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**A Comparative Analysis of Chinese, Western and African Media Discourse in the Representation of China's Expansion of Economic Engagements in Africa**

**Tong Wei,**  
MSc in Media, Communication and Development

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# **A Comparative Analysis of Chinese, Western and African Media Discourse in the Representation of China's Expansion of Economic Engagements in Africa**

**Tong Wei**

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## **ABSTRACT**

After the China-Africa Cooperation Forum was established in 2000, the bilateral trade between the two large emerging economies has witnessed a steady growth in recent years. China has enlarged its business and investment projects in Africa, mainly specializing in infrastructure construction, natural resources exploitation and agribusinesses. The Chinese president Xi Jinping chose Africa to be part of his first overseas visit after he had assumed to be the country's new head of state. During the visit, Xi promised to enhance the bilateral economic links under the principles of 'sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith'. Within different political and economic contexts as well as distinctive ideological backgrounds, Chinese, British and African media bear differences in representing China's expansion of economic engagements in Africa. This study will explore how the media discourses among Chinese, British and African (Tanzanian and South African) mainstream newspapers are shaped by distinctive ideologies and stereotypes in the representation of China's rising economic power in Africa. Meanwhile, how power relations produced from Chinese propaganda discourse and western postcolonialist discourse have influenced African media representation will also be discussed.

This research will be conducted by focusing on the concepts of representation as well as the impact of ideology and power generated from media discourse for the purpose of analyzing different representation models among media across nations. Furthermore, the concepts of postcolonialism, orientalism and stereotyping will be interlinked to examine how western ideology would influence the African media discourse. Discourse analysis will be applied, in which the textual and contextual dimensions are included to deconstruct media texts from twelve articles published in Chinese, British, Tanzanian and South African newspapers during Xi Jinping's African trip in late March, 2013. The method will place the linguistic discourse into different political and economic contexts for the analysis on ideology. The research has discovered three main themes which unveil patterns of cooperation or competition towards China's economic engagements in Africa. Despite limitations through

the researcher's own ideological stereotypes and restricted number of selected media texts, the findings still prove that Tanzanian media is prone to follow the Chinese propaganda model to represent China's economic expansion in Africa while South African media tends to be shaped by western postcolonialism discourse since the two African nations have developed within strikingly different political, economic and historic backgrounds.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, China has witnessed a robust growth in trade and investment projects in Africa. Along with the China-Africa Cooperation Forum (FOCAC) founded in 2000, China has expanded its business and investment projects in Africa. So far, China has set up more than 2,000 enterprises across the continent specializing in infrastructure construction, retailing, industrial processing and natural resources exploitation (Xi, 2014). These economic engagements, as Wenping (2008) argues, are in compliance with China's foreign policy on the basis of equality, mutual benefit, win-win cooperation and non-interference in African nations' internal affairs (Wen, 2004). The bilateral economic ties would be reinforced during Xi Jinping's official visit to three African nations, namely Tanzania, South Africa and the Republic of the Congo as China's new president in March, 2013. During the week-long visit, Xi vowed to enhance friendly ties, promote bilateral cooperation and expand Chinese business and investment in Africa by adhering to the principles of "sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith" (Anonymous, 2014).

However, China's expansion of business and investment plans in Africa has triggered scepticism and criticism from western nations, the former colonizers of the continent. As media discourse is normally shaped by ideology (Trevor Purvis and Alan, 1993), western media embedded with postcolonialist ideology of western dominance over the east (E. Said, 1985; R. Shome & R. Hegde, 2002) have frequently portrayed China's economic expansion ambition in Africa as a scramble for natural resources of strategic importance and labelled the action as neo-colonialism (Alden, 2007). Western media has frequently lashed China's economic engagements as threats to the western traditional interests in Africa. Chinese media, succumbed to the power generated from the CCP authoritarian regime has represented a completely positive image of Xi Jinping's African tour and defended China's Africa policy since media normally serves the role of a "lapdog by repeating government statements and policies" (Wang & Wang, 2014, p. 217). From an African perspective, some scholars argued that representation from African media has been influenced by western ideological stereotypes given the fact that African media system has special historic links with

the western media system (Nyamnjoh, 2005; Uka Uche, 1991). Based on previous research, the purpose of this study is to explore how discourses from media with different ideological backgrounds have generated power relations to shape the representation patterns of China's growing economic involvement in Africa and Xi Jinping's African visit by means of a comparative analysis of discourses from Chinese, British and African mass media. Discourse analysis, composed of textual and contextual dimensions (Lupton, 1992) will be used to deconstruct the media discourse from linguistic and contextual perspectives as well as studying the relations between discourse and power (Foucault, 1998; van Leeuwen, 1993).

Meanwhile, this research will further explore the influences of the propaganda model in Chinese media and the postcolonialism model in western media on the African media discourse and its representation of China's economic activities in Africa. Whether the influence of one model outweighs that of the other between Tanzanian and South African media discourse is worth an in-depth analysis. This study will fill in the gaps of previous research which lacks a horizontally comparative analysis of the representation of China's increasing economic power in Africa from media with different ideological backgrounds. Furthermore, the paper will examine the extent of neutrality of representation from two British newspapers and find out whether the claim that western media always portrays a biased and negative image of China's business and investment engagements in Africa could be justified or not. With regard to the application of theories, on the one hand, this research will link the concept of ideology with media discourse and the power relations it has generated to deconstruct media representation in different contexts. Chinese propaganda discourse will fall into the category of the notion of ideology and the power relations it has produced will be examined to view what differences exist compared to the western mode of representation. On the other hand, the concepts of postcolonialism, orientalism and stereotyping will be applied to explore to what extent they would exert influences on the representation patterns from western media texts as well as African media discourse, which has been claimed to be the legacy of western colonial discourse and ideology (Uka Uche, 1991).

