfang Zhoumo*, covers China in Africa.

In western literary accounts China is commonly portrayed as *the other* to the West. Fifteen years ago China, *the other*, was framed as an inferior, clumsy and inept communist nation. Today, the China framed in British news stories has evolved to become a greedy and skillful capitalist, a determined giant with comprehensive plans to exploit Africa for its resources.

In China, however, media frames portray a benevolent developing nation nursing a warm friendship with China's African brothers, while promoting mutual benefit and pragmatic cooperation. This thesis looks into how the frames of *the ruthless* China on the one hand and *the benevolent* China on the other, are developed and propagated simultaneously.

The image of a ruthless and greedy China in the West coincides with the the country's remarkable rise as an economic power. Frames in Chinese media portraying a benevolent and peace-loving nation have emerged as response to Chinese political leaders' quest to improve China's global image.

Based on empirical data, this analysis argues that framing in British and Chinese media is a result of a selection processes, and an explicit style of presentation by the two countries' publications. The selection process not only reflects what takes place in news rooms, but also the influence from political and economic elites who compete to dominate news stories.





# Acknowledgements

For many years I have nursed a profound interest in the topic of China in Africa. Together with my background in media, I thought that the two combined would provide valuable insights and a good starting point for writing this M.A. thesis.

Albeit interesting, I realized early on that the undertaking of completing an M.A. thesis is not easy. It has meant many hours of frustration, but also several moments of content and happiness.

I would like to direct my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Halvor Bøyese Eifring, whose guidance and advice has been integral to the success of writing this thesis.

To Kevin Reilly who has supported me and believed in me, and who has helped me with the challenge of writing in my second language, thank you.

Finally, I would also like to thank friends and family who have shown interest in my project and cheered me on.

Oslo, 23 May 2012

Mari-Anne Mørk



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# 1 Introduction

Reading about China in the media today, it is easy to draw the conclusion that China's interest in the African continent is something relatively new. However, the relationship between China and Africa has evolved since the early Maoist era up until today. Over the past sixty years the nature of the relationship has changed from being something purely diplomatic to become entwined with strong commercial aspects. Today, China is competing with western nations both as aid providers and as agents of business in Africa. Some scholars claim that China's increased involvement on the African continent has contributed to a media discourse giving China a widely exaggerated image as the new imperialists of Africa.

Given some of the more inflated claims about the impact of China in Africa, often contained within arguments about a 'new scramble' or 'new imperialism', there is a marked gap between the perceptions and exaggerated projections of an inexorable Chinese rise in Africa and knowledge of how this is actually playing out( Large 2008: 57).

In the same article, Large (2008) asserts that despite wide coverage of the topic 'China in Africa' since 2006, there still exist basic knowledge gaps about many areas of China's expanding involvement in Africa. On that basis, I believe it would be valuable to look into how media coverage on China in Africa has evolved over a five year period from 2006 to 2011. As I will explain further in the methodology section, I would like to make a comparative analysis of British and Chinese news coverage on 'China in Africa' to see how China is framed in both western and Chinese media.

The purpose of this analysis is thus to explore the operation of framing, namely how selected information about a topic is made salient in a news story in such a way as to promote a particular interpretation on the part of the audience (Entmann1993). For my analysis, I have selected a database consisting of articles from British and Chinese newspapers covering the Beijing Summit, a high-level political meeting between Chinese and African leaders taking place in Beijing in the autumn of 2006; as well as a variety of British and Chinese newspaper coverage of Sino-African relations from 2011.

This thesis thus has two objectives: (a) within the context of framing to systematically assess the coverage of Sino-African relations as exemplified in the 2006 Beijing Summit and again by the diverse coverage of China in Africa in 2011, and (b) to identify any changes in the

frames applied in British and Chinese news media on the topic of China in Africa between 2006 and 2011.

While several studies exist that explore framing in British and Chinese media separately, comparative analyses are rare. What this study reveals is that there are clearly contesting China frames in British and Chinese media, reflecting an attempt to influence audience perceptions of China in very different ways.

## 2 Definition of framing

Framing is a research concept which has gained remarkable popularity in both scholarly literature and the public imagination. As with its often-associated idea of media agenda setting, people intuitively grasp what framing conveys, although framing suggest more intentionality on the part of the framer and relates more explicitly to political strategy (Reese 2007: 148).

According to Entmann (1991: 7) news frames are embodied not in overt evaluative statements, but in “Key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols and visual images emphasised in a news narrative”. In the process of framing social and political issues, the social media can play a powerful role in determining how people perceive-the world surrounding them.

The applicability of the framing process in news work was first established by Tuchman (1978) in “Making News”, and has since been developed by other researchers through a number of empirical studies and theoretical contributions. Entmann’s extensive work on the concept has produced the following definition of framing in the news:

Frames define problems – determine what an agent is doing with the costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; diagnose causes – identify the forces creating the problem; make moral judgments – evaluate casual agents and their effects; and suggest remedies – offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects. (Entmann 1993: 53)

News frames tend to highlight certain pieces of information about an item which is the subject of communication, thereby making them more noticeable or salient. As a consequence the audience attitude towards an issue may be altered or even shaped based on exposure to certain frames. When conceiving of, for example oil drilling, the audience may be presented with frames such as the economic cost of gas prices, unemployment, environment and a country’s dependency on foreign energy sources, all bound to influence audience perceptions of oil drilling in different ways (de Vreese 2005: 53).

A journalist always makes a conscious choice when selecting what information to include and what to omit in the presentation of a news story, however the journalist may still be unaware of the conditions affecting his or her choice of frames. de Vreese (2005) argues that the choice of frame reflects predispositions the journalist adopts from his own culture; and furthermore, that the journalist can be unaware of the stereotypes underpinned by this choice. According

to de Vreese (2005:53) the highly interpretive and value-laden process of framing is often based not on individual values, but rather on an invocation of socially created collective universal and traditional understandings to define and interpret new issues at hand. As such, frames frequently draw on individuals' prior knowledge and predispositions to reinforce commonly held stereotypes.

## 2.1 The ultimate other

Based on post-structural theory, critical geopolitics has sought to break down the taken-for-granted reasoning underlying geopolitics to insist, following the discourse advocated by Michel Foucault and Edward Said, that power and knowledge are always inseparable (Sharp 2006, Sæther 2008). Critical geopolitics draws our attention to the constitutive role of discourse in establishing and maintaining hegemonic regimes of representation. Two powerful dimensions of discursive formation are visual images and language. There is always a choice in the concepts that can be drawn on to make sense of a situation. Language is metaphorical, explaining through reference to other already known concepts (Sharp 2006). Framing thus supplies a methodology which deconstructs the ways in which images and language contribute in the inscription of meaning in news items (Mawdsley 2008).

According to Edward Said (1978) the West has created images of *the Orient* that have then been used as bases for political, economic and foreign policy decisions, not to mention informing culture generally. Hugo de Burgh(2008: 286) argues that from Foucault and Borges up until today, writers have helped to perpetuate the China that is *the ultimate other*, in the manner of Said's Orient.

The stereotypes of China have changed over the centuries, from being recognized as an admired empire to become a rival, representing the opposite of the West. The dynamics of how other societies are depicted today have been looked at in particular by Galtung and Ruge (1965) who found that how foreign news is reported is partly conditioned by the journalists own cultural prejudice. During the Gulf War, the Guardian examined the language being used in British press in one week, and reported the findings which revealed how positive loaded

words were used to describe *our* forces and negative loaded words were used to describe *their* forces:

We have Army Navy and Air force; they have a war machine....We dig in; they cower in their foxholes...We launch [missiles] pre-emptively; they launch without provocation...Our missiles cause collateral damage; theirs cause civilian casualties...Our men are lads; their men are hordes...Our boys fly into the jaws of hell; theirs cower in concrete bunkers... We have reporting guidelines; they have censorship... We have press briefing; they have propaganda.

(Leapman 1992: 266)

Entman (1993) states that frames in the media emerge as the presence or absence of certain key words, sources of information, concepts, metaphors, symbols, visual images, and sentences that form *thematic clusters* in a news narrative, all of which are used to convey particular ways of understanding information. Methods in which information can be made more noticeable are through placement, repetition, or by associating them with familiar cultural symbols. As with the example above, the difference in choice of words and images, that is the difference in the frames, applied to the coverage of the two parties in the conflict is likely to leave the audience with very different perceptions of *us* and *them*.

Even a single un-illustrated appearance of a notion in a text can be highly noticeable to some readers dependent on the reader's own system of beliefs. By the same token, an idea emphasised in a text can be difficult for receiver's to notice, interpret or remember because of the same belief system. (Entmann 1993: 53).

## **2.2 Frames – reflecting conscious choice?**

According to Han (2007: 42) frames are not the equivalent to “story angles” chosen by journalists, or synonymous to “themes” or “topics” of news coverage. Rather, he argues, frames are basic cognitive structures which guide the perception and representation of reality. One could therefore claim that frames generally are not consciously manufactured but unconsciously adopted in the communication process. However, on this point the academia on framing lacks coherence as contesting scholarly accounts (D'angelo 2002, Entmann 1993, Reese 2007) claim that frames are the outcome of news gathering by which journalists convey

information about issues from the perspective and values held by political and economic elites. In that sense, one cannot claim that frames are manufactured unconsciously, although journalists may of course unconsciously have been influenced by the same frames that seek to dominate the perceptions of the audience. In the case of Chinese news as argued by this analysis, political elites to a great extent influence and direct the media on what information to cover, as well as the concepts and keywords that should dominate news items, thus the frames in Chinese news are highly consciously created.

Scheufele (1999) notes that, “the term framing has been used repeatedly to label similar but distinctly different approaches”, yet little discussion has taken place between the different fields of research. Because of the repeated use of the concept of framing within different disciplines, exactly what makes up framing has yet to be properly operationalised (Scheufele (1999), Coleman & Dysart (2005), Reese (2007) Matthes & Kohring (2008). As a result, there is no clear agreement about what a frame is, how a frame is identified, or how a frame is used. Scholars have found it difficult to develop mutually exclusive or exhaustive frames for objects of their studies (de Vreese 2005). Entman (1993) characterises framing as a fractured paradigm, in that it lacks clear conceptual definitions and a methodological approach. As Hertog and McLeod (2001: 139) maintain, framing analysis “has not settled on a core theory or even a basic set of propositions, nor has a widely accepted methodological approach emerged”.

Despite this lack of concordance among scholars on how exactly frames emerge, basic threads are agreed upon throughout most research on framing. Ultimately, the way in which issues are packaged and presented by mass media - underplaying some features while elevating others - will fundamentally influence audience perceptions of those issues and thus affect how they think about the political, economic and social aspects of the society they live in (Sæther 2008:37-38).

Rather than considering every micro- and macroscopic aspect of a new or complex idea, people use frames to simplify it in to an easily understood context. Frames provide clues that humans use in understanding information and do so by limiting and defining a message’s meaning. Because frames facilitate understanding, Hallahan (1999) argues that “framing’s ostensible weakness is actually one of the concept’s inherent strengths. Framing’s emphasis



on *providing context*... allows framing to be applied across a broad spectrum of communication situations”

In the last decade, there is one frame that has dominated the international news coverage more than any other, namely the “war on terror” frame. References to the “so-called” war on terror or bracketing in quotation marks, point to the reflexive awareness among many writers, and the frame has become a widely accepted way of thinking of the “post 9/11” world (Reese 2007: 152).

Through frames, like the “war on terror” frame applied in news stories, journalists suggest attitudes and opinions for the public to adopt. This is perhaps problematic because, as Entman (1993) and (de Vreese 2005) argue, frames used by the news media are imprints of political power, indicating the identity of actors or interest groups that were able to successfully topple other competing forces in dominating the news story. As a result, the portrait of framing has important implications for political communication. Frames are parts of political arguments, journalistic norms and social movement’s discourse. They are alternative ways of defining issues, endogenous to the political and social world (de Vreese 2005: 53). Because framing reflects influence by actors seeking to make their agenda public, news frames can actually work to constrict political consciousness, as the presentation of news becomes biased rather than pluralistic. Furthermore, because different actors are seeking to influence them, journalists have to make the choice between competing frames; some of which will be adopted by the media and some of which will be ignored (Knight, 1999). The frames that are not deemed as news worthy will thus not reach the public through the news.

## **2.3 Framing China in Africa**

Frames call attention to some aspects of reality concerning the Sino-African relationship while obscuring other elements, which in turn may influence audiences to have different reactions to China than what they might have had if the frames applied in media were different. According to Barutigam (2009), global media is dominated by the West, and thus the China frame that most commonly is propagated depicts China negatively.

Scholars (Van-Majid and Ramaprasad 1998 and Phalen and Algan 2001) detected a distinct “China frame” in their analyses of western media coverage of China, and variations of the same frame are found across a majority of news stories on policy issues involving China. This analysis agrees with other analyses (Large 2008, Mawdsley 2008) on western coverage of the Sino-African relationship in that the Chinese typically are portrayed as villains, driven by their insatiable lust to get hold of African resources. When the “China frame” is applied to media coverage of the Sino-African relationship, journalists emphasise what they perceive to be the negative impacts of China’s Africa-policy, disregarding what the positive aspects China’s involvement in Africa entails.

When Van-Majid and Ramaprasad (1998) and Phalen and Algan (2001) identified the “China frame” in the American media coverage on the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, they concluded that their findings “lend support to the hypothesised influence of ideologically driven frames on news coverage”. What the two studies established was that the American newspaper coverage of the conference was more focused on criticism of China than on the actual critical areas of concern which the conference was aimed at addressing on a global scale. The studies identified a strong anti-communist ideology in the American news concerning the conference, and their analyses of the critical discourse against China revealed a clear underlying emphasis on the then familiar themes of oppression and deceitfulness which have long been associated with the coverage of a communist country, previously the Soviet Union in particular, but also China (Van-Majid and Ramaprasad 1998: 145). In a majority of the stories, China was framed as an oppressive communist nation characterised by clumsiness and ineptitude, and China’s violation against the human rights became the larger context within which many events were interpreted.

The ultimate message within the “China frame” was an assertion of the superiority of the American political and ideological system over that of China. Media coverage in 2006 and 2011 has evolved a great deal from the anti-communist agenda detected in analyses published only ten years ago by Van-Majid & Ramaprasad (1998), Phalen & Algen (2001). This analysis concludes that the former clumsy and inept communist nation, in the accounts of British media, has evolved to become a greedy and skilful capitalist, a determined giant with comprehensive plans to exploit the African continent for all its resources. The China depicted in late 21<sup>st</sup> century British media is only socialist in the form of its authoritarian leadership; and in that regard the underlying notion of the superiority of western ideology still exists.

### 3 Media in the UK and China

Due to its role as a mouthpiece for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under Mao's leadership, the practice of the Chinese media was heavily regulated. All news media was directly owned by the party state and journalists were appointed by state officials. Although Chinese media today has become more commercialised, the CCP leadership has never officially redefined the political role of the media, and the hegemonic mouthpiece discourse of Chinese media still restricts what journalists can and cannot communicate to the public (Zhou 2000).

The CCP exerts rigorous ideological control on mass media at all levels, from content to page layout. Politics and politicians are deeply involved in the running and daily operation of the media outlets. As an agency of political power, mass media reflect the ideology of their owners that control their financial and personnel resources (Han 200: 44).

The hegemonic role of the Chinese media holds that journalists are propaganda workers, and that their main assignment is to forward the party line. The changes that have taken place in the media organisations and in media practices have evolved gradually since the economic reform period was initiated in 1978. Increased financial freedom and decreased emphasis on ideology has loosened the state's grip on media. As a result of the commercialisation process, Chinese media today have become more diversified with a wide array of media outlets offering products that cater to the interests of the audience, resulting in the expansion of critical journalism within some media (Sæther 2008). In that regard, the two Chinese media outlets I have chosen for my analysis represent both ends of the stick. While Renmin Ribao is considered a party organ and the mouthpiece of the CCP, Nanfang Zhoumo has been one of the newspapers in the forefront of the development of critical journalism in China

The genre of critical and investigative journalism is well known for challenging the media's mouthpiece role. Simultaneously media outlets like Nanfang Zhoumo are forced to adapt to a controlled media environment. The increased emphasis on thought work and propaganda in China after 1989 may have strengthened the party-state's influence on formal public opinion (Sæther 2008a: 211-12). It may also reflect the party-state's wish to utilise new media

discourses to its own advantage. While the introduction of market forces into the media system initially leads to the loosening of state control, the further development of the market soon produces new kinds of censorship. Commercialisation does not automatically lead to more critical journalism; critics note that in the West, where the media have long operated in market conditions and often have considerable freedom from political constraints, there is an ongoing crisis of investigative journalism (Tong & Sparks 2009: 338).

The years that have passed since the turn of the millennium have not been kind on British newspaper industry as it has battled to slow the ebb of news readers and advertisers to new news sources. While media in pluralistic societies often make claims of being the heart of democracy and thus operates under the precondition of press freedom; British media is currently undergoing an identity crisis (Anderson et. Al 2007: 17).

As the media-market becomes more competitive, the pressure to cater to audience demands' for entertainment becomes increasingly important. While it is an accepted principle in market economies that competition leads to higher quality and lower prices; many have noted that in the media market increased competition generally lead to more homogeneity around products with mass appeal rather than producing content that cater to particular interests (Ward 2007: 80). Media scholars (Anderson 2007, Ward 2007) have pointed to a process of tabloidisation in British media, where the news generally tends to become more sensationalist as celebrity news replaces serious political content. As profit-driven journalism becomes more cost-conscious, serious investigative journalism, which is both expensive and time-consuming to conduct, is becoming a scarce product in modern news journalism (Anderson 2007: 41-45).