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **China's African policy and its expanding economic presence in Africa**

After the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took power in 1949, China's foreign policy was subject to take a one-sided position, or termed as '*yi bian dao*', which was characterized by pro-Soviet Union and anti-U.S. under the context of ideological confrontation between

socialist and capitalist groups (Anshan, 2008, p. 22). The policy aimed at rejecting western ideology and running counter against capitalism under the Iron Curtain in the Cold War period (Kachiga, 2013). One of the most crucial points of the policy during the Mao Zedong regime (1949-1976) was the struggle against imperialism and colonialism (Six, 2009), which were also the enemies of colonized Africa. In 1954, Chinese premier Zhou Enlai initiated 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence', which stresses that countries, big or small, strong or weak should coexist peacefully based on equality and mutual benefit (Wen, 2004). The principles have laid a cornerstone for China's fundamental policy in developing relations with other countries. China centred on economic assistance to Africa without any privileges or political strings but in the meantime, endeavoured to seek African alliance in order to combat the superpowers, namely the United States and the Soviet Union (Kachiga, 2013).

Since the reform and opening up of Chinese economy in the late 1970s, China's policy on Africa has gradually shifted from offering unconditional economic assistance to seeking 'bilateral cooperation' and 'co-development' (Anshan, 2008, p. 27). China began to encourage domestic enterprises to invest in Africa (Yu, 1988). With the establishment of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum (FOCAC) in 2000, the two emerging economies have fostered relations to achieve win-win economic and mutual benefits on the basis of "mutual respect, non-interference in each other's internal affairs and self-determination" (Kachiga, 2013, pp. 42-43). In the 2006 FOCAC Beijing Summit, the bilateral ties have been promoted to a "new type of China-Africa strategic partnership" (Wenran, 2008, p. 52).

Attitudes toward China's equality and mutual benefit-based policy on Africa vary. Mawdsley (2008, p. 515) argued that China has sought to develop its relations with Africa as an example of "South-South economic cooperation" by achieving mutual benefits from "investment, agreements, joint ventures, banking and technology transfer". Having experienced a similar colonial and postcolonial history, China and Africa have shared perspectives on realizing common development based on equality and mutual respect rather than relying on the paternalistic pattern manipulated by the western powers (Wenran, 2008). Six analyzes that China and Africa have challenged the western development paradigm, which is characterized by "reiterating western superiority over the Oriental backwardness" (E. Said, 1985, p. 7) because the West, the former colonizer of the developing world, shares no similar "interpretation of history" (Six, 2009, p. 1109) with China and Africa. With China's growing economic strength, the country has modified its African policy to be "interest-oriented" (Six, 2009, p. 1113) with a "high degree of flexibility and pragmatism" (Kachiga, 2013, p. 16). China and Africa benefit from joint economic gains through fair cooperation and in the meantime, counter hegemonic development discourse from the West (Rupp, 2008). Hegemony, as

Mouffe (2001) elucidated, is the display of superior power exerted by a politically and economically strong entity over a weak entity. Therefore, China and Africa have endeavoured to jointly cast off the overarching and hegemonic western political discourse and “strategically leveraged structural characteristics of African political and economic systems” that promote the state interests of both parties (Rupp, 2008, p. 66).

Favoured by China’s African policy featuring cooperation on a free-enterprise basis (Kachiga, 2013), China-Africa bilateral trade exceeded 200 billion US dollars in 2013, over four times compared with the amount when FOCAC was held in 2006. So far, China has set up over 2,000 enterprises in Africa which operate agribusiness, infrastructure construction, industrial processing, natural resources exploitation and logistics (Xi, 2014). The expansion of Chinese business and investment projects has aroused scepticism and criticism from western nations, particularly the former colonizers of Africa. Some researchers have attributed China’s economic presence in Africa to the “growing need for energy and commodities” (Franks & Ribet, 2009, p. 130). China’s investment efforts in Africa, particularly in natural resources and infrastructure construction are labelled as ‘neo-colonialism’ (Frynas, 2007; Norberg, 2006). Raine (2009, p. 55) criticized China’s engagements for instigating more “corruption and autocracy” in some regimes, for example, Sudan and Zimbabwe, since China could back up these regimes in exchange for strategic natural resources badly needed by the world’s largest economy. Kaplinsky (2007, p. i) echoed Raine by arguing that China-Africa relations are not “purely an economic phenomenon” since by developing ties with China, Africa could “shun pressure from western governments to promote more transparent and better governance”. China’s escalating economic power in Africa is often regarded as threats to the traditional interests of the West on the continent (Brautigam, 2009; Breslin, 2007). Some literatures even labelled China as a ‘colonizer’ in an attempt to establish intimate relations with African power elites to gain political control over the continent (Alden, 2007, p. 6). Others criticize that the inflow of Chinese low-end products has squeezed African local market shares (Brautigam, 2008). These critiques have been rebutted by other scholars. Li (2007) argued for China’s involvement in African infrastructure construction as a win-win process rather than a zero-sum game. He Wenping (2008) hailed China’s investment projects in Africa for bringing in new technology to the continent and creating job opportunities for locals.

### **Media’s role in representing foreign policy**

There is much research which demonstrates that media have exerted widespread influence on a nation’s foreign policy. On one hand, media serve as a ‘watchdog’, which supervises the

government's process of enacting and implementing foreign policy. On the other hand, it also plays its role as a "lapdog by following or repeating government statements and policies" (Wang & Wang, 2014, p. 217). In democratic nations like the United States, media is always challenging and supervising government's policy to ensure the public interests to be best served (Wallach, 1990). However, for an authoritarian regime such as China, media is completely dominated by the Chinese Communist Party as its mouthpiece for disseminating CCP's ideology (Yan, 2000; Y. Zhao, 1998). The purpose of media in China is to "force the public to comply with government policy" and serves as the "propagator" and "promoter" of the policy (Wang & Wang, 2014, p. 220). The CCP's "ideological front" is reinforced if the Party tightens the control of media coverage (Reilly, 2011, p. 180). Therefore, Chinese media are striving to represent China's expanding business and investment projects in Africa as efforts to bring mutual benefits to both sides, in accordance with China's African policy under the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The concept of ideology will be used in this research to examine how Chinese media make use of CCP ideology in representing its African policy and how western media with completely different ideological background issue criticism in this regard.

### **Ideology, discourse and media representation**

According to Eagleton (1991, p. 5), ideology refers to a "dominant power" that "may legitimate itself by promoting beliefs and values that are congenial to it, naturalizing and universalizing such beliefs" so that they have become "self-evident and apparently inevitable". Any attempts to challenge such beliefs will be harshly attacked. Marxist tradition bears very close links with the concept of ideology, which examines "how relations of domination or subordination are reproduced with only minimal resort to direct coercion" (Trevor Purvis and Alan, 1993). Foucault (1980, p. 118) analyzes that ideology "always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth". Therefore, the dominant class has coerced the subordinate class to accept its ideology. Any acts to challenge or run counter against the ideological thinking would be denigrated because the thinking was claimed as reality. Ideology is also categorized into positive and negative conceptions (Larraín, 1983). The negative aspect of ideology is defined as "distorted thought", which results in the misconception and misrepresentation of the knowledge in the real world (Trevor Purvis and Alan, 1993, pp. 477-478). Purvis (1993, p. 478) also argues that "ideology always works to favour some and to disadvantage others". Thus, the subordinate class would lose their consciousness of combating the ruling class and regard the current social relations as "natural and inevitable" (Trevor Purvis and Alan, 1993, p. 478). From a media representation perspective, Chinese media are "exercised through self-censorship" (J. Zhao,

2003, p. 193). Some negative news are not allowed to be broadcasted in case it would “do harm to social stability and undermine the image of China” (J. Zhao, 2003, p. 193). Consequently, most of the stories about China’s business and investment projects in Africa are covered in a positive way regardless of objectivity and even distortion of reality. Regarded as ideological propaganda tools of CCP, Chinese media normally cover reports based on its “anti-colonial and anti-imperial history in Africa and its continued rejection of the equally ideological commitment of western countries in Africa” (Banda, 2009, p. 350).

Compared to ideology that mainly focuses on ‘action and consciousness’, discourse is concerned with the ‘linguistic constitution of the social’. Discourse relies on “specific linguistic and semiotic vehicles that can organize thinking, understanding and experience” of participants (Trevor Purvis and Alan, 1993, pp. 476,480). Based on this perception, media could serve as such a vehicle through which certain discourses could be formulated via languages and signs. However, Cao (2011, p. 7) argues that discourse, “constructed through language as a representational system”, serves its role of generating power relations beyond merely by means of language. Meanwhile, Foucault (1972, p. 49) defines discourse as “groups of signs” constituting “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak”. He also argues that “discourse transmits and produces power” (1979, p. 101). Since knowledge is composed of certain discourses, it is implicated in power relations (Fu, Zuo, & Lenihan, 2011). Media, as a platform on which knowledge is disseminated, exerts a kind of “symbolic power” which concentrates on creating meaning in a particular discourse (Bourdieu, 1979). Therefore, western media often represent China through a colonial and development discourse (Bromley, 2008; Ferguson & New Museum of Contemporary, 1990), which is characterized by the knowledge of orientalism as western perception of superiority over the East (E. Said, 1985) to generate an overarching power to criticize China’s economic expansion in Africa as threats to their traditional interests.

Another essential theory to be applied in this research is representation. Stuart Hall (1997) defines representation as a meaning production process through language. Since individuals bear different understandings of particular objects and events, the meanings produced for the objects and events vary between individuals. Therefore, individuals’ personal and subjective opinions are reflected in representation. As Hall (1997, p. 234) argues, “difference matters” since “it is essential to meaning” in representation. Therefore, it can be stated that almost no representation is completely neutral. The difference between binary oppositions, for instance black and white, or civilized and uncivilized, always exists with one binary serving as the dominant one while the other is the subordinate one. The two contrasting binaries are subject to power relations, within which one exerts overarching influence on the other (Derrida,

1972). Difference is necessary in representation since meaning cannot be constructed or generated without “a dialogue with the Other” (Hall & Open, 1997, p. 235). Consequently, in representing underdeveloped non-European regions, western media normally categorize the developed West as central and the underdeveloped Asia, Africa and Latin America as periphery or the Other. This representation is believed to be “the heir[...] of an illustrious genealogy of Western conceptions about those parts of the world” (Escobar, 1995, p. 7).