A trend recognised in some British newspapers, most notably the Guardian and the Independent, is therefore a switch from factual news reporting to commentary and analysis. Firstly, this switch has come about as these news outlets to some extent have recognised the inability of newspapers to challenge TV, radio and the internet as immediate sources of news; and secondly it reflects an opportunity for the newspapers to reposition themselves as a forum for ideas rather than the bearer of hard-core news (Ward 2007: 84). Commentary and analysis still allows the media outlets to take a critical approach to current affairs, while being a more cost-effective genre than investigative journalism for example. As opposed to investigative journalism where there is no room for cutting corners in fact-checking and every side of a

story should be elucidated, the genre of commentary and analysis gives the journalists more freedom in the presentation of a news item.

Much of both the British and the Chinese news coverage on Sino-African relations come in the form of commentary and analysis; which allows journalists in both countries to offer their opinion and viewpoints by drawing on the facts they find relevant. The news stories are seldom issue-specific and in-depth analyses are rare; stories typically present the audience with a broad range of topics, giving them a general idea of what takes place in a continent far away.

## 4 Methodology

In this study I apply Entmann's theory of framing in a qualitative method of assessment to determine the overall frames in the news and editorial content of two British and two Chinese news outlets, by 1) analysing the selection/presentation, semantics and structure of words and sentences in the media texts; and 2) by providing an interpretative account of media texts linking up frames with broader cultural elements.

While such a method enables me to present a well-documented and thorough discussion of media frames, critics have raised questions about selection bias and the robustness of this method, stating like Tankard (2001) that "there is a danger in this kind of lone-scholar analysis that the identification of a set of possible frames can be done arbitrarily" and that researchers run the risk of finding frames they were consciously or unconsciously looking for. Further criticism directed at this kind of analysis is that the scholar typically merely states that a frame was found, without giving any account of how this conclusion was reached. While there is no guarantee against a scholar's own predisposition in any kind of academic analysis, the method I have outlined still provides a basic tool for systematically analysing media texts and identifying frames. Alternatively, I could have applied a quantitative method, e.g. a computer-assisted approach. However, such a method also has its drawbacks as computers are unable to understand language in all its richness.

After establishing my database, I have sequentially and repeatedly read through the articles searching for the following which I have used to define news frames in this analysis:

- 1) Selection: what pieces of information are emphasised in the news stories, what is omitted or downplayed, how is a story presented;
- 2) Semantics; searching for keywords and phrases in terms of stereotypical images and words which holds a specific connotation relevant to Sino-African relations as well as exaggerations and generalisations;
- 3) Structure; how the articles are structured, choice of genre, what information is highlighted in the title and introduction.

## 5 Database

From British media I have chosen to analyse news stories from *the Guardian* and *the Economist*, selected on the basis of their importance as national agenda setters and extensive coverage of the Sino-African relations. The Chinese newspapers selected for the study are the government organ *Renmin Ribao* (人民日) and *Nanfang Zhoumo* (南方周末). While *Renmin Ribao* is a foremost mouthpiece for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), *Nanfang Zhoumo* has earned a reputation for being one of China's most outspoken newspapers, frequently voicing criticism directed at Chinese authorities.

Traditionally British newspapers have been divided into "quality", serious-minded newspapers, usually referred to as "broadsheets", and the more populist, "tabloid" varieties. The *Guardian* is Britain's third most circulated newspaper in the first category (while published in the Berliner format) behind the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Times*. The newspaper's online offering is the second most popular British newspaper website behind the *Daily Mail's*, *Mail Online*. The paper identifies with centre-left liberalism, its readership is generally on the mainstream left of British political opinion, and it is regarded somewhat as "an organ for the middle class" (Ward 2007). The *Guardian* is a part of the GMG *Guardian Media Group* owned by a limited company, the *Scott Trust Limited*. This former charitable foundation aims to ensure the paper's editorial independence in perpetuity, maintaining its financial health to ensure it does not become vulnerable to take-overs by for-profit media groups (the *Guardian*, 2 April 2012).

The *Economist* is a weekly news and international affairs publication belonging to The *Economist Group* and edited in London. Half of the publication is owned by the *Financial Times*, while the rest belongs to independent shareholders, including many members of the staff and the Rothschild banking family of England. The *Economist* is commonly described as neo-liberal and a general supporter of free markets, globalisation, and free immigration. The *Economist* does not print by-lines identifying the authors of articles other than surveys and special "by invitation" contributions. The editors say this is necessary because "collective voice and personality matter more than the identities of individual journalists" (The *Economist*, 4 April 2012)

*Renmin Ribao* (人民日) is a daily newspaper published in Beijing as the official mouthpiece of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The newspaper carries

serious politically oriented articles and numerous speeches and reports by government or party leaders. News about these leaders is always carried on the front page. Renmin Ribao's contents reflect official policy, and it is read throughout China by many times its circulation, which is numbered between three and four million. McGregor says in his book *The Party* that the Renmin Ribao "acts as a kind of internal bulletin board for officials...."66

Nanfang Zhoumo (南方周末) is the weekend edition of the newspaper Nanfang Ribao (南方日报), published by the Nanfang Daily News Group based in Guangzhou. The newspaper has a circulation of 1, 6 million, meanwhile claiming a readership of over eight million and an annual growth of 15 percent. Nanfang Zhoumo emerged as a force in the media in the early 1990s as a result of a commercialisation process in Chinese media. Weekly editions like Nanfang Zhoumo offered a solution to the problem facing all newspaper editors at the time as to how to fulfil their political obligations to the Party on the one hand and cater to audience demands' on the other. Nanfang Ribao, as the Party organ newspaper of the Guangdong Province Party Propaganda Committee had little leeway to avoid traditional political propaganda reporting. Nanfang Zhoumo began to publish lengthy investigative stories on social issues; contributing to a shift of the Chinese journalistic agenda from narrow official propaganda to social reporting. The newspaper has earned a reputation for being one of the leading newspapers on critical and investigative news reporting in China. The New York Times has even described Nanfang Zhoumo as "China's most influential liberal newspaper" (Zhou 2000).

As a basis for my analysis, I have collected seven articles from the Economist, four from the end of October/beginning of November 2006, one from 2007 and three from the end of April 2011. From the Guardian, I have also collected nine articles, seven from 2006 and two from the beginning of February 2011. From the Chinese newspaper Nanfang Zhoumo, I have one comprehensive feature story from November 2006, four articles from April 2010, and one article from October 2011. From Renmin Ribao, I have gathered a total of twenty three articles, eighteen from the end of October/beginning of November 2006 and five from 2011. Several of the articles from 2006 were written by external contributors rather than Renmin Ribao's own journalists. Stories from the foreign ministry, from government employees stationed abroad, and representatives from African nations are all featured among the articles.



# 6 Findings and analysis

By employing the method outlined earlier in this study to systematically analyse the news stories from British and Chinese newspapers, in terms of (1) selection, (2) semantics and (3) structure, I seek to exemplify how media apply contesting frames to their coverage of China in Africa. What my analysis suggests is that while western media applies overtly China critical frames when covering Sino-African relations, Chinese media applies contesting frames describing China's presence in Africa as something positive. I will begin by giving a systematic account of British media representations of China in Africa before moving on to the Chinese newspapers. As I will return to in the discussion part of this analysis, the contesting frames between the two countries' coverage reflect how, as argued by Entmann (1993), framing has important implications for political communication and plays a major role in the exertion of political power, influencing how and what ordinary people should think about a given topic.

## 6.1 British newspapers

Regarding British coverage I find an overriding tendency to accentuate the stereotypical images of a benevolent West and a ruthless China. China is viewed as a determined capitalist nation hungry for resources to fuel its own growth. This great need for resources, which according to the news items have developed quite recently, poses a threat both to western interests in Africa and to ordinary Africans as well. The Chinese method of investment is portrayed as primitive and nothing but self-interested. Outlined below are the most prominent frames applied by British journalists covering the Sino-African relationship as concluded by this analysis:

- a) a decided preference for focusing on China's negative impacts on the continent, and within that, on issues and places of violence, disorder and corruption (e.g. Zimbabwe, Sudan, Angola) over other negative issues (e.g. trade imbalances);
- b) a tendency to acclaim the western method of aid and investment while castigating China;
- c) a tendency to homogenise China and Chinese actors, and to 'isolate' them from other business interests in particular, and;

- d) within these article on China-Africa, a frequently complacent account of the role and interest of different Western actors in Africa that is not necessarily the case in the wider reporting on the West's- impacts and influences in Africa.

In my analysis of British media coverage in 2006 and 2011, I find that the main focus is on the battle between Western trusteeship and Chinese ruthlessness. Although the presentations have evolved and seemingly have become less sensationalist and more factual in 2011; the overriding frames are mostly unchanging. I find that one of the most notable changes in the British media accounts is the framing of Africans. In 2006, considerable focus was put on the framing Africans as weak and helpless. Today, however the African continent is regarded as wielding considerable power. Illustrative of this development is The Economist's Africa coverage; the May 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2000, the Economist ran a cover story on Africa titled "The hopeless continent", December 9<sup>th</sup> 2011, the Economist again published a story on Africa, only this time the title was "Africa Rising: The hopeful continent". This example is illustrative in exemplifying the power of definition that is wielded by the frames applied to news items. These titles alone point to two contesting frames suggesting two very different ways for the audience to think about Africa; namely as either a *hopeful* or a *hopeless* continent.

As initially noted, framing essentially involves selection and salience; to select some aspect of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text (Entmann 1993: 52). When framing China in a negative way, the journalists emphasise and give prominence to certain aspects of the Sino-African relations while downplaying others. In the following section I will give examples of how British media accounts choose to emphasise conflict, violence or anti-Chinese sentiment when creating these negative frames.

### **6.1.1 Selection: Conflict and violence**

When covering China in Africa, British media tend to ignore more positive elements such as debt cancellation; investments or compact on commodity prices seem to be downplayed, with a preferred focus on problem issues, thus contributing to framing China negatively. The uncertainty surrounding the Chinese method of investment in Africa may be partly to blame for the notably uneven and partial focus on China's interests and impacts in different African nations. Seen from a media perspective it is not controversial to focus more on problem

issues; conflict stories have a greater appeal to the readership, more so than sunshine tales. The news coverage of Africa in general has a preferred focus on zones plagued by violent conflict, corruption, genocide and authoritarian regimes. Most articles mentions Sudan, Zimbabwe or Angola, vilified by western governments.

The relationship between China and Sudan was a central focus of human rights journalism in the period leading up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics. China was portrayed as the big bad wolf in news items giving simplistic accounts of the course of events involving China and Sudan. In 2008, news stories around the world framed China as the main enabler of a situation labeled genocide by the United States. The story appeared to be simple: through their controversial friendship with the Khartoum-based President Omar al-Bashir, China purchased Sudanese oil, in exchange the Sudanese government got arms which were used against the Darfur rebels (Brautigam 2009: 281). The following excerpt from the Economist does not talk warmly about China's relations with Sudan leading up to Hu Jintao's Africa tour:

He will be especially welcomed this weekend in Sudan. For China not only buys about 80% of the oil exports that are making parts of Sudan rich. It also shields Sudan from being held to account in the UN Security Council for one of the largest atrocities of recent times: the killing of some 300,000 people and the uprooting of more than 2m in Darfur....there may be profit to China in turning a blind eye to all of this, but there is no honour (The Economist, 1 Febuary 2007; Mr. Hu's mission to Khartoum".

In the aftermath, several scholars (Brautigam 2009, Li 2007, He 2011,) claim that the story was more complex than media accounts commonly gave an impression of. They argue that China has changed its stance on Sudan in recent years; on his 2007 Africa tour, President Hu Jintao held "frank" discussions with Sudan's President Bashir, China has appointed a special envoy for Sudan, and persuaded president Bashir to allow a peacekeeping force into Darfur, in addition to supplying a contingent of some 300 military engineers for the peacekeepers. None of this information was however included in the simplistic presentation offered by the Economist or by other newspapers.

In fact, the magnitude of negative media coverage of china in western media in 2008 has sparked scholarly debate in China with a number of seminars and meetings held in China to discuss the issues of negative reporting.

Western media coverage on China in 2008, notwithstanding its inaccuracies and incompleteness, was so extensive, intensive and critical towards China (from the Chinese perspective) that it culminated in tension and even led to open battles between western and Chinese media professionals (Guo 2012).

Recently, several research projects have been sponsored by the Chinese government to find ways to boost China's image internationally (Guo 2012). This demonstrates that the Chinese care about how they are perceived outside China's borders and that they are actively seeking ways to improve their image, a subject I will return to in the discussion of this analysis.

### **6.1.2 Anti-Chinese sentiment in Zambia**

In addition to focusing on countries plagued by violence and corruption, Western media also pay much attention to African countries where there seemingly exist strong anti-Chinese sentiments. Zambia as a former British colony is frequently mentioned in British media accounts. In these articles, China is framed negatively with the main emphasis put on how China has a poorer reputation than other countries when investing in Africa. Zambia received massive media-coverage in Britain when opposition politician Michael Sata made containing Chinese investments in Zambia his platform in the 2006 presidential election. In the election, which he lost, Sata famously played the China card, with relentless attacks on Chinese "infestors". In the 2011 elections which he won, Sata had toned down his rhetoric considerably whilst the pledge to contain the Chinese was nowhere in evidence. Nevertheless, Sata's victory is widely seen in the West as "a vote of no confidence against China's existing projects" in Zambia. Below is an excerpt from the Economist describing Sata's resentment towards Chinese investors in Zambia

"We want the Chinese to leave and the old colonial rulers to return," said the populist Michael Sata. "They exploited our natural resources too, but at least they took good care of us. They built schools, taught us their language and brought us the British civilisation...at least Western capitalism has a human face; the Chinese are only out to exploit us (The Economist, 1 October 2011, "Not as bad as they say")

As I will discuss later on in this analysis, Chinese media accounts took another approach to the events in Zambia.<sup>1</sup> Acknowledging Sata's resentment to Chinese investments in the 2006-election, Chinese media claim the new president's change of heart is due to China's

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<sup>1</sup> For further discussion, see page 43.

contribution to Zambia's economy, especially during the global financial crisis when they relentlessly kept on investing and fuelling Zambia's economic growth, whilst several Western actors withdrew their investments. The difference between Chinese and British news coverage of the Sata-victory exemplifies how the choice of journalistic angles; what to emphasise and which sources to include affects the news frames.

### **6.1.3 Simplification: China's hold on Africa**

In accordance with Mawdsley (2008), I find that Western media accounts have the tendency to simplify a complex reality of Sino-African relations for their readers by overlooking the fact that the Chinese involvement in Africa is diverse in origins, roles and interests. Heidi Østbø Haugen (2006) writes that the Chinese in Africa include both longstanding and more recent diasporic communities, often engaged in small and medium sized enterprises. However these interests are seldom featured in media accounts. According to British media coverage, China's presence in Africa is all about "China's global drive for resources, raw materials and market" with a focus on "shaping the economic and political realities (in Africa) in favour of Asia's rising superpower".<sup>2</sup>

That the British media tend to focus more strongly on the undertakings of the Chinese authorities, state run enterprises (SOEs), as well as larger private enterprises is not surprising when observed from a geopolitical perspective. Over the last decade, China has rapidly become a force to be reckoned with on the African continent as it increasingly is imposing on what used to be the turf of Western powers, invoking massive media coverage. Meanwhile, the fact that China's interests in Africa are diverse tends to be lost in the news items. The distinction between Chinese national and corporate interests are often blurred; as journalists assume that China's national and corporate interests in Africa are more closely knit than they in reality are (Li 2007). According to He (2011) the claim that SOEs can be equated with the state is largely outdated as the government and SOEs must compromise in order to maximise benefits for their increasingly different interests.

However, China's inability to control the actions of its SOEs in Africa has been the subject of intense criticism by the West and is a significant cause of Western concerns about China's

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<sup>2</sup> The Guardian, 1 November 2006, "Beijing's race for Africa"

rising influence in Africa. According to Chinese scholars Li (2007) and He (2011) the criticism from the West is unreasonable when the diverging interests and increasingly distant relationship between the government and SOEs is taken into account. Media accounts tend to be less concerned with the accuracy of the Chinese corporate structure and rather choose to accentuate what they describe as China's lack of an ethical business culture, like the following excerpt from the Economist:

Chinese expatriates in Africa come from a rough-and-tumble, anything-goes business culture that cares little about rules and regulations. Local sensitivities are routinely ignored at home, and so abroad. (The Economist, 20 April 2012, "Trying to pull together")

Whether the assertions made in media accounts have truth to them or not, the ample focus on the faults of SOE's and other major companies may contribute in promoting a distorted image of the Chinese interests in Africa, thus framing China in a negative way. In the same article as above, the journalist generalises and makes it appear like all Chinese undertakings in Africa are characterised by a low standard:

Chinese construction work can be slapdash and buildings erected by mainland firms have on occasion fallen apart. A hospital in Luanda, the capital of Angola, was opened with great fanfare but cracks appeared in the walls within a few months and it soon closed. (The Economist, 20 April 2011 "Trying to pull together")

A typical article covering China in Africa is filled with examples of Chinese investment going haywire like the excerpt above. A small section of an article often gives account of several failed projects all in different countries, influencing the reader to believe that the majority of Chinese projects are somehow faulted:

Sinopec, an oil firm, has explored in a Gabonese national park. Another state oil company has created lakes of spilled crude in Sudan. Zimbabwe's environment minister said Chinese multinationals were "operating like *makorokoza* miners", a scornful term for illegal gold-panners. (The Economist 20 April 2011, "Trying to pull together")

Of course, the Chinese business model is different from that the West and the tendency to give prominence to strong claims as above may reflect British journalists lacking knowledge of the Chinese corporate environment. However, as most of the British coverage on China in Africa takes the form of commentary, the assertions made are seldom supported by facts and explanations. If the coverage had taken the form of investigative journalism, the use of facts

and numbers to support assertions like the one made above would have been required (de Burgh 2008). If the article was covering British undertakings at home, the claim of an investment project going wrong would likely be accompanied by thorough explanations and factual accounts. However, because the Chinese are not in Britain to hold the media accountable, seemingly journalists can allow themselves to be more lenient with their use of colourful language and claims not entirely supported by facts.