### **Postcolonialism, orientalism and stereotyping**

Since this research mainly focuses on comparing the representation of China’s business and investment projects in Africa in Chinese, western and African media respectively, postcolonial theory will be appropriately applied to examine how China is represented in western colonial discourse. Despite the collapse of the colonial system, western nations are still making attempts to retain the “West as the subject” and the underdeveloped areas as the subordinate in submission to the subject (Spivak, 1988, p. 271). The developed world has the ability to “conceptualize and theorize” the reality that the West has dominant power over the rest of the world, so that western knowledge bears predominant authority over other knowledges (R. Shome & R. Hegde, 2002, p. 40). Postcolonial conception mainly concentrates on the production of knowledge for the group of people subject to oppression, termed by Gramsci as ‘subalterns’ (Green, 2002, p. 2). Different races fall into the category of subalterns so that western nations normally regard races from the developing world as subalterns. Spivak (2002) argues that the subalterns should not be labelled as the naturally oppressed. Their voice should be listened to and heard and they should be entitled to speak and be represented. However, the European and American modernity “continues to remain one of the dominant forms of colonial modernity” and attempts to “universalize discourse of western modernity” (R. Shome & R. Hegde, 2002, pp. 255-256,262). Gaonkar (1999, p. 13) critiques that modernity in the developing world cannot escape from “the dominance of western modernity”. In the media context, European nations regard the developing world, such as China and Africa, as subalterns so that the postcolonial discourse which highlights the superiority of western development patterns is being conveyed in the representation of Chinese economic activities in Africa. It demonstrates that “the colonial presence of western powers still continues” (Said & Edward, 1989, p. 206) in many parts of the developing world and that “the experience of being colonized and the subjects of the West did not end” (Fanon, 1991, p. 101) with the collapse of the colonial system. Although the colonized people won freedom physically, they still fall victims to colonial discourse and representation (Ahmad, 1980).

Apart from postcolonial epistemology, another conception used to compare media discourse between the West and the East is orientalism. As Said (1978, p. 3) defines it, orientalism is a 'discourse' which expresses the weakness of the Orient from a western perspective by contrasting it with the perceived power and strength of the West. As a western pattern in an attempt to dominate, manipulate and have overarching authority over the Orient, Orientalism falls into the category of ideological images and fantasies about the Oriental world (E. Said, 1985). The Orient is depicted as primitive, backward, uncivilized, superstitious, exotic and in urgent need of assistance from the West. By contrast, the West is described as carrying "moral, intellectual and cultural superiority over non-western civilizations" (Hung, 2003, p. 254). From a media perspective, western media representation of the developing world consists of "ideological products of western superiority which reinforce[...] western hegemony" (Nohrstedt, 1986, p. 423). China and Africa are portrayed as inferior to the West in terms of political system, governance, economic development and civilization. In the western ideology, modernity in the Orient can only be achieved by adopting a Westernization process (Shih & Zhiwei, 2001). In terms of African development, western nations still consider Africa as being within their range of influence. Therefore, any other emerging economies, including China should have served as an outside player on the continent (Berger, 2006).

In the study of media representation within different ideologies, stereotyping, defined by Lippmann (1922) as fixed images of objects in individuals' minds is another important conception. According to Dyer (1977), stereotyping minimizes differences and homogenizes various traits and characteristics of particular persons and objects. Furthermore, stereotyping also "fixes boundaries" and "excludes everything which does not belong" (Hall & Open, 1997). For a long period of time, western media have held the ideological stereotypes that the developing world, such as China and Africa, is underdeveloped and backward compared to the advanced and civilized West. Furthermore, Dyer (1977) argues that the representation of developing nations from a western perspective has reflected power inequalities from western media which have been exerted on the media in the Orient.

### **Media representation of China's economic presence in Africa**

#### *From a Chinese perspective*

In this research, Chinese media representation of China's investment project in Africa will be studied by focusing more on ideology and on the media power perspectives. Although the status of media as "an ideological apparatus for political and state control" (Dan, 2011, p. 110)

is weakened in the process of media commercialization, Chinese media remain the mouthpiece of the CCP government and a “political propaganda machine” (Hu, 2007, p. 336). Thus, Chinese media normally avoid covering problems related to China’s engagements in Africa, including Chinese illegal immigrants, complaints from local workers about constant overwork in Chinese enterprises as well as shoddy Chinese low-end products on African markets (Sautman & Hairong, 2009). On the contrary, it lauds Chinese business and investment projects in Africa for bringing benefits to both sides and achieving win-win results. Chinese media also refutes its growing presence in Africa as being labelled as neo-colonialism by stressing “a new paradigm of China-Africa partnership based on traditional friendship” (Wenran, 2008, p. 50). Relating to Silverstone (1999) who states that media bears the power to cheat the public, infiltrate ideology and create meanings, Chinese media are subject to the power from the totalitarian regime and coerce the public to accept the ideological discourse and representation by giving no tolerance to any challenges.

*From a western perspective*

With regard to the expansion of Chinese business and investment projects in Africa, the representation from western media has often been characterized as ‘criticism’ and ‘cynicism’ (Kachiga, 2013, p. 215). Western media normally portray the non-western world by creating the image and discourse of the ‘other’ in contrast to the West as ‘self’ (Cao, 2011, p. 6). In representing China’s economic engagements in Africa, western media are inclined to present a “distorted image and projects onto this image their fears and desire through a modernity-centred discourse” (Cao, 2011, p. 14). In this regard, China is normally orientalist by the West as less developed and incapable of promoting development in Africa. Instead, Africa could only achieve economic progress by pursuing the western mode of modernity, which is reflected in postcolonial ideology. Moreover, the Chinese notion of common development based on equality and mutual benefits has been questioned by the West who bears the stereotypes that China’s economic presence in Africa makes no difference to what the former colonial powers did as a scramble for strategic natural resources and African lucrative markets, which is termed as neo-colonialism or a repetition of colonialism by western media and intelligentsia (Franks & Ribet, 2009; Rotberg, 2008). Based on the above analysis, the overarching and biased western representation of the ‘underdeveloped’ world is largely attributed to the postcolonial and orientalist stereotypes deeply rooted in western nations, the former colonizers of many developing nations including China and Africa.

*From an African perspective*

Despite the collapse of the colonial system, the special economic and cultural links between Africa and its former western colonizers still exist today (Wenping He, 2006). African media rely heavily upon western media coverage as important source of information. What is more, the discourse of African media in representing events has been profoundly influenced by western ideological stereotypes (Uka Uche, 1991). The mass media systems in Africa have “deep-rooted historical links with the West” and are “highly influenced by western societies and models” (Nyamnjoh, 2005, pp. 40,43). Meanwhile, quite a number of African journalists have received professional training in Europe and North America so that their minds have been shaped by western ideologies (Murphy & Scotton, 1987). Therefore, some African media will portray China’s economic engagements in Africa with a postcolonial and orientalist discourse as western media does. Alden (2007) also analyzes that some African media present negative images of China due to economic power and development agency of Africa being weakened by Chinese business engagements. However, their similar colonial history creates a link between China and Africa to stand together to struggle against western hegemony and the paternalistic development paradigm (Manyozo, 2012). China’s African policy based on equality, mutual benefits and non-interference in each other’s internal affairs has been lauded by most African nations. Consequently, African media play an essential role in “persuading other nations to view international relations, politics and development from [the] perspective of China” (Banda, 2009, p. 354). These scholars come from a variety of political, economic and cultural backgrounds so that I would argue they bear quite different ideologies and values (Wenping He, 2008).

### **Conceptual frameworks and research objectives**

Based on the frameworks of theories outlined above, this research will explore the media discourse and representation of China’s growing economic presence in Africa under different ideological contexts. What kind of power relations have been revealed from the different media discourses in their representation of Chinese president Xi Jinping’s African tour will also be carefully compared and studied. By applying a discourse analysis approach, this study will deconstruct newspaper articles to examine the extent to which postcolonialism and orientalism discourses are embedded within western media perspectives. Another important point to be explored is whether China’s ambition to enlarge its business and investment scales in Africa promised by president Xi Jinping during his African visit is weal or woe for African economic development and people’s livelihoods, according to the representation from Chinese, western and African media outlets. Influenced by colonial discourse, it seems inevitable for western media to misrepresent China’s African policy based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and to label China’s growing economic power in Africa as

neo-colonialism. Therefore, how firm these ideological stereotypes still remain in western media discourse and to what degree the stereotypes exert influences on African media discourse will also be unveiled in this research. From a Chinese media perspective, I would explore how closely the Chinese media representation of Xi Jinping's visit and his promise to foster relations with Africa based on 'sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith' is linked with the propaganda model of ideological infiltration in mainstream media (Herman & Chomsky, 2002) under the authoritarian form of press (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956).

This research will mainly focus on how China's attempts to enlarge business and investment projects in Africa on occasion of Xi Jinping's African trip are being discussed and represented in Chinese, western and African mainstream newspapers. These will be compared in order to explore the ideological distinctions under different media discourses.

This study will contain one main research question and several sub-questions. The main question to be answered is *what power relations and ideological differences are reflected in the representation of China's growing economic presence in Africa in Chinese, western and African newspaper articles?*

The following sub-questions closely relevant to the main research question will also be examined to make the research more in-depth and comprehensive.

- *To what extent are western ideology and stereotypes embedded in the two leading British newspapers' representations of China's economic presence in Africa? How does one differ from the other?*
- *Looking at the Chinese propaganda discourse and western postcolonialism discourse, which one has exerted more influence on African media representation (Tanzania and South Africa respectively) of China's African policy and its economic engagements in Africa?*

The research would draw conclusions to reveal the reason why the representation from Chinese, western and African media might differ in covering China's expanding economic presence in Africa. The findings will provide an understanding of how power relations and ideology in different media contexts would generate different discourses influencing the representation patterns.

### **Limitations of the literature review and the necessity of this study**

This research project will study media representation of China's economic presence growth in Africa by drawing upon Chinese president Xi Jinping's first official African tour in 2013 one week after he assumed presidency. The three nations which Xi visited, namely Tanzania, South Africa and the Republic of the Congo are abundant in natural resources which are urgently needed for China's economic development so that the aim of his visit is thought-provoking. In addition, the year 2013 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chinese former premier Zhou Enlai's trip to Africa, during which the 'Eight Principles of Economic and Technical Aid' were launched. Therefore, the study on how media of different ideologies represent the transformation of China's African policy from unconditional assistance to mutually beneficial investment and business projects (Anshan, 2008) is of academic significance. Meanwhile, despite some existing academic research, which focuses on China's business actions in Africa as well as their reflections in the media, either supporting or criticizing China's engagements in Africa, as far as my search has found there has not been any tripartite comparative analysis of Chinese, western and African media representation. As a matter of fact, the study of how Chinese and western media have represented China in Africa has largely outnumbered studies on how African media represent this issue. Thus, the research will also concentrate on the representation from an African media perspective. Furthermore, in spite of criticism from some western and African intelligentsia and media coverage, whether Xi Jinping's African visit has triggered another ripple of anxiety and panic towards China's growing economic presence in Africa, especially in the investment sector, is worth an in-depth research. Last but not least, this research will integrate postcolonialism and orientalism theories into the media representation of China's business engagements in Africa since there have not been many previous studies found on this particular topic.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SELECTION OF MEDIA TEXTS**