#### **6.1.4 Changing frames in China-specific contexts**

Mawdsley (2008) claims that Western companies in Africa supposedly operate under a different ethical regime than the Chinese because of their own high convictions; good governance; labour laws; voluntary agreements as part of a wider government and third sector pressure to improve business with Africa; and consumer demands for more ethical production. None of these are said to apply to Chinese private or state-run companies. In the following excerpt from *The Economist*, the author claims that African see Chinese aid and investment as a way to avoid Western nagging over human rights and good governance.

For Angola, China's straightforward approach is an attractive alternative to the pinnicketies of the IMF and the Paris Club of creditors, which have been quibbling over terms for years. So it is with many African countries, fed up with the intrusiveness of Europeans and Americans fussing about corruption or torture and clamouring for accountability...China's credit to Angola is not only welcome in itself. It has reduced the pressure from the West. (*The Economist*, 26 October 2006, "Never too late to scramble").

Bilateral and multilateral initiatives on debt, trade and aid have made advances towards greater equity and reparation of injustices in Africa; however, there are still many western companies which employ corrupt and exploitative business practices in Africa. Despite "progressive initiatives" and the importance and achievements of incremental improvements in Western accountability and transparency; in several cases they remain inadequate (Mawdsley 2008). While insights like these often appear in British news stories, they are less apparent when framed within the China specific-context. Newspapers that in other stories can be very critical towards western aid and investments in Africa, appear to become less critical when the West is framed in the same article as China. Following is an excerpt from *The Guardian* urging British government to crack down on British facilitators of corruption in an article not concerned with China's presence in Africa:

A report by the Bond anti-corruption group, whose members include Tearfund and Christian Aid, praised the UK for having a sound legal framework but concluded that not enough action has been taken against lawyers, bankers and accountants who handle corrupt transactions, with very few attempts to prosecute facilitators of corruption. The report, released on international anti-corruption day, pointed to the devastating effects of corruption on developing economies, with the cost in Africa alone estimated at \$148bn a year... (The Guardian, 9 December 2011, "Britain must get tougher on facilitators of corruption, says report").

### **6.1.5 Semantics: China - a negative impact?**

While researchers (Brautigam 2009, Large 2008, Mawdsley 2008) acknowledge that there are serious issues which rightly tarnish the general reputation of China in Africa, they argue that western media accounts are prone to exaggeration when covering Sino-African relations.

The Economist article titled "Trying to pull together" published in 2011 claims that a generalised sense that lower standards, lack of "corporate social responsibility" in business practices, poor labour relations, competition with import substitution industries (especially textiles), and not enough hiring of local labour are the downside of China's increasingly prominent presence in Africa. However in a section of the article the journalist, without making any references to sources, claims that deadly accidents occur almost daily in Chinese-run copper mines in Zambia, and that workers have to work two years before receiving safety equipment:

At Chinese-run mines in Zambia's copper belt they must work for two years before they get safety helmets. Ventilation below ground is poor and deadly accidents occur almost daily. To avoid censure, Chinese managers bribe union bosses and take them on "study tours" to massage parlours in China. Obstructionist shop stewards are sacked and workers who assemble in groups are violently dispersed. When cases end up in court, witnesses are intimidated. (The Economist, 20 April 2011, "Trying to pull together").

The article above contains many suggestions that contribute to framing China as a ruthless employer oblivious to labour standards and prone to corruption in Africa. However, after having investigated the different claims separately, I find that they, to a large extent, can be refuted. According to the Human Rights Watch (HRW) Report "You'll be fired if you refuse" published in 2011; although still falling short of other multinationals operating in Zambia, the Chinese employers had improved considerably at complying with labour regulations since first starting work in Zambia about a decade ago. The report states that Chinese in the copper



belt do issue required safety equipment on a regular basis, but that they are reluctant to replace boots or helmets that are damaged before the scheduled replacement period (HRW 2011).

About the occurrence of deadly accidents, the report (2011:32) states that “Underground copper mining is particularly dangerous, with at least 15 recorded fatalities in Zambia every year since 2001 and numerous other serious injuries and long-term health problems incurred”. While 15 deaths still is a considerable number, it is far less than *the almost daily accidents* projected in the Economist.

Furthermore, the Human Rights Watch-report (2011) claims that some of the Chinese-run operations in Zambia are preventing their workers from exercising their right to join the trade union of their choice. While anti-union activities do not reach the same level, union representatives from companies owned by other nations at times voiced similar complaints regarding prejudice against them (HRW 2011). As for the court cases, while it is difficult to assess the degree to which witnesses are intimidated; Dan Haglund, a researcher on the China-Zambia relationship, argues that the courts tend to rule in favour of workers in court disputes (Haglund: 2010).

Brautigam (2009) argues that journalists have a tendency to be inaccurate in their reporting of Sino-African relations. A general lack of understanding of the Chinese approach to aid and investment may be an underlying reason, thus compelling journalists to recycle typical stereotypes in their coverage of China and Africa. However, fact-checking is not always made easy for Western journalists as the Chinese generally not are prone to openness around their investments in Africa. Traditionally, the unwillingness on the Chinese side to meet international demands for transparency by making the size of Chinese aid publicly known, has fuelled much speculation concerning the size of foreign aid to Africa (Brautigam 2009). In that regard, the Chinese themselves contribute to misconceptions about their methods to aid and investments, and furthermore to suspicion and negative publicity surrounding the nature of Chinese undertakings in Africa.

### 6.1.6 Images: The benign west vs. the ruthless China

Throughout the western media coverage, we can identify recurring words and phrases which are indicative of the frames outlined above. Large (2008) points to the continuity of historical metaphors for understanding China's relations with Africa – the articles are littered with references to the *new scramble* for Africa, China's *colonial* ambitions and China's African *safari*.

But it is plainly designed to make money, win friends, and gain influence. In Africa, it is as if the era of 19th century imperial expansion is happening all over again - but this time freebies and open check books have replaced glass beads and pith helmets.” (The Guardian, 1 November 2006, Beijing's Race to Africa”)

Maoist solidarity with anticolonial struggles has been replaced by a business agenda set strictly on Chinese terms (The Guardian 4 November 2006, “Scrambling to Beijing”)

Noting the importance of representation and image, Large (2008) argues that these images are indicative of western defensiveness about ‘it’s *backyard*, and can be seen as part of a wider reaction to an emerging power. The language of *red dragons* charging the continent bares resemblance to the geopolitical discourses that characterised the Cold War. From the 2006 articles, it is evident that unlike the West, the Chinese have *insinuated* their way into the continent.

Quietly, while the world's attention has been elsewhere, China has become a major player in Africa (The Independent, 7 September 2006, “The benefits and dangers of those gifts from the east”)

There are not only metaphors drawing on colonial history and stereotypical images of China that contributes to the critical China frames in British media. The news frames depicting the Chinese as an unscrupulous force in Africa is also enhanced by the choice and placement of words invoking audiences' negative reactions towards China. China is described as *shrewd jet-setting businessmen*, a *yellow peril* arriving in Africa in ever greater numbers. In the following excerpt the keywords describe China as a *powerful player*, *voracious* and “*peacefully rising*“ in quotation marks with a *voracious appetite* for African resources while *flooding* African markets with goods:

No fewer than 48 African heads of state are being hosted at a grand summit in Beijing this weekend - a dry run for the 2008 Olympics, some say - in an event which underlines how "peacefully rising" China has become a

powerful player in a distant continent...In some ways, of course, China's voracious appetite is a good thing and helps boost African growth and create jobs. But the focus on extractive industries means too little diversification into manufacturing, while cheap Chinese goods flood local markets and threaten South African and Nigerian textile companies. (The Guardian, 4 November 2006, "Scrambling to Beijing").

As noted in earlier in this thesis, most of the British news coverage on Sino-African relations comes in the form of commentary; a genre which allows greater room on the part of the journalist to offer his or her views on the topic discussed. The journalists themselves not only contribute to the frames they employ, but like the audience, they are also affected by them (de Vreese 2005). And what may have been intended to be neutral stands appears as overtly subjective and negatively loaded. Commonly, the introduction of a commentary offers the question - is this good for Africa? The question alone is neutral, however, framed as below it gives little room for alternative perceptions:

Tony Blair and Bono see Africa as a moral cause; China sees it as a business opportunity. But, is Beijing's interest based on economic partnership – or ruthless exploitation? (The Guardian, 29 March 2006, "China's Goldmine")

The assertion that China sees Africa as a business opportunity, and not like a moral cause, is likely to leave readers with the notion that China's involvement in Africa involves more ruthless exploitation than economic partnership. The introduction calls attention to the West represented by Blair and Bono as having Africa's best interest in mind, while inviting the audience to believe that China's presence in Africa is nothing but self-interested. Western actors, whether they are businesses, NGOs or governments, are typically portrayed as benign within the majority of this articles and accounts. The West may in the past have supported authoritarian leaders, or been part of corrupt business transactions; but it has learnt its lesson and reformed. While colonialism was economically exploitative and morally wrong, western colonialism is claimed to at least have had a developmental dimension and well-intentioned elements – an attitude that has translated into an ethical concern for Africa in the post-colonial period.

The Beijing summit is a big deal for China, a deliberately showy monument to its value-free strategy. It would be absurd to claim that western greed and self-interest did not do enormous damage in an earlier scramble for Africa. But the age of colonialism is over. It should be accepted today that global power brings global responsibilities. Tyranny, inequality and corruption offend universal values. In countries where it now has the ability to make a difference, China should think twice about offering its help with no strings attached. (The Guardian, 4 November 2006, "Scrambling to Beijing").

The dominant frame that runs through British articles on China in Africa is that the mistakes of the past have been addressed, and that the West is now the architect and engineer of a new drive towards good governance and development, with aid now accompanied by ethical conditions, while reformed commercial practices promise investment and trade that will enhance development rather than line the pockets of kleptocratic elites. Furthermore, these faltering steps, which will be of mutual benefit to Western companies and ordinary Africans, are under threat from the *unscrupulous* Chinese:

The scramble for resources invariably passes the ministerial doorstep, where concessions are sold and royalties collected. China helps African governments ignore Western nagging about human rights: its support has allowed Sudan to avoid UN sanctions over Darfur. (The Economist; 26 October 2006, “Wrong model, right continent”)

Mawdsley (2008) claims that “western countries demonstrate a persistent reluctance to recognise and redress structural inequalities of power within the world system”. This, she finds, is refracted through much of the media’s reporting on China in Africa. With this in mind, one might be able to understand why the gradualist reform and experimental pragmatism advocated by the Chinese seem attractive to African people – not just corrupt leaders and elites – blighted by the ‘shock therapy’ of Structural Adjustment Programs in the 1980s and 1990s. In that light, the western assertion that it cares about Africa and is undertaking serious efforts to ‘help, heal and save’ it may not ring a true sound.

With titles making mention of *neo-colonialism* and suggestive introductions, some of the article covering China in Africa thus appears as quite judgmental. The journalist seems to be holding the moral high ground, taking it upon themselves to advise Africa on how to handle China’s mounting interest in the continent. The title “Wrong model, right continent” of an article published in the Economist in 2006, goes far in suggesting that while Africa indeed is the continent that needs saving, China’s method of aid and investment does not offer the appropriate means of help:

The Chinese part of this puzzle is easier to deal with: even if it is not the first resource-hungry power to behave poorly in Africa, China should be condemned wherever it bribes, cajoles or (in the case of Sudan) permits genocide. (The Economist, 26 October 2006.” Wrong model, right continent”).

Once the targets of rioting and insurrection in Africa were European colonial overlords. Today, though, jet-setting Chinese businessmen, arriving in ever greater numbers, are causing a backlash in the world's poorest continent... (The Observer, 29 October 2006, Is China the new colonial power in Africa?)

In line with earlier media analysis Mawdsley (2008), Brautigam (2009), I find that in 2006, British media tended to adopt a paternalistic line where the notion of the West having to save Africa from China's influence was widely circulated. The frame is enhanced by the application of loaded words, e.g. when describing African's like students, who need to receive guidance to avoid being exploited by the Chinese:

Chad was supposed to establish a model of good practice. But, as a Western observer in the country puts it: "The risk is [following China's oil deals] it will become an example of the worst [African] pupils. (Financial Times, 23 January 2006, "The 'resource curse'")

In 2011, the media accounts increasingly have a different focus. From being portrayed as someone who is dependent on Western assistance and advice in 2006, Africans in the news stories from 2011 are depicted as people who are capable of fending for themselves. Africa is to a lesser extent framed as the continent which needs healing and saving, as Western media have started to appreciate that bargaining power of African governments, like the discussion in this 2011 excerpt of the Economist exemplifies:

Africans are not helpless in their business relations with the Chinese. Some, admittedly, have not been strong in their dealings: a usually bossy Rwanda lets Chinese investors' run riot. But African governments by and large get reasonable deals; and some, like Angola, are masterful negotiators...Increasingly, however, it is the Chinese who play Africans off against each other. Growing policy co-ordination between African embassies in Beijing is a useful first step in improving African bargaining power. (The Economist, 20 April 2011, "Trying to pull together").

### **6.1.7 Structure and genre**

In the British coverage of the 2006 Beijing Summit, the media showed great diligence in recycling old colonial terms. Titles and introductions often go far in suggesting what the readers should think of China's interest in Africa. Both the Guardian and the Economist frequently apply titles making mention of China's *scramble* and *race* for Africa; China's economic invasion of Africa; and China's plans to go on safari to woo the continent, invoking

images of a country willing to do whatever it takes to get its hands on African resources. The title is the first thing a reader takes notice of when examining an article, and when negative loaded words are frequently applied to the titles and repeated throughout the articles, they will strongly affect readers' perceptions. The titles below, all taken from the news stories originating around the time of the Beijing Summit, give assertion to the view of China as a neo-colonialist power in Africa:

“Never too late to scramble” (the Economist, 26 October 2006)

“On safari” (The Economist, 2 November 2006)

“The Savannah comes to Beijing as China hosts its new empire” (The Guardian, November 4, 2006)

“Scrambling to Beijing” (The Guardian, 4 November 2006).

“Beijing's race for Africa” (The Guardian, 1 November 2006)

The titles suggest that China is the new colonial power in Africa, and the articles often go on to evaluate China's negative impacts on Africa and explaining why China's presence in Africa is a bad thing. According to Entmann (1993:54) the readers' response to a news item is clearly affected if they perceive information about one interpretation and possess little or no information about the alternatives. In the British coverage of China in Africa, all frames reinforced by exalted titles and distorted representations; depict China's presence in Africa as something negative. The colourful language often applied in the titles is often followed up throughout the articles. However, as discussed earlier in the analysis, they are not always supported by factual explanations.

As mentioned, most articles on China in Africa take the form of commentary, a genre that invites the journalist to express his or her views and suggestions on the topic covered, more so than for example the genre of investigative journalism. A sentence describing the Beijing Summit as “a shrewd attempt by China's communist-capitalists to harness the mostly forgotten forces of Marxist historical inevitability”<sup>3</sup> is by no means extreme in the British commentaries; however it would likely not go unchallenged in another genre.

Meanwhile, I see a tendency in 2011 for some of the very China critical commentaries to be replaced by more investigative journalism compared to the media accounts from 2006. The

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<sup>3</sup> The Guardian, 1 November 2006, “Beijing's race for Africa”

colonialist rhetoric is toned down in the media accounts of both the Guardian and the Economist, perhaps reflecting more knowledge among journalists about China's undertakings in Africa, as well as more openness on the part of the Chinese around their own aid and investments projects in Africa.

## 6.2 Chinese newspapers

The frames I find in the Chinese newspapers stand in stark contrast to their British counterparts. I suggest that the frames employed by Chinese newspapers endorse positive images of China as a nation promoting soft power in Africa. What is meant by soft power in this analysis is China's intentions to *cooperate* with African nations in providing an alternative model of aid and investment in Africa, not *coercing* African nations to cooperate with China strictly on Chinese terms. Chinese news coverage portrays the Sino-African relationship as a deeply rooted, long-standing friendship, built on mutual trust, benefit and reciprocity.