### **Methodology**

This research will apply discourse analysis to deconstruct texts from Chinese, British, Tanzanian and South African mainstream newspapers to explore the connection between discourse and power (van Leeuwen, 1993) in the media representation of China's growing economic engagements in Africa on occasion of Chinese president Xi Jinping's official visit to Africa. As Foucault has defined, discourse refers to "the production of knowledge through language" (Chouliaraki, 2008, p. 44) and it can "transmit and produce power" (Foucault, 1998, pp. 100-101). Mass media serve a crucial role in the reproduction of meanings and

discourse (Joffe, 2002). Accordingly, discourse analysis is the study of discourse by analyzing the written, oral and sign language, including media texts produced by media outlets (N. Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough (1995, p. 16) uses the term 'linguistic analysis' to highlight the decomposition of media texts from a language perspective. Since "texts are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power" (N. Fairclough, 1993, p. 135), the research on media texts will also concentrate on the influences upon media representation by "unequal power relations and relations of domination" (Norman Fairclough, 1995, p. 14) from different ideological contexts. In this research, textual and contextual dimensions of discourse analysis will be applied (Lupton, 1992). Meanings and key themes of media texts will be deconstructed first from a language analysis perspective. Then the meanings will be further analyzed by placing them into various media contexts shaped by different ideologies to explore what sorts of relations of power have been generated in representing China's expanding economic presence in Africa through Chinese, British and African news outlets. By means of discourse analysis, hidden meanings from different media discourses will be unveiled to interpret how "the world is being represented to us and to orient us towards others in this world" (Chouliaraki, 2008, p. 25). With regard to this study, textual analysis will be initially conducted to explore the major themes and the reasons for the use of particular words and expressions in Chinese, British and African newspaper texts. Then contextual analysis will be applied to examine why these "texts are produced and interpreted" and why "the discourses are drawn upon and combined" in different ways in Chinese, British and African media contexts respectively (N. Fairclough, 1992, p. 213). Lastly, these discourses will be compared to identify the way in which postcolonialism, orientalism and ideological stereotypes are embedded in representations from different media texts (Dittmer, 2005; Myers, Klak, & Koehl, 1996).

In comparison to qualitative discourse analysis, content analysis, a quantitative method by means of "counting the occurrence of dimensions of texts" (Anders, 1998, p. 95) is inappropriate for this research since this method only calculates the frequency or recurrence of particular texts that appear in media representation (Burgelin, 1968) but fails to "place text into context" (Lupton, 1992, p. 147). By using content analysis, the understanding of media texts could only stay at a superficial level because the method will not deconstruct the relations of the texts with certain media discourses or see the texts in different ideological contexts as discourse analysis does. This research will not only outline the neutral description of media texts (Gill, 1996) but further explore the media discourse in relation to power from postcolonialism and orientalism perspectives. Accordingly, discourse analysis proves to be the most appropriate and feasible method.

## **Selection of media texts**

Newspapers are selected for this research, because this form of print mass media can provide a more in-depth analysis of news texts in comparison to other types of media outlets, such as TV and radio. Willey (1942, p. 19) highlights the “editorial function” of newspapers indicating that newspaper texts can “make comments on current affairs”. All selected newspaper texts are in English language for the purpose of facilitating the comparative analysis on media discourse from different language contexts. Among the three African nations (Tanzania, South Africa and the Republic of Congo) which Xi Jinping visited, newspaper articles from the Congo will not be selected since there was a low availability of English-language media texts in this French-speaking country. Newspapers from China, the United Kingdom, Tanzania and South Africa were chosen for this research. The publication date of the selected articles ranges between 17 March, 2013, one week before Xi Jinping embarked on his African tour and 14 April, 2013, two weeks after he wrapped up his visit. These three weeks outside of the timeframe of Xi’s African journey were included in the media text selection process, because some editorials and commentaries concerning his visit did not come out immediately after his trip ended. The available articles for analysis would prove to be more comprehensive and inclusive when the date range was broadened. *China Daily*, the largest and most circulated English newspaper in China was chosen for its authority in representing events. From the British newspapers, *The Times*, the UK’s leading newspaper and *Financial Times*, the country’s mainstream business paper were both selected to demonstrate the UK’s voice from political and economic perspectives respectively.

How differently these two papers represent China’s economic presence in Africa will be studied as one of the sub-questions. Articles from *Daily News*, Tanzania’s mainstream paper and *Mail & Guardian*, a significant weekly newspaper from South Africa will be comparatively analyzed to answer the other sub-question. Media texts relevant to Xi’s African visit but irrelevant to China’s growing business and investment engagements in Africa will not be chosen since they did not meet the criteria set by the research questions. For instance, some reports cover Chinese first lady Peng Liyuan’s activities as the sideline of Xi’s visit. Other stories focus on the Durban BRICS Summit, a highlight of the visit but not particularly linked to China’s economic involvement in Africa. By using the online newspaper database Nexis together with some newspapers’ official websites, 12 articles were finally selected for this research, which includes four from *China Daily*, two from *The Times*, two from *Financial Times*, two from *Daily News* (Tanzania) and two from *Mail & Guardian* (South Africa). All of these articles were not randomly selected which would have the sampling used in quantitative method such as in content analysis (Gunter, 2000). Instead, they were carefully

examined until all articles met the criteria for the study. The table overleaf shows the selected articles for this research.

**Table 1: Articles for this research**

	Item Nation	Publisher	Title	Author	Date (2013)
1	China	<i>China Daily</i>	'Shared goal of development'	He, W.	March 25
2	China	<i>China Daily</i>	'Western countries' African exploitation claims unfounded'	Anonymous	March 27
3	China	<i>China Daily</i>	'Bond of sincere commitment'	Makgetlaneng, S.	March 28
4	China	<i>China Daily</i>	'China will be Africa's all-weather friend: Xi'	Anonymous	March 30
5	The UK	<i>The Times</i>	'China warns its businesses: don't exploit Africa'	Lewis, L.	March 23
6	The UK	<i>The Times</i>	'International aid can be a moneyspinner too; Our good works have built up a huge bank of goodwill towards Britain in Africa. It's time for business to cash in'	Wighton, D.	April 3
7	The UK	<i>Financial Times</i>	'China pledges more investments to Africa'	Hook, L.	March 25
8	The UK	<i>Financial Times</i>	'China shrugs off criticism of role in Africa'	Hook, L.	April 10
9	Tanzania	<i>Daily News</i>	'Why China is the winner in Africa'	Wa, M.	March 29
10	Tanzania	<i>Daily News</i>	'Dar, Beijing keen on "Shared Dreams"'	Anonymous	April 2
11	South Africa	<i>Mail &amp; Guardian</i>	'China and SA cement relationship'	Donnelly, L. & Benjamin, C.	March 22
12	South Africa	<i>Mail &amp; Guardian</i>	'South Africa, China get cosy ahead of Brics summit'	Bauer, N.	March 26

### Limitations of methodology

In discourse analysis, the number of selected media texts is far more limited than that for quantitative methods, such as content analysis (N. Fairclough, 1992). Therefore, the articles to be researched are far less diversified and comprehensive. In the meantime, the selection of

media texts completely depends on the researcher's personal understanding of the texts and the social contexts in which he or she lives. Therefore, different articles would have been chosen by researchers from a variety of social status, gender, ethnic groups and age groups since they bear different life value and world vision (Lupton, 1992). As a result, it is difficult to guarantee the objectivity and impartiality in the media text selection process. The same texts would be interpreted and understood in different ways within different contexts (N. Fairclough, 1993). Furthermore, the ideological stereotypes deeply rooted in the researcher's mind would render the entire research lop-sided and biased. For instance, British newspaper articles bearing critical attitudes were selected but those with neutral or slightly positive positions were ignored subject to the researcher's own biased idea that it is common and regular for western media texts to portray negative images of China. For further studies, media texts with different positions should be selected to guarantee the objectivity and impartiality of the research samples.

## **ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

### **General procedure**

In this section, the 12 selected media texts will be comparatively analyzed and conclusions will be drawn in the end. Lupton's (1992) two dimensions of discourse analysis will be applied. In the textual dimension analysis, the main themes of each article or certain paragraphs of some articles will be generalized to further analyze them within different media discourses. The particular vocabulary and rhetoric used in the media texts will be deconstructed to explore the reasons for their use in specific discourses. The direct or indirect quotations and the identity of the quoted figures in the articles will also be examined. The results from the textual dimension analysis, which is conducted from a linguistic perspective, will be put into contextual dimension. The analysis of the media texts will be integrated into different ideological contexts of the Chinese, British and African political economy, social culture and media so that power relations within media discourse could be reflected. This section is composed of several sub-sections to answer the main research question and other sub-questions.

### **Analysis**

After meticulous reading of the 12 media texts, the representation of newspapers from different ideological backgrounds about Xi Jinping's Africa trip and China's expansion of economic presence in Africa are categorized into three primary themes: win-win cooperation,

zero-sum game and neither of the two. Particular vocabulary and rhetoric, such as metaphors as well as quotations from the texts will be deconstructed from linguistic and contextual perspectives to examine the relations of power generated from discourses.

### *Win-win cooperation*

Among the 12 selected articles, the four articles from *China Daily* bear a generally positive position on China's economic engagements in Africa. '*Mutual benefit*' and '*cooperation*' are highlighted several times (Anonymous, 2013a). These articles emphasize that China and Africa are achieving a common development for the interests of people from both sides (W. He, 2013). One article quotes Chinese president Xi Jinping's commitment during his African tour as saying '*China will always be an all-weather friend of Africa*' as well as his appeals for both China and Africa '*to stick to the path of mutually beneficial cooperation and common development*' (Anonymous, 2013a). These media discourses have reflected China's current policy on Africa which is based on equality and mutual benefit (Wen, 2004) and seeking '*bilateral cooperation*' and '*co-development*' (Anshan, 2008, p. 27). Moreover, Xi Jinping is also cited as saying '*China supports African states in following the development paths which they have chosen on their own and which suit their respective domestic conditions*' (Anonymous, 2013a). This discourse is a testimony to China's foreign policy in adherence to the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence', in which non-interference to each nation's internal affairs is emphasized (Six, 2009). It has also echoed the theme that China and Africa have shared perspectives to seek win-win cooperation rather than merely depending on the paternalistic development paradigm manipulated by western powers (Wenran, 2008). Another article has rebutted the western media's description of China's cooperation with Africa as a form of neo-colonialism and defended China's by stating that '*high-risk, low-profit investments have addressed the needs of Africans*' (Anonymous, 2013c). The discourse indicates that Chinese media coverage is normally based on its "anti-colonial and anti-imperial history in Africa" and the rejection of "ideological commitment of western countries in Africa" (Banda, 2009, p. 350). Meanwhile, the texts stress that China's willingness to offer '*technological know-how*' to Africa is more than just its '*appetite for resources*' (Anonymous, 2013c). There is also quotation from China's vice foreign minister Zhai Jun as saying '*making quick money and leaving is a myopic action*' (Anonymous, 2013c).

All these discourses have expressed that China's economic activities in Africa are likely to bring about win-win cooperation in accordance to China's foreign policy based on equality and mutual benefit (Mawdsley, 2008). *China Daily*, as China's CCP regime's mouthpiece newspaper, plays its role as a 'lapdog' in disseminating government policies (Wang & Wang,

2014, p. 217). As media in authoritarian regimes, such as China “must further the interests of government and advance the political objectives of the central authority” (Siebert et al., 1956, p. 35), Chinese media have the power to disseminate CCP’s ideology to the public and to coerce the public to adhere to government policy (Yan, 2000). The representation in the *China Daily* articles tends to focus on the contribution that China’s growth of business and investment projects has brought to Africa while ignoring the potential risks and challenges for African development raised in western media texts. Chinese media discourse, a stronghold for instilling CCP ideology, “transmits and produces power” (Foucault, 1979, p. 101). This power produces a new discourse (Hall, 1997), for example, China’s development paradigm based on mutual benefit and win-win cooperation. A *China Daily* article cites a Chinese expert on Africa, Dr. He Wenping, as stressing ‘*an alternative to the Western model of development*’ (W. He, 2013) to imply that China’s equality-based paradigm is superior to the western paternalistic paradigm. It justifies media power, as a soft power, for having the capacity to convince other countries to follow the same development patterns (Thompson, 2005). However, I would argue against the objectivity of Chinese media texts in representing China’s growing engagements in Africa. Succumbed to power from an authoritarian regime, Chinese media normally avoid covering negative news, claiming that it might ‘*do harm to social stability and undermine the image of China*’ (J. Zhao, 2003, p. 193). Some problems related to Chinese business engagements which did exist and prevail in Africa have been concealed by media power. Therefore, the objectivity of Chinese media representation proves to be uncertain in this regard.