In the Chinese newspaper, I can identify the following frames;

- a) A tendency to emphasise the similarities between the African continent and China, especially in terms of shared colonial history, their common status as developing countries and the possible gains of south-south cooperation;
- b) A decided preference to focus on China's positive impacts on the African continent often by employing propagandistic rhetoric when describing Chinese undertakings in Africa, with less focus put on factual reporting;
- c) A tendency for media accounts, especially Renmin Ribao, to directly reflect current Chinese foreign policy;
- d) A tendency to portray the West as villains, bringing forth its colonial past and its' failed methods of aid in Africa ;
- e) A distinctive difference between the coverage of Renmin Ribao and Nanfang Zhoumo, were the approach of the latter is more concerned with investigative journalism.

To reach this conclusion I have used the same selection criteria as in the analysis of British newspapers, namely (1) selection; (2) semantics; and (3) structure.

As discussed earlier in this analysis, it is apparent that of the Chinese newspapers chosen for this analysis one is more closely intertwined with Chinese authorities than the other. This is reflected in the coverage which differs notably between the two newspapers. In this part of the analysis I have therefore chosen to first look at the coverage of Renmin Ribao, before looking at Nanfang Zhoumo, and then making a comparison between the two.

Renmin Ribao's close connection with the CCP is apparent in the Chinese media coverage of China in Africa, and much of its coverage directly reflects national policy. During the 2006 Beijing Summit, media was given an important role in shaping perceptions of China and Africa, an important step in trying to prohibit that the perceptions of China in Africa were driven largely by Western media coverage (Li 2007, Brautigam 2009, Guo 2012). Thus, Chinese media organisations, particularly the ones with the closest affiliations with the government, started to expand the Chinese journalist coverage of Sino-African relations.

### **6.2.1 Renmin Ribao: Mutual benefit for China and Africa**

During the 2006 Beijing Summit, the CCP mouthpiece, Renmin Ribao, thus published articles on a daily basis. In addition to very detailed reporting about the summit itself, the newspaper also started paying attention to Africa, publishing articles covering the socio-economic conditions, economic development and culture of different African countries.

The media coverage of Sino-African relations both in 2006 and 2011, is characterised by what Van-Majid and Ramaprasad (1998) dubbed 'propagandistic praise' of China's undertakings in Africa. I believe this frame is adopted to bolster China's international image, which appears to be suffering based on the massive amount of negative reporting occurring in Western media (Guo 2012).<sup>4</sup>

The Chinese coverage is concentrated on the ideological lines of the Sino-African relationship. In the articles, China is depicted as a global power and leader of the developing world. Seen from a political stance, this is not surprising as China, a global economy on the

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<sup>4</sup> See discussion for further debate on China's national image



rise, both for political and economic reasons, wants to cultivate good relations with all nations in Africa. Furthermore, in several African countries, close links to China is a way to minimise Western and, especially, American hegemony, which have been of interest to African governments who have been faced with tough demands on democracy and transparency from the West (Li 2007).

To that end, it is evident that China's current foreign policy is directly mirrored in the media coverage of Sino-African relations. Beijing operates a distinctive normative mode in conducting its foreign policy relations with Africa: resting on a historically-informed framework, this is reinforced by contemporary rhetoric emphasising political equality, mutual benefit sovereignty, non-interference and 'win-win cooperation' (Alden 2009: 568).

Clearly visible in the accounts from Renmin Ribao, the news frames are enhanced by the repetitive use of certain keywords and concepts. When framing the Sino-African relationship, the uses of positive loaded words like *friendly cooperation* (友好合作), *equality and mutual benefit* (平等互利), *pragmatic cooperation* (实施合作) and *having one's eyes on the future* (着眼长远) occurs consistently throughout the articles. The Chinese media accounts always emphasise the benefits of *south-south cooperation* (南南合作) when accentuating how China and Africa can help each other on the way to becoming prosperous. Furthermore, the newspapers apply culturally very positively loaded concepts in China to describing the relationship between Chinese and Africans in the terms of *good friends* (好朋友) and *good brothers* (好兄弟).

Following is an excerpt from a commentary published in Renmin Ribao during the 2006 Beijing Summit, including all of the terms mentioned above to elaborate on how closely intertwined the interests of African nations and China are. The excerpt is representative of the majority of news items originating in Renmin Ribao around the time of the Beijing Summit:

经过6年的发展，中非合作论坛为推动中非全面友好合作发挥了重要作用，形成平等互利、务实合作、着眼长远三大特点。

中国一贯重视发展同非洲国家的友好合作关系。长期以来，中国和非洲国家在政治、经贸、卫生、教育、文化和社会发展各领域合作日益扩大，不断深化，造福双方人民。中非堪称真诚友好、相互信任的好朋友，平等互利、团结合作的好伙伴，风雨同舟、情同手足的好兄弟。 建立中非合作论坛是新形

势下中国和非洲友好国家为增进传统友谊、深化务实合作、共同应对挑战、面向未来发展所采取的重大战略举措，也是推动南南合作、促进发展中国家团结合作的一项新的尝试。

(Underlining added)

After six years' development, Forum on China-Africa Cooperation has been playing a significant role in promoting the **friendly cooperation** between China and Africa in all areas, and it has formed three characteristics as follows: **equality and mutual benefit, pragmatic cooperation, and having ones' eyes on the future.**

China has always attached importance to developing friendly Sino-African relations. For a long time, China and Africa's cooperation in the various fields of politics, commerce, health, education, culture and social development have become increasingly expanded, continuously deepened, benefitting the people on both sides. China and Africa can be rated as **genuine friends** with mutual confidence in each other and a united, equal and mutually beneficial partner and **brothers** who stand together in thick and thin. During the establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, China and Africa have adopted the major strategies of strengthening traditional friendship, deepening pragmatic cooperation, tackling challenges and facing toward future development together in an attempt to promote **south-south cooperation** and to accelerate the unity of developing countries (Renmin Ribao, 26 October 2006, 中非友好：务实机制 真诚合作 «Sino-African friendship: Pragmatic mechanisms for sincere cooperation», *my own translation*).

## 6.2.2 Invoking history

Because of the close link between the CCP and the media, foreign policy decisions have a direct effect on how Sino-African relations are being covered in Chinese media accounts. China's Africa policy is a long-term strategy, and the Chinese like to emphasise that China's interest in Africa is not something new (Alden 2009). Therefore media often invoke history to accentuate the similarities between China in Africa and the long-time bond between them. It is not uncommon for the journalist to use several paragraphs looking retrospectively at the Sino-African relationship; making mention of how both China and Africa have encountered recent hardship under *colonialism* (殖民主义) and *foreign aggression* (外来侵略), how China supported African countries' independence movements - in Southern Africa, there are close Chinese ties going back to solidarity with national liberation movements - and how both China and African countries have been in rapid development since the second world war (Brautigam 2009). And furthermore; continuously underscoring how friendly Sino-African relations have existed for more than 50 years:

中国和非洲，有过类似的历史遭遇，都曾饱受殖民主义和外来侵略造成的深重灾难。在争取民族独立与解放的长期斗争中，始终相互同情、相互支持、相互帮助。

中国和非洲，在第二次世界大战后，都揭开了自己历史发展的光辉篇章。随着新中国的诞生和一系列非洲国家砸碎殖民主义枷锁而宣布独立，中非关系进入全面发展的新时期。我国老一辈领导人和非洲民族解放运动的先驱们，携手奠定了中非友好合作关系的坚实基础。1956年5月，中国同埃及建立大使级外交关系，开启了中非关系的新纪元。

China and Africa have both encountered similar mistakes in world history; they have both in the past endured the great misfortunes brought about by colonialism and foreign aggression. Through the long fight for national independence and liberation, they have sympathized with each other, held out together and helped each other.

After World War 2, China and Africa both revealed the glorious chapters of their development history, alongside the birth of China, a few African countries smashed the chains of colonialism and proclaimed independence, and Sino-African relations entered a new period of full scale development. Our country's generation of old leaders and the pioneers of the African liberation movement cooperated in establishing the solid fundament of friendly Sino-African relations. In May of 1956, China and Egypt established diplomatic relations on ambassador level, opening a new era of Sino-African relations (Renmin Ribao, 1 November 2006, 好朋友。好伙伴。好兄弟, "Good friends, good partners, good brothers", *my own translation*).

### **6.2.3 Reflecting the distinctions of China's Africa policy**

The frames in Chinese media accounts, and especially in Renmin Ribao, puts strong emphasis on promoting China's soft power and the current foreign policy. The fundamental goals of this foreign policy are to preserve China's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, create a favourable international environment for China's reform and opening up and modernise construction, maintain world peace and propel common development.<sup>5</sup>

As a part of this all-embracing foreign policy, China's Africa Policy consists of the two following main characteristics agreed upon by The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation

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<sup>5</sup> China's independent foreign policy: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/wjzc/t24881.htm>

(FOCAC), which was established in year 2000 between China and African countries supporting the One-China policy<sup>6</sup>:

- Pragmatic Cooperation: Its purpose is to strengthen consultation and expand cooperation and its focus is on cooperation.
- Equality and Mutual Benefit: It promotes both political dialogue and economic cooperation and trade, with a view to seeking mutual reinforcement and common development.

According to Alden (2009: 569), China's Africa policy does take particular form in so far as it accentuates a basic, but fundamental difference in its relationship with the continent as compared to other actors—notably in a shared history of colonialism and experience as a developing country—and at the same time promoting political principles based on a stronger conception of state sovereignty, non-interference, territorial integrity and political equality. These principles stand in stark contrasts to the demands for democracy, transparency and human rights which tend to accompany Western aid to Africa, and thus form a point that is continuously repeated in Renmin Ribao's coverage. In the following article published during the 2006 Beijing Summit, the journalist attempts to highlight the positive aspects of China's non-interference policy, underscoring the fact that China does not impose their own ideology, social system and development model on the African countries they invest in:

在处理同非洲国家关系中，中国从不把自己的意识形态、社会制度和发展模式强加于人。中非新型战略伙伴关系的建立着眼于和平、发展与合作，着眼于双方人民的福祉，既不针对任何第三国，也不会损害他国利益。这一跨越亚非两大洲的伙伴关系的建立与发展，无疑会有力推进全球国际关系民主化的进程。

When dealing with African relations, China never impose their own ideology, social system or development model on others. The new strategic partnership on Sino-African relations draws attention to peace, development and cooperation, the happiness of the people on both sides, never to be directed at any third country, and never to harm the interests of other countries. The establishment and development of the Afro-Asian partnership relations will undoubtedly powerfully promote a global democratisation process. (Renmin Ribao, 6 November 2006, 史册增华章 “Records of a rising China”, *my own translation*).

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<sup>6</sup> China's Africa policy: <http://www.focac.org/eng/lttda/ttjj/t157576.htm>

## 6.2.4 Vilifying the West

To summarise, the frames employed by Chinese media invokes on history, repeats positive culturally loaded terms and propagate political rhetoric, to frame China in a positive way. Chinese media is seemingly more concerned with their own undertakings in Africa; the West, when mentioned, is without exception referred to in negative terms. Chinese media only reverts to writing about the West when defending China's undertakings in Africa from Western criticism. They frequently employ generalisations and exaggeration to accentuate how China is a positive presence in Africa, while the West is only concerned with protecting their own historic sphere of influence.

As discussed in the analysis of British newspapers, a frequently adopted perspective in western media holds that China's record on ethics and human rights and the way they play out in Africa constitute a highly negative influence. When denouncing this, Chinese coverage overwhelmingly focus on the similarities between Africa and China, and asserts that because there is no colonial baggage, African states find relations with China more attractive. Renmin Ribao typically emphasises the fact that African countries and China are all developing countries which will benefit from extending south-south cooperation. Furthermore, the Chinese coverage often contrasts the Western and the Chinese methods of aid and foreign investment, such as highlighting the Chinese preference for investing in infrastructure and agricultural aid, sectors that tend to be avoided by Western aid and investment, while calling western methods to aid a failure (Brautigam 2009).

These declarations of defence only appear in the accounts of Renmin Ribao, the rhetoric is overtly anti-western, and the language applied clearly antagonistic. In the following excerpt from Renmin Ribao disputes western coverage of China, claiming that the West shows a persistent failure to recognise their own faulted methods of aid, and that western criticism of China actually represents an attempt on the part of the West to maintain their own sphere of influence in Africa:

新殖民主义论、掠夺能源论、漠视人权论、援助方式危害论……西方对中国发展同非洲关系的指责从未消停过。

西方的种种偏见皆缘自维护传统势力范围的畸形思维。这种思维的一大特征就是赤裸裸的双重标准：一

边是戴着有色眼镜看待中国对非关系；一边是对其在非洲的殖民历史和损人利己的政治现实意图采取选择性屏蔽。

New colonialism, plunder for natural resources, ignore human rights, a harmful method of aid..... the West's criticism of the development of the Sino-African relationship never seems to end. All this kinds of prejudice is caused by the West to safeguard the deformed ideology of their own sphere of influence. This ideology's big trait is its undisguised double standard: on the one hand it puts on coloured glasses to look at Sino-African relations, and on the other hand it regards its own history of colonialism and benefitting itself on other expense with selectiveness. (Renmin Ribao, 6 September 2011, 拿出客观审视中非关系的勇气 “The courage to objectively examine the Sino-African relationship”, *my own translation*)

Similar to western coverage, a majority of the articles take the form of commentary, and exaggerations, generalisations and simplistic presentations are common. In the following excerpt, Renmin Ribao draw simple conclusions and fuel the assertion that the West is only in Africa to extract resources. In a section discussing agricultural aid to Africa, Renmin Ribao claims that China have never purchased land in Africa and have never imported grain from Africa, while the West, according to the article, imports cheap produce from Africa to use as bio-fuel:

长期以来，中国一直向非洲国家提供粮食援助，帮助非洲国家发展农业。中国从没在非洲“大量收购土地”，从没把粮食从非洲运回中国。西方国家在非洲“圈地”已超3000万公顷，占非洲已耕地15%。西方公司利用非洲廉价的生产资料生产农产品，简单加工后运回欧美制造生物燃料，并利用价格“剪刀差”大赚其钱，而非洲国家只能得到有限的土地租金和微薄的人工报酬。究竟是谁占了非洲的土地，是谁运走了非洲的粮食？

For a long time, china has supplied Africa with food aid, and helped African countries developed agriculture. China has never “extensively purchased land” in Africa and has never imported grain from Africa to China. Western “enclosures” in Africa already surpass 30 million hectare, occupying 15% of china's cultivated land. Western companies utilise Africa's cheap means of production to produce agricultural products; after it has been processed it is exported to Europe and the U.S to produce bio-fuel. To a great extent they apply price scissors to gain profit and African countries only receive a limited rent on the land and meagre pay for its manpower. As it turns out, who is occupying African land and importing its grain? (Renmin Ribao, 6 September 2011, 拿出客观审视中非关系的勇气 “The courage to objectively examine the Sino-African relationship”, *my own translation*)

Equally, the following excerpt reduces the West's contribution to Africa's infrastructure to *simple* roads from the mines to coastal areas, while promoting China's contributions of 2000 kilometres of railroad and 3000 kilometres of highway and 500 infrastructure projects. The

article does not give any accounts from where the statistics originate. Regardless, the rhetoric frames China in a positive way as compared to western powers whose interests in Africa are portrayed as nothing but egotistic.

漫长的殖民历史上，西方仅在非洲沿海地区和矿区修筑了简单的道路，目的只是为了运出矿产和资源。中国在非洲援建了 2000 多公里的铁路、3000 多公里的公路。截至 2009 年底，中国在非洲援建了 500 多个基础设施项目，其中民生项目占半数以上，包括 100 多个学校和 60 多个医院。

Through the long history of colonization, the West only built simple roads in costal and mining areas. The reason was to transport coal and natural resources. China has helped Africa to build over 2000 kilometres of railroad and 3000 kilometres of highway. At the end of 2009, China had helped to build more than 500 infrastructure projects, among them, housing accounted for about half, it also included more than 100 schools and over 60 hospitals. (Renmin Ribao, 6 September 2011, 拿出客观审视中非关系的勇气 “The courage to objectively examine the Sino-African relationship”, *my own translation*)

## 6.2.5 Structure

The difference between the frames in newspapers like Renmin Ribao and Nanfang Zhoumo' is easily visible just from the titles of the two newspapers' coverage. Nanfang Zhoumo is more commercially oriented and typically attempts to apply shorter and more “catchy” titles to their articles. 在非洲开一个农场 (To open a farm in Africa)<sup>7</sup> and 超越争议的非洲开发中国在赞比亚的真实存在 (African development beyond dispute: China's true existence in Africa)<sup>8</sup> are two of the title examples from Nanfang Zhoumo. In addition to being relatively short, the titles convey the idea of what the two articles cover. Furthermore the articles from Nanfang Zhoumo have introductions, summarising the main content of the relevant news story.

From the titles of Renmin Ribao it is quite clear that the newspaper has closer affiliation to Chinese authorities. The articles are seemingly more concerned with politically correct content, something which is reflected in the title. The titles below are both representative of commonplace articles found in Renmin Ribao:

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<sup>7</sup> Nanfang Zhoumo, 4 April 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Nanfang Zhoumo, 4 April 2010.

实机制真诚合作经过6年的发展，中非合作论坛为推动中非全面友好合作发挥了重要作用，形成平等互利、务实合作、着眼长远三大特点

Real mechanism to cooperate in good faith after six years of development, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation to promote the important role of China-Africa all-round friendly cooperation of bringing into play the three major characteristics of equality and mutual benefit, pragmatic cooperation, long-term perspective (Renmin Ribao, 26 October 2006, *my own translation*)).

真诚友好 患难与共——外交部官员谈对非旱灾粮援和中非农业合作

Sincere friends who shares weal and woes – Foreign ministry official talks about cooperation on African drought, food aid and Sino-African agricultural cooperation (17. August 2011, *my own translation*).

The titles in Renmin Ribao are often careful to make mention of key phrases like *equality and mutual benefit*”(平等互利) and *pragmatic cooperation* (务实合作). Furthermore the articles never include an introduction or subtitles, giving the articles resemblance to a policy document, rather than a news story.

### **6.2.6 Nanfang Zhoumo: A different approach to framing**

Whilst there are subtle differences between the reporting in the two British newspapers chosen for this analysis; the difference between Nanfang Zhoumo and Renmin Ribao's coverage of Sino-African relations is more prominent. On the one hand, still defined as the CCP mouthpiece, key state media organisations such as Renmin Ribao propagate official formulations, thus providing guiding principle for soft power development. On the other hand, other media publications like Nanfang Zhoumo are engaging in a more open discussion of soft power, in addition to relaying official views (Cao 2011: 17)

Nanfang Zhoumo as a liberal newspaper not that closely intertwined with Chinese authorities is thus more at liberty to choose a different approach to journalism, while still under strict observation by Chinese authorities. However the newspaper's coverage on foreign affairs is mostly concerned with current international hot topics involving China, and much less comprehensive than that of Renmin Ribao. As 2006 was dubbed China's year of Africa, mainstream media paid much attention to covering Sino-African related topics. Meanwhile, the international coverage in 2011 was occupied by the civil war in Libya and the power balance between China and the United States, with less focus placed on China in Africa.



The fact that there is less coverage of China in Africa in Nanfang Zhoumo is also due to the newspaper's orientation. Nanfang Zhoumo as an investigative newspaper, known for its critical journalism, is less concerned with propaganda. While Renmin Ribao stays true to a more ideological line, Nanfang Zhoumo has an investigative approach to its news reporting, more similar to that of Western media, albeit with certain limitations.

A China-Africa related topic that has been the subject of in-depth coverage by both western and Chinese newspaper is Zambia. Both in 2010 and 2011 Nanfang Zhoumo published comprehensive articles covering Sino-Zambian relations. The choice of country is not a coincidence. The Chinese diaspora in Zambia is substantial and China's interest in the country rich on natural resources is great. Furthermore, Zambia is one of the African countries where the anti-Chinese sentiments have been most prominent, and the country's newly elected president, Michael Sata, has received much media attention both in the West and China due to his anti-Chinese rhetoric and promises to contain the Chinese influence in Zambia.

Unlike Renmin Ribao's articles, Nanfang Zhoumo's approach to the coverage of Sino-African relations is not concerned with undisputed praise of China. By the approach to the coverage of China in Zambia, the newspaper shows that Chinese interests in Africa do not all culminate into the interests of the Chinese state. As Heidi Østbø Haugen (2006) has pointed out, the Chinese diaspora in Africa consist of diverse interests, including small privately-owned businesses, million dollar corporations and state-owned enterprises (SOEs).

In comparison to Renmin Ribao, the news content of Nanfang Zhoumo is more factual, including statistics, numbers and interviews. Less emphasis is put on culturally loaded keywords and phrases like *mutual benefit, friendly cooperation*; and references to *African brothers* appear less frequently, if at all. The journalists of Nanfang Zhoumo do not apply the same political rhetoric detected in the articles of Renmin Ribao, and antagonism directed at the west is absent.

## 6.2.7 A critical view of China in Africa

Unlike Renmin Ribao, Nanfang Zhoumo on occasion directs a critical eye on Chinese undertakings in Africa, in an attempt to explain how the anti-Chinese sentiment has arisen. In the following excerpt from one of the articles published in 2010, the journalist places significance on the Chinese small-scale business owners' lack of knowledge about Zambian laws when explaining why the Chinese has earned a reputation for not abiding by the Zambian labour laws:

赞比亚贸易工会 (Zambia Congress of Trade Unions) 秘书长罗伊 - 穆瓦巴 (Roy Mwaba) 告诉南方周末记者, 相比之下, 中国的大型投资企业, 比如矿业公司, 都是非常遵守当地劳动法的, 不过中小企业的中国商人的情况要糟糕得多。 “每当我跟店主谈劳动法的时候, 他们就会摆手说不懂英文。” 穆瓦巴说, “但我要是装作顾客来看他们的东西, 我发现他们的英文很流利!”

在 Kamwala 市场, 一间中国人经营的服装商店的员工说, 他们每月只有约 55 美元的薪水, 而且只有星期天他们能休息半天, 去教堂做礼拜。

由于当天是复活节假期, 记者便询问是否有加班费, 店员们都笑了。 “当然没有, 我们问也不会问的……甚至圣诞节我们也要上半天班!” Felix Lutangu 说。

“如果你们去要加班费会怎么样?”

“你会被开除掉! 他是老板, 他想怎么样就怎么样……”

By comparison, the big Chinese companies that invests in Zambia, like the mining companies, are all very much abiding by the Zambian labour laws, while the situation for Chinese small and medium sized business owners is a mess, the secretary general of the Zambian Congress of Trade Unions, Roy Mwamba, tells Nanfang Zhoumo's journalist.

- Every time I talk to the business owners about labour law, they wave their hands saying they don't understand English, says Mwamba.
- But, if I pretend to be a customer looking at their goods, I discover that their English is fluent!

At Kamawala Market, upon interviewing the staff of a Chinese run clothing shop, they said that they only had a monthly salary of 55 U.S Dollars, and that they only were able to take half the day off on Sunday to go to church.

Because it was Easter holiday, the journalist asked whether or not the staff got overtime pay, they laughed;

- Of course not, we don't even need ask, even on Christmas eve we have to work half the day, says Felix Lutangu.
- If you ask for overtime pay, what would happen?
- You will be discharged! He is the boss, the way he thinks is the way it is...

(Nanfang Zhoumo, 4 July 2010, 超越争议的非洲开发 中国在赞比亚的真实存在, “African development surpass controversy, the true story of China’s presence in Zambia”, *my own translation*)

In the excerpt above, the journalist emphasises how Chinese SOEs and big corporations to a great extent abide by African labour laws, while Chinese small and medium sized business owners are blamed for the increase in anti-Chinese sentiment in Zambia thanks to their reluctance to speak English, the practice of underpaying African employees and refusing them holidays:

实际上，根据赞比亚现行法律，外国人不允许从事零售贸易，但中国人在Kamwala市场拥有大量的店面几乎是公开的秘密。当然，老板是不会一直在店里的，他们可能一个人拥有五六间不同的店面，每天只是巡视，在一家店出现很短的时间。这些看不见的中国人，却供给着卢萨卡市民大量的廉价日常用品。

In reality, according to the existing Zambian laws, foreigners are not permitted to be engaged in retail. But, the Chinese at Kamawala Market have several shops which almost are secretly opened. Of course, the boss cannot stay in the shop all the time, maybe one person has five or six shops, every day he just makes an inspection tour and appear in the shop just for a short time. These invisible Chinese are the ones who supply the people of Lusaka with low-priced commodities

(Nanfang Zhoumo, 4 July 2010, 超越争议的非洲开发 中国在赞比亚的真实存在, “African development surpass controversy, the true story of China’s presence in Zambia”, *my own translation*).

Investigative journalists in China employ what Tong (2007) calls guerrilla tactics to ensure that their critical reporting is in line with the authorities’ restrictions on reporting. Consequently, newspapers like Nanfang Zhoumo have been able to expose illegal undertakings like corruption taking place in other Chinese cities and provinces without the local authorities being able to control their activities. While local authorities are able to ensure that “their own” media are kept under supervision concerning local matters, they have no direct control over media responsible to party bodies elsewhere in China. Meanwhile as Zhou (2000) notes there is a fundamental difference between criticising major state policies on one hand and criticisms of power abuse by individuals and the violation or “distortion” of policies by local bureaucracies on the other; and as the media watchdogs do not critically examine national policies, their targets are typically bureaucrats and individuals below county level. According to Tong and Sparks (2009) a major factor acting to restrict investigative reporting in China today is the collaboration between political power and economic capital:

Very far from there being an antagonism between the Communist political authorities and the ruthless entrepreneurial capitalists, the two in fact are linked by myriad channels, both formal and informal (Tong and Sparks 2009: 339).

While Nanfang Zhoumo allows critical questions concerning China's undertakings in Africa to emerge in their coverage, the newspaper is careful to not question the ideological lines of Sino-African relations. In that regard the newspaper stays consistent to the overriding practice of framing which entails praising China as a new leading developing nation in Africa and a welcome alternative to Western hegemony. Nanfang Zhoumo refrains from criticising Chinese authorities whilst also avoiding criticising the major corporations operating in Zambia, despite the existence of reports blaming them for not complying with local laws<sup>9</sup>, implying the validity of Tong and Spark's argument.

As a result, while a news item originating in a Chinese newspaper can criticise Chinese authorities, the criticism should without exception be directed at lower level of government. However it is the national government more than local authorities that play a role in Sino-African relations, thus pending criticism has to be directed elsewhere. As seen in the excerpt above, Nanfang Zhoumo question the behaviour of business-owners not affiliated with the government in an attempt to discuss why China has a bad reputation in Zambia. In that regard, it may appear like small business owners rather than local government becomes the target and scapegoats in Chinese international news coverage. If and when China is criticised in Nanfang Zhoumo, this is seemingly due to the misconduct of non-governmental entities, preferably to the ignorance of small business owners.

To that end Nanfang Zhoumo's coverage of Sino-African relations is much in line with its coverage of domestic political affairs; criticism is condoned as long as it is not directed at the national leadership. Meanwhile, there are reasons to believe that small and medium-sized business owners alone are not entirely to blame for the anti-Chinese sentiment in Zambia. In 2010, eleven Zambian workers at the Chinese-owned Collum Coal Mine in Zambia were shot by Chinese executives after having gathered outside the gates of the mine to protest

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<sup>9</sup> For further discussion, see Matenga (2010) "The Impact of the Global Financial and Economic Crisis on Job Losses and Conditions of Work in the Mining Sector in Zambia" and Human Rights Watch (2011) "You'll be fired if you refuse".

against poor pay and labour conditions. The incident sparked international coverage of the mounting resentment in Zambia over the Chinese presence in the country.<sup>10</sup>

Concerning coal mining, which represents a considerable proportion of the Sino-Zambian relationship, recent ILO and Human Rights Watch studies both report that working conditions as well as safety standards have progressively deteriorated over all in the mining industry since the onset of the global financial crisis between 2008 and 2009 (Matenga 2010, HRW 2011). The Chinese, however, still holds a reputation for being more lenient in complying with safety requirements than other international investors. According to the studies, Chinese mines have the worst safety records and experience most accidents. Among the Chinese companies operating in Zambia is the SOE, China Non-Ferrous Metals Mining Corporation (CNMC) as well as the privately owned Collum Coal Mine. Thus, while Nanfang Zhoumo holds small and medium-sized private entrepreneurs accountable for much of the Zambian resentment directed towards the Chinese in Zambia, the picture is more complex, as it appears that violation of labour laws occur both in private and state-owned industries, among small scale business owners and big corporations.

### **6.2.8 Contesting frames: Renmin Ribao vs. Nanfang Zhoumo**

In comparison to Renmin Ribao, Nanfang Zhoumo applies a different approach when dealing with Western criticism of Chinese undertakings in Zambia. When Michael Sata won the presidential election in Zambia, western media accounts generally took it to mean a setback for China in Africa. Renmin Ribao vehemently disputes the assertion made by Western media with a news story titled “The selective blindness of ignoring basic facts” (不顾基本事实的“选择性失明”). The article is full of praise for the Chinese undertakings in Zambia explaining how Chinese investors helped Zambia endure the global financial crisis while western investors withdrew from the country:

恰恰是中国投资，对赞比亚经济的发展做出了重要贡献。最近几年，赞比亚保持了年均近 6% 的经济增长。特别是在 2008 年国际金融危机席卷全球、原材料价格猛跌之时，赞由于严重依赖矿业而面临严峻

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<sup>10</sup> For more on the incident see e.g. The Telegraph, 19 October 2010, “Zambian miners shot by Chinese managers”.

考验。西方企业和资金为“自保”纷纷从中撤离，中国却坚定对赞未来经济发展的信心，提出“不撤资、不撤厂”的政策，帮助赞经济实现了“软着陆”。

It is exactly Chinese investors who have made important contributions to the economic development of Zambia. Over the recent year, Zambia has maintained an economic growth averaging at 6 % annually. Especially in 2008, when the international financial crisis swept across the globe, and the price of raw material fell precipitously, Zambia who rely deeply on the mining industry were faced with severe problems. Western enterprises and capital one after another withdrew for reasons of “self-insurance”; China however stood steadfast in their belief in Zambia’s future economic development, and put forward a policy of “not withdrawing investment, not withdrawing factory” to help Zambia’s economy achieve a soft landing ( Renmin Ribao, 29 September 2011, 不顾基本事实的“选择性失明, “The selective blindness of ignoring basic facts”, (*my own translation*), .

The article offers few facts, statistics or numbers, and thus appears as somewhat generalising. According to a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO), several of the Zambian coal mines owned by foreign investors from the West were closed either during or in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, resulting in massive job losses for Zambian workers. A Chinese-owned mine was the only one found not to affect any downsizing of the workforce during the recession. Furthermore; two of the British-owned mines that were closed during the financial crisis, have later been bought by the Chinese and re-opened (Matenga 2010). However, while there exist examples of western mining companies seizing or downsizing their operation in Zambia, the Renmin Ribao account that western mining companies withdrew *one after another* is exaggerated.

While Renmin Ribao employs a propaganda like rhetoric to refute assertions made by media in the West, Nanfang Zhoumo, in lengthy articles apply an investigative approach to the unique nature if the Sino-Zambian relations. Like Renmin Ribao, the newspaper mentions the western assertion that Sata’s win implies a setback or Chinese investments in Zambia, albeit without bluntly dismissing it. Much like the approach of the articles from 2010, the journalist has based his story on a magnitude of interviews with Zambian politicians and labour representatives, Chinese academics on Sino-Zambian relations, as well as businessmen and ordinary people from both countries. The object of the report is to investigate what, if any, will be the implication for Chinese investments in Zambia when Sata is inaugurated. Unlike Renmin Ribao, the article thus brings forth both positive and negative aspects of the Chinese presence In Zambia, the positive being the substantial economic implications of Chinese

investments and amongst the negative, the Chinese businesses' lack of adherence to labour laws.

对华强硬派当选赞比亚新总统——中国将失去赞比亚？

萨塔主张严厉对待外国投资者，尤其是中国人。他曾主张“驱逐中国商人”；曾主张没收中国和其他外国投资者的部分股份分给穷人和本国企业；甚至主张与台湾“建交”。

萨塔的绰号叫“眼镜蛇”，他当选让很多中国人心悬了起来。危险缘自他在反腐、保障劳工权益等方面的犀利言辞和强悍作风，更是缘于他长期以来对中国的强硬姿态。这位4次冲击总统之位终获成功的老人曾多次严厉批评中国“接管”赞比亚的劳动力、“掠夺”赞比亚铜矿资源。此前二次选举时萨塔曾表示，若当选将驱逐中国商人，将矿山国有化。

他甚至敢于触碰中国的外交“红线”，不仅收受台湾政治献金，更曾公开声称若当选将寻求与台湾建交。

西方媒体也一度将此次赞比亚大选解读为中国在赞比亚的“命运之战”。那么，中国在赞投资者和普通中国人的工作生活将面临怎样的变局？被两国政府长久称颂为中非友谊样板的中赞关系又将面临怎样的挑战？

China hardliner elected president of Zambia – Will china loose Zambia?

When Sata, who has been nicknamed “Cobra” was elected, it stirred up worry among many Chinese. Sata has advocated severe treatment of foreign investors, especially Chinese. In the past he has said “expel the Chinese businessmen”; he has advocated for confiscating Chinese and other foreign investors properties to give to the poor and domestic industry; he has even advocated for establishing “diplomatic relations” with Taiwan.

The worry is caused by his sharp rhetoric and his tough stance against corruption, on the protection of labour rights, but also due to his long-standing hard line against China. The old man finally successful of winning the presidency after four tries, has on several occasions severely criticised China’s “take over” of the labour force in Zambia and of “plundering” Zambian copper resources. After the second selection, Sata proclaimed that if elected he would expel Chinese businessmen and nationalize the copper mines.

He has even dared to touch upon the Chinese foreign policy “red line”, not only accepting money contributions from Taiwan, and also publicly declaring that if elected, he would seek to establish diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

At once, Western media interpreted the outcome of the presidential election to mean the “fate of war” for China in Zambia. That being the case, what kind of crisis will Chinese investors and ordinary people’s livelihood be faced with? Which challenges will the Sino-Zambian friendship as a long-time praised model for China-Africa relations be faced with?

(Nanfang Zhoumo, 30 September 2011, 对华强硬派当选赞比亚新总统——中国将失去赞比亚? ,”China hardliner elected president of Zambia – Will china loose Zambia?”, *my own translaton*).



## 7 Discussion

Thirty years ago, China accounted for a tiny part of the global economy and had little influence outside its borders, save for a few countries with which it had close political and military relationships. Today, the country is a remarkable economic power; the world's manufacturing workshop, its foremost financier, and a leading investor across the globe from Africa to Latin America, and, increasingly, a major source of research and development. The Chinese government sits atop an astonishing level of foreign reserves - greater than two trillion US dollars (Jaques 2009).

Meanwhile, the US, the world's sole economic superpower until recently, is becoming a diminished giant. Foreign-policy blunders and a massive financial crisis have left it humbled. Its credibility after the disastrous invasion of Iraq is at an all-time low, notwithstanding its shattered economic model.

According to Cao (2011), most research on China still seeks to understand China through a largely western frame, assuming that China will become more like the West as its economy develops and its population gets richer. However, some recent studies looking at China, like Jaques' (2009) "When China rules the world", not only predict that China is the next economic superpower, but that the world order that it sets out to construct will look very different from what has been the case under American leadership. This is because the Chinese and their government hold a different conception of society and polity: community-based rather than individualist, state-centric rather than liberal, authoritarian rather than democratic.

It is under the influence of this power struggle that journalists and media in Britain as well as China are framing China in Africa. The China-critical frame in British media portrays a red dragon with a voracious appetite for resources, taking unscrupulous advantage of the African continent. Before 2006, neither media nor academia seemed to take much notice of China in Africa, even though the Chinese presence on the continent numbered close to fifty years. When China celebrated its "year of Africa" in 2006, inviting the political elites of the entire African continent to a summit in Beijing excluding the West, it triggered a myriad of scholarly articles as well as media attention, examining China's intention on the African continent.

Western coverage seemingly contains a benign concern for the future development of Africa. However, one might assert that the spate of recent media and scholarly publications suggest that there is a market anxiety about China's rise in the West on the part of political and economic elites; not only for the sake of Africans, but also due to the West's own diminishing role in Africa. In his analysis Still (2005) urges the importance of maintaining moderate, pragmatic and a respectful language and diplomatic signals on both sides to avoid hardening ideological dividing lines between China and the West.

Taking the studies of Van-Majid & Ramaprasad (1998), Phalen & Algen (2001) into account, there has been a distinct change in the frames applied to China over the last two decades. The prevailing frames in the news coverage of China in 1995 portrayed a clumsy and inept communist country, from 2006 onwards the clumsiness has turned into skilfulness, and China went from being a clumsy communist to greedy capitalist in the accounts British newspapers.

This analysis suggests that while British newspapers' representations of Chinese interactions with different African countries are problematically partial and simplistic in 2006, the tendency in 2011 is for the news representations to be more balanced and well-informed. This development is likely due to journalists' extended knowledge concerning China's presence in Africa, while also reflecting China's increased openness and transparency surrounding their aid and investments to Africa.

While I can detect changing frames in the British news coverage, the frames in Chinese media appears similar in the media accounts of 2006 and 2011. Chinese media, despite a recent commercialisation process, is still under the control of Chinese authorities. Chinese media coverage on the Sino-African relationship is thus focused on disseminating China's official policy of soft power; propagating cooperation and mutual development between China and African nations. As a mouthpiece for the CCP, and its clear orientation towards policy related content, Renmin Ribao thus appears to function less as a traditional newspaper and more as a publication informing people about the public policy and the political bottom line of a certain topic at any given time. Nanfang Zhoumo as one of China's most liberal and investigative newspapers employs a style of reporting clearly different from that of the party

press, in that its content is less concerned with official policy, and that it is more open to discussion and critical views.

On some levels I find that British and Chinese media converge mirror each other; they both make use of generalisation, exaggeration and simplistic presentation to underpin their chosen frame. While British and Chinese media on occasion provide issue-specific details, facts and numbers, they often appear out of context and without explanation. This may be due to the choice of genre, predominantly commentary, which provides more room for expressed meaning on the part of the writer than other genres.

Furthermore, I agree with Cao (1998) whose study on the handover of Hong Kong to China in the British and Chinese media concluded that the reporting of both countries has sharply different perspectives and therefore each presents equally different frames to their respective readers. What is curious, while Chinese media coverage is heavily regulated by strict guidelines, British media are not, and yet they are similarly homogenous in their approach to covering China. As discussed in the methodology section, some scholars on framing (Entmann 1993, de Vreese 2005, D'angelo 2002) argue that news organisations select some information and intentionally omit other information such that different frames of a topic either will not exist or will still foster a single viewpoint.

D'angelo (2002) has pointed out how journalists can make a selection to create meaningfully different frames about an issue within a single news item. In the case of China in Africa this rarely occurs, which may in turn reflect the success for economic and political interests to dominate the frames originating media; as well as the notion that journalist are guided by their own predispositions as argued by de Vreese (2005) when selecting news frames.

Regarding this framing analysis of China in Africa, it is important to note the difference between the Chinese newspapers' framing of China, and the British media's framing of the *other*. As argued by Said (1978), when writing about a distant other, it is easier to revert to stereotypical images. In the case of China in Africa, frames invoking images of the *red dragon in the bush* are frequently applied in the media coverage. To that end one could argue that framing in British media to a certain extent occurs arbitrarily, as the journalist is unconsciously guided by culture and his or her own predispositions.

Meanwhile taking the nature of the Chinese coverage into account, with its close affiliation to political elites and its clear references to political terms and keywords like *mutual benefit* and *pragmatic cooperation*, I would argue that framing in Chinese media happens more intentionally on the part of the framer than what is the case in British media. Chinese media is concerned with drawing on the broad strokes of Sino-African relations, framing the warm friendship that has developed between Chinese and Africans after more than fifty years of Chinese presence on the African continent; their shared history of colonial oppression; and the benefits of south-south cooperation. Given the nature of the political communication system in China, official formulations of soft power are propagated and circulated largely in the state media (Cao 2011: 17). After all, Chinese media represents the only platform where China undisputed is able to display their political intentions in Africa.

Taking the dominance of western media on the global media market and the scope of negative reports about China into account, China seemingly has an image problem internationally. According to a recent study exploring how China is portrayed in global media, based on covers of leading global magazines such as the Economist, Time, Newsweek and der Spiegel, almost half portray China as hostile towards dialogue and only six percent portray China as very open to dialogue (Guo 2012).

When China is framed as a threat and hostile, it reflects that the Chinese have a problem with disseminating the desired image of themselves. For instance, in 2010 a shooting incident at the Chinese privately owned Collum Coal Mine in Zambia where two Chinese managers fired shots at group of Zambian workers injuring eleven, sparked worldwide media coverage. However, the story that a Zambian worker had murdered a Chinese manager only months before was hardly circulated at all. The situation highlights China's failure to properly manage the media impact of Sino-African relations, and to disseminate the desired news frame to audience outside of China.

Thus, it is a high priority for China to improve their image in the international world. According to Li (2007) western media dominates global public opinion, and when framing China negatively, that will also affect people's perception of China. Li (2007) and Yang (2008) point to the importance of giving publicity to China's attempt to build harmonious

relations with Africa and making their soft-power stance of Sino-African relations known through the media.

However, a report researching how China attempts to influence media in developing countries from the Centre for International media Assistance (CIMA) based in the US does not take kindly to China's plans to boost its image (Farch and Mosher 2010). The report argues that "China's primary purposes appear to be to present China as a reliable friend and partner, as well as to make sure that China's image in the developing world is positive. As part of its efforts to do this, the Chinese government seeks to fundamentally reshape much of the world's media in its own image".

The report gives considerable space to Chinese efforts to improve their image by expanding their public diplomacy and the reach of Chinese media, including the provision of Chinese media content, news sharing, training programs and visits to China for journalists, a significant expansion of Chinese media abroad, and the establishment of "Confucius Institutes" that teach the Chinese language and host cultural events. However it gives little assertion to the claim that China attempts to remodel international media. Presenting a more favourable image of China, bolstering public opinion, and giving Chinese views more prominence gives evidence of China's efforts to try to boost its soft power and reshape public opinion, however, it does not support the claim that China is attempting to "reshape much of the world's media" in China's image.

As quoted by Washington Post journalist John Pomfret in the report (Farch and Moshe 2010: 6): "The Chinese want to change the way people think about them. They have a belief they don't get a fair shake in the Western media, and they want to get out the message of how well China is doing."

To achieve this, CCTV has recently launched its own global network aiming at competing with well-established news providers like CNN, BBC and Al-Jazeera. In so doing we might consider China as following in the footsteps of France and Qatar, who in recent years have launched Al-Jazeera and France 24. Leaders in these countries also believed that the dominant international media gave too little attention (or not the right attention) to their country or region (Brautigam 2009).

## 7.1 Concluding remarks

The conclusion of this analysis is undoubtedly affected by my choice of news sources. Regarding media coverage of China in Africa, there exist notable differences both between the Chinese and British newspapers and also within the media coverage in the respective countries. While the Economist and the Guardian both represent liberal British newspapers, and the frames applied are similar across the two publications, the Guardian still appear as slightly more sensationalist than the Economist. The contrast between the Guardian and the Economist, classified as broadsheets, and the tabloids is however striking. Had I chosen to include tabloids in this analysis, I would be likely to find British media accounts as more sensationalist and prone to exaggeration than what this analysis suggests, like the following headline from the Daily Mail exemplifies:

How China's taking over Africa, and why the West should be VERY worried (The Daily Mail, 18 July 2008, "How China's taking over Africa, and why the West should be very worried")

The outcome of this analysis would also have been different if I had chosen to include broadcast media. For example, TV features less commentary, as the journalist preferably need to be on site to make recordings for a TV-reportage. Furthermore a TV-reportage usually includes more interviews as well as pictures, and less expressed meaning on the part of the journalist, thus it would likely make for a very different database than what has been the case for this analysis

On a final note, the difference between the framing in Renmin Ribao and Nanfang Zhoumo demonstrate the great diversity within Chinese media, were some publications are closer affiliated to political elites than others. Therefore, when researching frames in Chinese media, one should select a diversity of publications to be able to analyse the nuances of framing between different publications. In their study of media representations during "the Fourth UN Conference on Women" in Beijing, Van-Majid and Ramprasad (1998) analysed the English-language China Daily presenting it as a general representation of Chinese media.

When using an English-language newspaper as basis for an analysis of Chinese news, the analysis becomes one-dimensional as the variety of English-language publications in China is limited, likely to have implications for the diversity of an analysis. Furthermore, English-

language newspapers in China are directed at a foreign readership, which will affect what is deemed news worthy and how the content is framed. Future studies making comparative analysis between Chinese and western media, should therefore be careful to include a variety of Chinese-language newspapers, representing both those closely affiliated with the political leadership, to liberal newspapers pushing the boundaries of critical journalism in China.

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«Real mechanism to cooperate in good faith after six years of development, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation to promote the important role of China-Africa all-round friendly

cooperation of bringing into play the three major characteristics of equality and mutual benefit, pragmatic cooperation, long-term perspective». *Renmin Ribao*.

Zheng, Zhong (钟声) (6.9.2011). 拿出客观审视中非关系的勇气 “The courage to objectively examine the Sino-African relationship”. *Renmin Ribao*.

# Appendix

## “Scrambling to Beijing”

The Guardian, 4 November 2006

No fewer than 48 African heads of state are being hosted at a grand summit in Beijing this weekend - a dry run for the 2008 Olympics, some say - in an event which underlines how "peacefully rising" China has become a powerful player in a distant continent. As happened with the European powers in the 19th century, the red flag is following trade that has grown to a staggering \$50bn this year. China's clout in many countries is enormous: it buys 70% of all Sudanese exports; Angola has just overtaken Saudi Arabia as China's biggest energy supplier.

It is China's booming economy that is driving the search for African resources: copper and cobalt, platinum, cotton, timber and iron ore, and above all oil. Maoist solidarity with anticolonial struggles has been replaced by a business agenda set strictly on Chinese terms.

In some ways, of course, China's voracious appetite is a good thing and helps boost African growth and create jobs. But the focus on extractive industries means too little diversification into manufacturing, while cheap Chinese goods flood local markets and threaten South African and Nigerian textile companies. Chinese firms, many state-owned, have poor records on labour relations and environmental standards. There are concerns too about soft loans leading to unsustainable debt and generous aid programmes that undermine efforts to improve governance, transparency and accountability. If the World Bank and IMF say no or attach conditions, Beijing always says yes.

Economic interests are dictating political stances. Like the US during the cold war, China is at ease with African dictators who are relieved not to be pressed to live up to other peoples' standards. Once Washington sustained Zaire's kleptocratic Mobutu. Now Beijing's intimate links with Sudan and Zimbabwe, and its diplomatic efforts to block their censure over Darfur and human-rights abuses, give comfort (and weapons) to Omar al-Bashir and Robert Mugabe, against the grain of western policy - and against the interests of ordinary Africans.

The Beijing summit is a big deal for China, a deliberately showy monument to its value-free strategy. It would be absurd to claim that western greed and self-interest did not do enormous



damage in an earlier scramble for Africa. But the age of colonialism is over. It should be accepted today that global power brings global responsibilities. Tyranny, inequality and corruption offend universal values. In countries where it now has the ability to make a difference, China should think twice about offering its help with no strings attached.

### **“Wrong model, right continent”**

#### **China knows what it wants from Africa and will probably get it. The converse isn't true**

The Economist, 26 October 2006

The characters for “Africa” in the Mandarin language mean “wrong continent”. But the Chinese have often ignored this etymological hint. In the 15th century the emperor's emissaries sailed as far as Mozambique, carrying silk and returning with a giraffe. In the cold war Maoists dotted Africa with hospitals, football stadiums and disastrous ideas.

Next week China will host more than 30 African leaders from the wrong continent in Beijing, offering them a pinch of debt relief, a splash of aid, plus further generous helpings of trade and investment. China already buys a tenth of sub-Saharan Africa's exports and owns almost \$1.2 billion of direct investments in the region. A Chinese diaspora in Africa now numbers perhaps 80,000, including labourers and businessmen, who bring entrepreneurial wit and wisdom to places usually visited only by Land Cruisers from international aid agencies.

What is in it for China? It no longer wants Africa's hearts, minds or giraffes. Mostly, it just wants its oil, ores and timber—plus its backing at the United Nations. Thus, even as the Chinese win mining rights, repair railways and lay pipelines on the continent, Africa's governments are shuttering their embassies in Taiwan in deference to Beijing's one-China policy.

This suits Africa's governments. The scramble for resources invariably passes the ministerial doorstep, where concessions are sold and royalties collected. China helps African governments ignore Western nagging about human rights: its support has allowed Sudan to

avoid UN sanctions over Darfur. And some Africans look on China as a development model, replacing the tough Washington Consensus with a “Beijing Consensus”: China's economic progress is cited by statist, protectionist and thugs alike to “prove” that keeping the state's grip on companies, trade and political freedoms need not stop a country growing by 8%-plus a year.

### **Think again, Africa**

The Chinese part of this puzzle is easier to deal with: even if it is not the first resource-hungry power to behave poorly in Africa, China should be condemned wherever it bribes, cajoles or (in the case of Sudan) permits genocide. But what about the African hope that China provides an economic model?

Sadly, China's success is an obstacle, as well as an inspiration. Its rise has bid up the price of Africa's traditional raw commodities, and depressed the price of manufactured goods. Thus Africa's factories and assembly lines, such as they are, are losing out to its mines, quarries and oilfields in the competition for investment. Even if Africa's labour is cheap enough to compete with China's, its roads, ports and customs are far from good enough. If they are to provide jobs for their workers, not just rents for their governments, Africa's economies must find less-exposed niches in the world economy, such as tourism or cut flowers. And they should look not to China, but to Chile or Botswana for examples of how to turn natural bounty into shared prosperity.

China is doing its bit to improve infrastructure, building roads and railways. But it could do more to open up its own markets. China is quite open to yarn, but not jerseys; diamonds, but not jewellery. If it has as much “solidarity” with Africa as it claims, it could offer to lower tariffs on processed goods. Chinese firms have also ignored international initiatives to make project finance greener (the “Equator Principles”) and to make mining industries cleaner (the “Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative”). Even with China's backing, these outside efforts might not succeed: honesty and greenery come from within. Without it, they will certainly fail.

For their part, Africa's leaders could also play their hands rather better. They should talk to each other as well as their hosts in Beijing. If they negotiated as a block, they could drive a

harder bargain. Just as China insists that foreigners enter into joint ventures with its companies, so Africans should make sure they get China's know-how, not just its money.

### **Trying to pull together**

#### **Africans are asking whether China is making their lunch or eating it**

The Economist, 20 April 2011

Zhu Lianxu gulps down Kenyan lager in a bar in Nairobi and recites a Chinese aphorism: “One cannot step into the same river twice.” Mr Zhu, a shoemaker from Foshan, near Hong Kong, is on his second trip to Africa. Though he says he has come to love the place, you can hear disappointment in his voice.

On his first trip three years ago Mr Zhu filled a whole notebook with orders and was surprised that Africans not only wanted to trade with him but also enjoyed his company. “I have been to many continents and nowhere was the welcome as warm,” he says. Strangers congratulated him on his homeland’s high-octane engagement with developing countries. China is Africa’s biggest trading partner and buys more than one-third of its oil from the continent. Its money has paid for countless new schools and hospitals. Locals proudly told Mr Zhu that China had done more to end poverty than any other country.

He still finds business is good, perhaps even better than last time. But African attitudes have changed. His partners say he is ripping them off. Chinese goods are held up as examples of shoddy work. Politics has crept into encounters. The word “colonial” is bandied about. Children jeer and their parents whisper about street dogs disappearing into cooking pots.

Once feted as saviours in much of Africa, Chinese have come to be viewed with mixed feelings—especially in smaller countries where China’s weight is felt all the more. To blame, in part, are poor business practices imported alongside goods and services. Chinese construction work can be slapdash and buildings erected by mainland firms have on occasion fallen apart. A hospital in Luanda, the capital of Angola, was opened with great fanfare but cracks appeared in the walls within a few months and it soon closed. The Chinese-built road from Lusaka, Zambia’s capital, to Chirundu, 130km (81 miles) to the south-east, was quickly swept away by rains.

## **Business, Chinese style**

Chinese expatriates in Africa come from a rough-and-tumble, anything-goes business culture that cares little about rules and regulations. Local sensitivities are routinely ignored at home, and so abroad. Sinopec, an oil firm, has explored in a Gabonese national park. Another state oil company has created lakes of spilled crude in Sudan. Zimbabwe's environment minister said Chinese multinationals were "operating like *makorokoza* miners", a scornful term for illegal gold-panners.

Employees at times fare little better than the environment. At Chinese-run mines in Zambia's copper belt they must work for two years before they get safety helmets. Ventilation below ground is poor and deadly accidents occur almost daily. To avoid censure, Chinese managers bribe union bosses and take them on "study tours" to massage parlours in China. Obstructionist shop stewards are sacked and workers who assemble in groups are violently dispersed. When cases end up in court, witnesses are intimidated.

Tensions came to a head last year when miners in Sinazongwe, a town in southern Zambia, protested against poor conditions. Two Chinese managers fired shotguns at a crowd, injuring at least a dozen. Some still have pellets under healed skin. Patson Mangunje, a local councillor, says, "People are angry like rabid dogs."

There is anger and disappointment on the Chinese side too. In the South African town of Newcastle, Chinese-run textile factories pay salaries of about \$200 per month, much more than they would pay in China but less than the local minimum wage. Unions have tried to shut the factories down. The Chinese owners ignore the unions or pretend to speak no English.

They point out that many South African firms also undercut the minimum wage, which is too high to make production pay. Without the Chinese, unemployment in Newcastle would be even higher than the current 60%. Workers say a poorly paid job is better than none. Some of them recently stopped police closing their factory after a union won an injunction.

"Look at us," says Wang Jinfu, a young factory-owner. "We are not slave drivers." He and his wife came four years ago from Fujian province in southern China with just \$3,000. They sleep on a dirty mattress on the factory floor. While their 160 employees work 40 hours a

week, the couple pack boxes, check inventory and dispatch orders from first light until midnight every day of the year. “Why do people hate us for that?” says Mr Wang.

Indeed, China has boosted employment in Africa and made basic goods like shoes and radios more affordable. Trade surpassed \$120 billion last year (see chart 1). In the past two years China has given more loans to poor countries, mainly in Africa, than the World Bank. The Heritage Foundation, an American think-tank, estimates that in 2005-10 about 14% of China’s investment abroad found its way to sub-Saharan Africa (see chart 2). Most goes in the first place to Hong Kong. The Heritage Foundation has tried to trace its final destination.

One answer to Mr Wang’s question is that competition, especially from foreigners, is rarely popular. Hundreds of textile factories across Nigeria collapsed in recent years because they could not compete with cheap Chinese garments. Many thousands of jobs were lost.

### **Mixed blessings**

Quite a bit of criticism of China is disguised protectionism. Established businesses try to maintain privileged positions—at the expense of consumers. The recent arrival of Chinese traders in the grimy alleys of Soweto market in Lusaka halved the cost of chicken. Cabbage prices dropped by 65%. Local traders soon marched their wire-mesh cages filled with livestock to the local competition commission to complain. “How dare the Chinese disturb our market,” says Justin Muchindu, a seller. In Dar es Salaam, the commercial capital of Tanzania, Chinese are banned from selling in markets. The government earlier this year said Chinese were welcome as investors but not as “vendors or shoe-shiners”.

Another answer, according to China’s critics, is that the Chinese are bringing bad habits as well as trade, investment, jobs and skills. The mainland economy is riddled with corruption, even by African standards. International rankings of bribe-payers list Chinese managers near the top. When these managers go abroad they carry on bribing and undermine good governance in host countries. The World Bank has banned some mainland companies from bidding for tenders in Africa.

China’s defenders reply that its detrimental impact on governance is limited. African leaders find it surprisingly hard to embezzle development funds. Usually money is put into escrow accounts in Beijing; then a list of infrastructure projects is drawn up, Chinese companies are

given contracts to build them and funds are transferred to company accounts. Africa, for better and worse, gets roads and ports but no cash. At least that is the theory.

A third answer is that China is seen as hoarding African resources. China clearly would like to lock up sources of fuel, but for the moment its main concern is increasing global supply. Its state-owned companies often sell oil and ore on spot markets. Furthermore, its interest in Africa is not limited to resources. It is building railways and bridges far from mines and oilfields, because it pays. China is not a conventional aid donor, but nor is it a colonialist interested only in looting the land.

The ambiguities in China's relationship with Africa have created fertile ground for politicians. Opposition parties, especially in southern Africa, frequently campaign on anti-China platforms. Every country south of Rwanda has had acrimonious debates about Chinese "exploitation". Even in normally calm places like Namibia, antipathy is stirring. Workers on Chinese building sites in Windhoek, the capital, are said to get a "raw deal". In Zambia the opposition leader, Michael Sata, has made Sino-scepticism his trademark.

Much of this is wide of the mark. Critics claim that China has acquired ownership of natural resources, although service contracts and other concessions are the norm. China is also often accused of bringing prison labour to Africa—locals assume the highly disciplined Chinese workers in identical boiler suits they see toiling day and night must be doing so under duress.

Even so, the backlash is perhaps unsurprising. Africans say they feel under siege. Tens of thousands of entrepreneurs from one of the most successful modern economies have fanned out across the continent. Sanou Mbaye, a former senior official at the African Development Bank, says more Chinese have come to Africa in the past ten years than Europeans in the past 400. First came Chinese from state-owned companies, but more and more arrive solo or stay behind after finishing contract work.

Many dream of a new life. Miners and builders see business opportunities in Africa, and greater freedom (to be their own bosses and speak their minds, but also to pollute). A Chinese government survey of 1,600 companies shows the growing use of Africa as an industrial base. Manufacturing's share of total Chinese investment (22%) is catching up fast with mining (29%).

In part this spread is happening because Africans have asked for it. Some countries made industrial investments a precondition for resource deals. In Ethiopia two out of three resident Chinese firms are manufacturers. Yet the Chinese did not need much pushing. They have always wanted to do more than dig up fuel when investing abroad. They hope to build skyscrapers in Tokyo, run banks in London and make films in Hollywood. In Africa they can learn the ropes in a region where competition is weak. The continent—soon to be ringed with Chinese free-trade ports—is a stepping stone to a commercial presence around the globe.

To this end, the government in Beijing is encouraging all sorts of activity in Africa. Construction is a favourite, accounting for three-quarters of recent private Chinese investment in Africa. The commerce ministry says Chinese companies are signing infrastructure deals worth more than \$50 billion a year. For investment in African farming, China has earmarked \$5 billion. A lot of Africans view this anxiously.

Perhaps the most significant Chinese push has been in finance. Industrial and Commercial Bank of China has bought 20% of Standard Bank, a South African lender and the continent's biggest bank by assets, and now offers renminbi accounts to expatriate traders. Other mainland banks have opened offices too, and from their sleek towers they make collateral-free loans to Chinese companies. In theory Africans are eligible to borrow on the same terms, but this rarely happens.

The government in Beijing, which controls the banks, is alert to such criticism. China's image in Africa is sullied by more than just cowboy entrepreneurs, admits an official. Many of the government's own practices could be improved.

Suspect above all is the type of transfer that China offers to African countries. Most loans and payments are "tied"—ie, the recipient must spend the money with Chinese companies. (Japan, Spain and others followed a similar model until fairly recently.) But tied aid leads to shoddy work. With no competition, favoured firms get away with delivering bad roads and overpriced hospitals. Creditors and donors often set the wrong priorities.

Worse, the Chinese government is anything but transparent about its money. Aid figures are treated as state secrets. China Exim Bank and China Development Bank, the main lenders, publish no figures about their vast loans to poor countries. The Democratic Republic of

Congo was persuaded at the last minute by international advisers to scale back a Chinese lending facility from \$9 billion to \$6 billion.

### **Firm friends**

Politics can be even murkier than finance. For years China has been chummy with African despots who seem to be reliable partners. Publicly, China presents its support for odious incumbents as “non-interference” and tries to make a virtue of it. Africans are less and less convinced.

Relations get especially tricky for the Chinese when strongmen fail to maintain stability. In Zimbabwe in 2008 Robert Mugabe’s sabotage of elections set off civil upheaval. Chinese investors fled, yet the ascendant opposition still linked them to the dictator. In Sudan Omar al-Bashir, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court on genocide charges, has long been a Chinese stalwart. But following a referendum in January, the oil-rich south of his country has seceded. Rulers in Beijing are belatedly trying to befriend his enemies.

Africans are not helpless in their business relations with the Chinese. Some, admittedly, have not been strong in their dealings: a usually bossy Rwanda lets Chinese investors run riot. But African governments by and large get reasonable deals; and some, like Angola, are masterful negotiators. Its president publicly told his Chinese counterpart, “You are not our only friend.” Brazilians and Portuguese are numerous in Luanda, the capital, and Angolans frequently play them off against the Chinese. Angola once banished a Chinese state oil company after a disagreement over a refinery. The company came crawling back a year later, offering more money.

Increasingly, however, it is the Chinese who play Africans off against each other. Growing policy co-ordination between African embassies in Beijing is a useful first step in improving African bargaining power. The World Bank and the IMF are valuable advisers. But no matter how hard African governments try, they cannot cope with the sheer volume of new enterprises. Rules exist to protect employees and the environment, but institutions are too weak to enforce them. Labour inspectors in Lusaka, who monitor sweatshops, have use of only one car and recently it was broken for four months. In the meantime Chinese engineers built an entire cluster of garment factories from scratch.



For aeons the prospect of China and Africa coming closer together had seemed otherworldly. W.H. Auden wrote:

I'll love you, dear, I'll love you  
Till China and Africa meet,  
And the river jumps over the mountain  
And the salmon sing in the street.

Sweet-and-sour salmon now regularly croon in sub-Saharan streets. Africans are embracing new opportunities made in China yet remain wary of all the pitfalls.

Western countries too will want to observe the progress of Chinese privateers who cross the Indian Ocean: men like Danny Lau, a 31-year-old from Shanghai, who a year ago followed a group of friends to Zambia, where he is now a successful coal trader and dabbles in property. In a few years, he says, they will move on to a richer continent. What they learn in Accra and Brazzaville will travel with them to Vancouver and Zagreb.

### **拿出客观审视中非关系的勇气**

“The courage to objectively examine the Sino-African relationship”

Zheng, Zhong (钟声), 6 September 2011, Renmin Ribao

新殖民主义论、掠夺能源论、漠视人权论、援助方式危害论……西方对中国发展同非洲关系的指责从未消停过。近日，西方一些官员、学者又扬言中国要对非洲之角的饥荒负责。

西方的种种偏见皆缘自维护传统势力范围的畸形思维。这种思维的一大特征就是赤裸裸的双重标准：一边是戴着有色眼镜看待中国对非关系；一边是对其在非洲的殖民历史和损人利己的政治现实意图采取选择性屏蔽。

指责中国“攫取”非洲资源时，西方国家视而不见的事实是：非洲出口到中国的石油不到其出口总量的 30%，且完全是以正常的国际贸易方式进行的；中国在非石油资产远远比不上欧美，且中国公司的很多项目都是欧美公司因环境条件差而不愿考虑的项目；中国的项目基本上都是通过国际市场竞拍得来的；中国援助的非洲国家中有很多是资源贫乏国。

非洲存在的腐败问题既有深刻的历史及部落文化因素，也有国家法律法规执行不力和缺乏监管的现实因素。近年中国大幅增加对非援助，但美、法、德等国对非援助数额也不小，

日本也曾一度成为第四大援非国。且随着非洲战略地位上升，韩国和一些新兴市场国家也展开“援非之争”，为什么单单中国外援成为所谓非洲腐败的祸根？

中国不干涉非洲国家内政竟然也会受到批评。中国不把自己的意志强加于人，这是中国传统文化和外交政策决定的。中国以自己的方式积极参与调解非洲地区冲突。西方强迫非洲接受其价值评判标准，不啻是一种意识形态的霸权主义。

长期以来，中国一直向非洲国家提供粮食援助，帮助非洲国家发展农业。中国从没有在非洲“大量收购土地”，从没把粮食从非洲运回中国。西方国家在非洲“圈地”已超 3000 万公顷，占非洲已耕地 15%。西方公司利用非洲廉价的生产资料生产农产品，简单加工后运回欧美制造生物燃料，并利用价格“剪刀差”大赚其钱，而非洲国家只能得到有限的土地租金和微薄的人工报酬。究竟是谁占了非洲的土地，是谁运走了非洲的粮食？

在非洲，中国和西方的做法的确不同。

无论是在 300 年前肮脏的奴隶贸易中还是在 1884 年瓜分非洲的柏林会议上，恰是西方殖民者以血腥掠夺把非洲变为其原料供应地和商品倾销地。中国是非洲民族反抗殖民斗争的坚定支持者。

西方在非洲民族刚刚独立之时抛弃了非洲。中国人来到非洲，与当地百姓共同奋斗。中国援非过程中，牺牲了 700 多个生命，用鲜血构筑了中非友谊丰碑。

漫长的殖民历史上，西方仅在非洲沿海地区和矿区修筑了简单的道路，目的只是为了运出矿产和资源。中国在非洲援建了 2000 多公里的铁路、3000 多公里的公路。截至 2009 年底，中国在非洲援建了 500 多个基础设施项目，其中民生项目占半数以上，包括 100 多个学校和 60 多个医院。

西方自视为非洲的“救世主”和“施惠者”，每笔发展援助都设立所谓民主、自由、人权的条件和门槛。而中国的援助以平等互利、共同发展为基本指导原则，将对非援助视为发展中国家间的相互帮助。

西方把非洲视作世界上最穷、最没希望的大陆，不断用“内战”、“贫困”、“疾病”、“腐败”和“欠发达”等负面词语描述非洲。而中国用“友谊”、“真诚”、“相互尊重”、“共同发展”、“互利共赢”等积极词汇来描述中非关系。中国政府的《中国对非洲政策白皮书》从头到尾没有出现“贫穷”一词。

西方向非洲提供援助更多关注自身利益，无视非洲人民最关心的减贫和发展问题。西方主导的各种发展战略都未能打破非洲的落后循环。中国的援助旨在实实在在帮助非洲。中国的投资从促进就业和经济增长等角度出发，为非洲的发展提供了新的途径，为非洲的未来注入了新的希望。

中非关系中的平等观念和互利双赢，对西方主导的不平等、不合理国际秩序产生了冲击

。中国成为非洲第二大贸易伙伴，使西方在与非洲交易中不能再像以往那样随心所欲。中国感召力上升，使一些非洲国家不再对西方的说教奉若“圣旨”。中国公司在基础设施等项目的公开竞标中的竞争力，使西方公司处于不利地位。所有这些，都让西方国家感到，中国这个“新来者”正对它们在非洲的利益构成威胁。

霸权主义的思维定势从来都是有惯性的。当西方感到自身地位和利益受到挑战，便由着性子颠倒是非，混淆黑白，挑拨离间。然而，不负责任的做法只会让事情变糟。

### **中非：好朋友 好伙伴 好兄弟**

**«China in Africa: Good friends, good partners, good brothers»**

Renmin Ribao, 1 November 2011.

中国国务院总理温家宝 6 月 17 日至 24 日访问埃及、加纳、刚果（布）、安哥拉、南非、坦桑尼亚和乌干达 7 个非洲国家。温总理的此次非洲之行，旨在进一步巩固和发展中非传统友谊，扩大互利合作，发展和加强中非新型战略伙伴关系。这是一次面向全非的访问，也是继今年初中国政府发表对非洲政策文件、4 月胡锦涛主席成功访问非洲 3 国之后中国对非外交的又一重大行动，受到非洲国家普遍欢迎，引起国际舆论广泛关注。

新中国成立以来，始终高度重视发展、巩固和加强与非洲国家的关系，制定了一系列发展中非关系的方针政策。半个多世纪以来，中国在政治上一贯支持非洲国家的正义要求和合理主张，推动国际社会重视非洲的和平与发展，支持非洲国家平等参与国际事务；在经济上尽力向非洲国家提供帮助，尽管自身财力和物力有限，仍然在非洲援建了包括坦赞铁路在内的近 900 个项目，对促进非洲国家经济发展、民生改善发挥了重要作用。中国对非洲的援助真诚无私，不附加政治条件，不以援助施压，从不对非洲国家的内部事务指手画脚。非洲国家长期以来也在各个方面给予中国大力支持，中国政府和人民对此永远铭记。

进入新世纪以来，中非政治关系日趋成熟，经贸合作迈上新台阶。2000 年成立的中非合作论坛已经成为中非开展集体对话的有效机制和务实合作的重要平台。6 年来，中国与非洲国家领导人互访频繁，中非贸易额由 105 亿美元增至近 400 亿美元，中方逆差达到 24 亿美元。在论坛框架下，中国先后减免了 31 个非洲重债贫困国家 105 亿元人民币债务，给予 29 个非洲最不发达国家 190 个税种商品对华出口零关税待遇，为非洲国家培训各类人才 1 万多

名，给予 16 个非洲国家中国公民出境旅游目的地国地位，向非洲派出青年志愿者等。2005 年 9 月，胡锦涛主席出席联合国成立 60 周年首脑会议时发表讲话，提出帮助其他发展中国家加快发展的五点举措，非洲国家成为主要受益者。今年 4 月，胡锦涛主席访问非洲时进一步提出发展中非新型战略伙伴关系的五项建议。中国对非洲国家的援助成效显著，赢得了非洲国家和人民的广泛赞誉。

发展同非洲国家真诚友好、平等互利、团结合作、共同发展的伙伴关系，是中国政府决不动摇的外交方针。中非已经成为全天候的好朋友，真诚合作的好伙伴，情同手足的好兄弟。中非友好合作堪称当今南南合作的典范。中国、非洲人口占世界总人口 1 / 3 以上，中国与非洲国家在政治上相互支持尊重，经济上互利互惠，除促进各自的发展和提高人民生活水平外，也是对世界和平与发展的重要贡献。

事实已经并将继续证明，中国对非洲的政策，是建立在中非共同和长远战略利益基础上的；中非之间长期稳定、平等互利的友好合作关系，是中非一代又一代领导人和中非人民共同努力的结果，不会因世界局势的演变和各自情况的变化而改变，更不会被某些心怀叵测之人散布的“中国对非洲实行经济殖民主义”、“中国在非洲掠夺资源”等谬论所阻挠。中非人民必将谱写友好合作、共同发展的新篇章。（黄泽全）

### 超越争议的非洲开发 中国在赞比亚的真实存在

“African development surpass controversy, the true story of China’s presence in Zambia”

Nanfang Zhoumo, Zhang Zhe (张)哲 8 April 2008

编者按：“中国在世界的真实存在”系列专题，南方周末记者走访第二站——南部非洲国家赞比亚。

40 年前，坦赞铁路刚刚开工，那是中国援助非洲弟兄的标志。而 40 年后在赞比亚，中国在海外最大的矿产企业年产 10 万吨铜，最大的中非农业合作项目铺开几千公顷，“赞比亚中国经济贸易合作区”拔地而起。

中非传统友谊，显示了更多层次的时代内容。

中国的银行，大标牌闪闪发亮

南部非洲大陆的雨季刚刚结束，雨水的下一次到来恐怕还要等待长达半年的时间。

在首都卢萨卡，一位典型的赞比亚市民很可能发现，他一天中的生活将与“中国”这个陌生又熟悉的事物发生千丝万缕的联系。

他吃个早饭。当地传统食品希玛，原料玉米却产自距卢萨卡 50 公里的中国国企，中垦农场。

他走上街头。在繁华的商业街开罗路上，“中国银行”的大标牌闪闪发亮。即便是其他建筑，他听说，中国公司已经占据了赞比亚建筑市场 80% 的份额。

不论手机还是固定电话，他打个电话，都得使用由中国的华为和中兴公司架设的通讯网络。他打开报纸看到连篇累牍的党派争斗，反复争论的话题，是关于中国的矿业公司、中国的商人。

卢萨卡街头没有麦当劳，但他可能会遇到“远东饭店”或者“四川饭店”，满街的连锁超市“Budget Store”是中国人开的，当地最大的购物市场“Kamwala”是中国公司修建的。

他累了回家。中国制造的电视机里却传来新闻，“总统班达在访华期间同中国政府签订了经济技术合作协定，政府将把贷款的 70% 用于本国公路建设……”

### **“资源报国”**

“我们虽然是企业经营，但也要兼顾政治责任。”

从赞比亚首都卢萨卡出发，一路向北，大约 5 个小时的车程，就可以进入铜带省（Copperbelt），到达赞比亚第二大城市基特韦（Kitwe）。“铜带”指的是一条长 250 公里、宽 65 公里、向西北延伸至刚果（金）的铜资源区。这是世界上最大的沉积型铜矿床，赞比亚境内已探明储量为 12 亿吨。矿业，是这个国家的支柱。“到目前为止，这是中国在境外唯一已经正常生产和盈利的矿山。”中国有色矿业集团有限公司（简称中色集团）总经理罗涛告诉南方周末记者

。

罗涛指的是离基特韦 30 公里处，著名的谦比希铜矿区。1998 年，中色集团旗下的中色非洲矿业有限公司（NFCA）以 2000 万美元收购了谦比希铜矿。该矿区最早由英国公司开采，但英国人早在 1983 年就已经由于各种原因撤出。

NFCA 总经理王春来透露，虽然金额数量不高，但涉及中国海外资源战略，这个项目得到了中赞两国高层的支持。“我们虽然是企业经营，但也要兼顾政治责任、经济责任和社会责任。”王春来说。

事实上，谦比希铜矿的经营非常出色。自 2003 年投产后，NFCA 在 2008 年收回了全部投资。目前加上新开发的矿体，铜产量每年可达 5.5 万吨，年利润 4000 万美元，雇用当地工人约 2500 人。

但谦比希铜矿的经营绝非一帆风顺。2005 年 4 月，该矿的合作单位发生事故，造成部分赞比亚工人死亡。于是关于民族仇视的传言一度被反对党利用，成为攻击中国投资的把柄。

如今，中色集团已经在赞比亚建成了以矿山企业为龙头的有色金属产业链。2007 年 2 月 4 日，中赞两国领导人共同为赞比亚中国经济贸易合作区剪彩。合作区面积达 11.58 平方公里，由中色集团开发和运营，目前已有 13 家企业加入。而中色集团已经在当地拥有资产 11 亿美元，累计向赞比亚政府缴税 5500 万美元，并雇用员工 6500 人，当地工人数量达 86%。在 2008 年世界金融危机期间，中色集团又以相对低的价格收购了卢安夏铜矿，期望在未来可达年产量 10 万吨。

与谦比希铜矿一起，NFCA 的铜产量可以在目前赞比亚六大铜矿山公司中排名第三位。第一位的印度公司年产铜量可达 20 万吨以上。赞比亚 2009 年产铜共 69.8 万吨。

同时，谦比希铜冶炼有限公司（CCS）也在准备扩大投资规模，争取达到年冶炼铜 25 万吨。这意味着它不仅仅可以完全消化 NFCA 的铜矿石，还可以从其他矿山公司收购。中色集团权威人士透露，他们每年冶炼的铜，绝大部分都会运回中国，“我们是资源报国”。

中国已经成为全世界最大的铜消耗国，2009 年进口精炼铜 318 万吨。中色集团总经理罗涛告诉记者，中国的对铜的国际依存度达 75%，而且铜价远比铁矿石高。

他回忆说，2007 年 2 月，国家领导人访问赞比亚，听完中色集团的汇报之后，提醒了他两条：一是要环保、安全达标，二要讲和谐社会。

在赞比亚，中色经营医院，捐献修建汽车站，给学校捐款，甚至还为当地部落酋长修建院墙。

### “太严格”的劳动法

“实在是‘太健全’了，法律水准有点超前……快 50%的人没工作了，还要搞这么多房补、教育补、交通补，还不能随便辞人，要有不良工作记录才可以。”

讲到在赞比亚投资的困难，除了讲当地市场有限、劳动力素质不高，中国企业家里最常讲到的就是当地的劳动法“太严格”。

经历了长达近 70 年的英国殖民统治后，独立后的赞比亚依然大量继承了英国司法系统，其中包括非常健全的劳工保护法律条款。

“实在是‘太健全’了，法律水准有点超前……快 50%的人没工作了，还要搞这么多房补、教育补、交通补，还不能随便辞人，要有不良工作记录才可以。”赞比亚中国经济贸易合作区副总经理咎宝森对南方周末记者说，“经济发展的初级阶段必然要有一些法律，公平是被放弃掉的，每个发展阶段都有不公平的现实，他们应该学会接受这个。”

但很多赞比亚人似乎没有学会接受这种现实。强大的工会组织每年都会与资方进行工资谈判，这对于国企出身的中国企业经营者来说完全是陌生的。“咱们国内的工会主席都是人事经理兼任，哪有这种谈判经验。”一位经理人对本报记者说。

今年工会的工资谈判刚刚结束，工人们并不满意，有当地工人就毁坏了矿井下的一些设备。2006 年，谦比希铜矿的工人因为工资问题罢工，引发与当地警察的冲突。

中色非洲矿业有限公司（NFCA）总经理王春来告诉记者，今年的工资谈判已经结束，很多工人总体的工资涨幅在 15%左右。

王春来介绍，NFCA 员工的平均工资在当地的矿山公司中处于中等水平，“不算最低，也不算最高”。

CCS 和湿法冶炼公司的劳资谈判也刚刚结束，工资都上涨了 12%左右，而配偶医疗、丧葬补助等福利也得到了增长。CCS 常务副总经理杨新国透露，当地工人工资水准基本上是 250 美元每月，“人力成本比国内还贵”。

记者随机询问了在谦比希铜矿的工人，他们无一例外地称“工资太低”。但实际上，矿区工人在赞比亚是收入相对高的群体。他们在卢萨卡的同胞常常只能赚得 100 美元，甚至 50 美元的月薪。

赞比亚的失业率约为 50%，超过 70%的人生活在贫困线以下。

赞比亚贸易工会（Zambia Congress of Trade Unions）秘书长罗伊-穆瓦巴（Roy Mwaba）告诉南方周末记者，相比之下，中国的大型投资企业，比如矿业公司，都是非常遵守当地劳动法的，不过中小企业的中国商人的情况要糟糕得多。“每当我跟店主谈劳动法的时候，他们就会摆手说不懂英文。”穆瓦巴说，“但我要是装作顾客来看他们的东西，我发现他们的英文很流利！”

在 Kamwala 市场，一间中国人经营的服装商店的员工说，他们每月只有约 55 美元的薪水，而且只有星期天他们能休息半天，去教堂做礼拜。

由于当天是复活节假期，记者便询问是否有加班费，店员们都笑了。“当然没有，我们问也不会问的……甚至圣诞节我们也要上半天班！”Felix Lutangu 说。

“如果你们去要加班费会怎么样？”

“你会被开除掉！他是老板，他想怎么样就怎么样……”

实际上，根据赞比亚现行法律，外国人不允许从事零售贸易，但中国人在 Kamwala 市场拥有大量的店面几乎是公开的秘密。当然，老板是不会一直在店里的，他们可能一个人拥有五六间不同的店面，每天只是巡视，在一家店出现很短的时间。这些看不见的中国人，却供给着卢萨卡市民大量的廉价日常用品。

Lutangu 说：“我们能怎么办呢，首先，这样的店面没有什么当地人能租得起，要差不多 3000 美元一个月；其次，有钱能使鬼推磨……对，我说的是，我们穷人什么也做不了。”

**“ 他 们 觉 得 中 国 是 天 堂 ”**

《赞比亚每日邮报》，头版新闻是“商人行贿反腐败委员会官员 1500 万克瓦查”。商人叫“LiangGe”。“是一个中国人吧？”Kazoka 问。



很多中国人在来到非洲之前，对这片大陆的印象如果不是停留在赵忠祥的《动物世界》，就是定格于美联社那幅著名的照片《饥饿的苏丹》——枯瘦的孩子，贪婪的秃鹫，大片干裂而绝望的土地。

新来到赞比亚的中国人往往会小心翼翼地打量这个完全不同的世界。不少人觉得赞比亚“比想象中的好”、“没那么艰苦”。

曾宝森告诉本报记者，有一次带着国内来的考察团参观矿区的“中赞友好医院”，明显能感觉出来有的人“跟黑人握手都特紧张”。他们行前准备时可能发现，赞比亚某些地区的 HIV 携带率高达 35%。

但中国人很快会发现，《阿凡达》也在赞比亚同步上映，尽管没有 3D 银幕。

旅馆服务员茱蒂正申请去中国读研究生，她让我们写下汉语的“你好”和“谢谢”，不停地练习。

留学生田野也会教邻居们说一点简单的中文。他对南方周末记者说，他在学校里帮别人忙，做好事的时候，总会特别强调自己是中国人。邻居家的孩子非常喜欢他，甚至想跟他回中国上学。“他们觉得中国是天堂。”田野说。

但显然并非所有的赞比亚人都把中国的人和投资当作天使。赞比亚实行多党民主制，执政党 MMD 与中国长期友好，但主要的两个反对党 PF 和 UPND 都主张对中国投资加强管制。

PF 领导人萨塔(Michael Sata)在参加 2006 年总统选举时曾接受台湾捐赠，声称若当选会承认台湾独立。随着 2011 年总统大选的临近，反对党票仓所在地的中国人也嗅到了一丝紧张的气味。“这是企业不能解决的问题。”一位中资高层经理说，“我们会在使馆的统一领导下，看采取什么对策。”

反对党 UPND 的政策与研究局主任、赞比亚大学的教授 Choolwe Beyani 告诉南方周末记者，“如果反对党 UPND 或者 PF 上台，中赞关系仍然会继续。至少外交和政治方面的关系不会改变。在经济政策上则会带来一些调整……原材料和资源的出口不是必须的，如果政府要求外国更多投资加工业，则赞比亚可以更多地出口半成品、成品，而不止是原材料。”

对于普通赞比亚人，中国人的形象也并非完美，当地人坦率地告诉我们，他们会把“中国”跟廉价低质产品和低工资联系在一起。

中国人的抱怨则往往跟“要钱”有关。来自云南大学的留学生杨青刚到赞比亚三四天，就碰到有当地人上门“乞讨”。但“乞丐”说的话是：“给我点钱，或者吃的，要知道我可比你强壮。”

杨青吓坏了，跟室友玄兆娟一起，匆忙给了“乞丐”一根萝卜，把他打发走了。她们立即向学校报告，学校也相当重视，当天就请来了保安在他们的院子里值守。从此之后，24小时专人保安的待遇就没有中断过。

赞比亚凤凰广播电台（Radio Phoenix）的编辑 Bily Kazoka 跟南方周末记者聊到中国时，随手从桌子上拿起一张《赞比亚每日邮报》，头版新闻是“发动机商人行贿反腐败委员会官员 1500 万克瓦查（约合 3200 美元）”，而新闻的主人公是“Liang Ge”。Kazoka 问：“这个 Liang ， 是 一 个 中 国 人 吧 ？”

### “历史让我们成为现在的样子”

很多年轻人不记得坦赞铁路了。“关于国际关系，人们没有长久的记忆。”

南方周末记者来到卡皮里姆波希（Kapiri Mposhi）车站时，对车站的空置有些吃惊。这里是著名的坦赞铁路赞比亚境内的起点站，从这里起，中国制式的铁轨向东北方向铺开，行进 1860.5 公里，一直抵达坦桑尼亚首都达累斯萨拉姆。

42 年前，中国曾总计派出 5.6 万人次工程设计和施工人员，打造这条象征着中非友谊的钢铁道路。如今，大气磅礴的时代过后，空旷的站台上甚至能隐隐传来风声。

站台外，三两个出租车司机懒洋洋地晒着太阳。只有周二和周五才有客车从这里出发，周二是普通列车，周五是慢车。

事实上，自 1975 年试运营以来，坦赞铁路运力长期过剩。这条设计运量达 200 万吨的铁路目前每年运量只有 60 万至 70 万吨。随着非洲民族国家纷纷独立，种族隔离状况解除，赞比亚南部经济封锁也不复存在，坦赞铁路日益冷清。

赞比亚其他地方，很多年轻人似乎都不记得这样一条铁路，铜矿或中国商品成为了在赞比亚新的中国符号。

坦赞铁路竣工 35 年了。而这个国家卫生和健康条件并不尽如人意，疟疾、霍乱流行，赞比亚的人均寿命仅为 37.5 岁。

“对于年轻一代的赞比亚人，他们就不知道和中国过去长久的友谊……很多赞比亚人没有看到这样的关系带来的益处。”反对党 UPND 政策与研究局主任 Beyan 说，“他们只看到了坦赞铁路的持续问题，而非国际友谊……关于国际关系，人们没有长久的记忆。”

但在卡皮里姆波希站台上，安保人员和警察都热情地跟记者打招呼，他们说，中国工程师会时不时来到这里，检修铁轨和机车，但他们“住得很远，不知道什么时候会来”。

但在铁路工程师克里斯托弗·班达（Christopher Banda）家里，他在天安门城楼前的照片，被放在客厅很显眼的位置。

卡皮里姆波希是一个只有不到 3000 人的小镇，它因为坦赞铁路而存在，而衰败。这里最热闹的地方是镇上的公共汽车站。每当有蓝色的小巴士驶入或驶出，头顶各种水果、花生或是磁带、VCD 的小贩就冲上去，将车窗围住。他们甚至跟着车缓缓跑动，扬起一路尘土。

市场上，一名叫做 Ray Sakala 的商贩说：“卢萨卡的那些人是听了反对党的宣传，他们不懂得真实的情况……我们应该感谢中国给我们这么多便宜的产品，我们才能付得起这样的价钱，有不错的衣服和鞋子。”

在 Sakala 的小摊上，一双皮鞋只要约 4 美元，而拖鞋只要 1 美元。

记者离开卡皮里·姆波希时，班达工程师一路送到车站。分手时他还在说：“我们不能改变历史，是历史让我们成为现在的样子。”