Similar to *China Daily* articles, both of Tanzania’s *Daily News* texts also reflect the theme of win-win cooperation. One article hails Xi Jinping’s African tour as ‘*historic*’ and ‘*fruitful*’ (Anonymous, 2013b). They both highlight China-Tanzanian friendship nurtured by Chinese former premier Zhou Enlai and the founding father of Tanzania Julius Nyerere as being long-standing and sincere. One text quotes a Tanzanian shopping centre manager who conveys his strong aspiration to expand businesses with China. Tanzanian president Jakaya Kikwete also dismissed the ‘*unfounded and misleading perception*’ that foreign investment from China comes back to ‘*rule Africa in the form of neo-colonialism*’ (Anonymous, 2013b). The article also praised China’s African policy based on ‘sincerity’, ‘real results’, ‘affinity’ and ‘good faith’. The other *Daily News* article has portrayed a positive image of China in Africa. It hailed the special historic links between China and Tanzania from ‘*the days of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa*’ (Wa, 2013), during which Chinese-aided Tanzania-Zambia railway contributed to releasing the economy of the two nations from reliance on apartheid South Africa. An article cites Tanzanian president Jakaya Kikwete and South African president Jacob Zuma who ‘*described Xi Jinping’s visit as absolutely important*’ (Anonymous, 2013b).

Putting the pro-China media representation into historic and political contexts, Tanzania and China used to share communist ideology when Tanzania was at the helm of president Julius Nyerere (Bailey, 1973). The two nations stood together in the struggle against western imperialism and white minority ethnocentrism. Meanwhile, some scholars argue that Nyerere's 'African socialism' philosophy was influenced by socialist China in the Cold War period (Pratt, 1999, p. 147). Even though Tanzania discarded the socialist system and capitalized its economy upon retirement of Nyerere, the traditional friendship fostered by Zhou Enlai and Nyerere remains influential and nurtured by their successors. Accordingly, Tanzanian media texts are inclined to represent positive images of China due to the ideological similarities to China. The media discourse has generated power against the western critique of China's scramble for African natural resources, labelled as neo-colonialism. The metaphor in the article describing that China gives Africa '*fishing nets to go and fish in the sea*' rather than '*free fish already cooked on the table*' (Wa, 2013) has echoed the theme of win-win cooperation by comparing it to the western paternalistic development paradigm.

Generally speaking, Tanzanian media texts have attacked western postcolonialism discourse which claims that the dominance of western modernity still remains. In this sense, I would critique Uka Uche (1991) against his argument that the western ideological stereotype has deeply influenced African media representation. This argument did not take historic and ideological contexts into consideration. With a shared ideology, nations like Tanzania are prone to represent China's business engagements in Africa in a similar way as how Chinese media has done. Nations across Africa differ from each other in terms of political and ideological systems, so the conditions for specific nations should be taken into consideration rather than regarding Africa as a whole.

#### *Zero-sum game*

By comparison, British newspaper articles have generally taken a critical stance on China's economic engagements in Africa. Both *The Times* and *Financial Times* regard the expansion of Chinese business and investment projects as threats and hindrance to British interests in Africa. In the British media discourse, China is labelled as 'competitor' rather than 'co-operator', which presents China's economic involvement in Africa as nothing but a zero-sum game for both Africa and the West. One article from *The Times* uses '*flood*' (Wighton, 2013) to depict the increasing number of Chinese investments in Africa, which implies that Chinese projects would bring tragic results to the continent instead of benefits. The article takes negative positions by criticizing that China is '*distorting African economies and stunting*

*long-term development*' (Wighton, 2013). It represents China as exploiting Africa and claims that this action makes no difference from what the British colonial power did before. A string of words in one paragraph, listed as *'hungry for natural resources'*, *'grabbing African minerals'*, *'flooding African market'* and *'hampering the development'* (Wighton, 2013) could be deemed as the reflection of postcolonialism and orientalism discourses. The West regards itself as being superior to the Orient (E. Said, 1985), for example in terms of political system and economic development. China's economic engagements are often considered as threats and challenges to the western interests in Africa (Brautigam, 2009; Breslin, 2007). Therefore, it is clearly seen that representation from *The Times* has negated the advantages that Chinese business involvement would bring to Africa. Western nations retain the stereotype that the West remains the 'subject' while the underdeveloped world is normally subordinate to the subject (Spivak, 1988) so that only the western model of development could boost the African economy and improve people's livelihoods. Chinese involvement could only bring chaos and disorder into the continent and, what is worse, undermine the interests of western powers in Africa.

Therefore, it is not surprising that an article from the *Financial Times* conveys its scepticism of Chinese enterprises in Africa and criticizes the *'poor record of compliance with local and environmental rules'* (Hook, 2013b). Both *The Times* and *Financial Times* cite Nigerian central bank governor Lamido Sanusi who has lashed China's *'neo-colonialist'* business activity of taking primary goods from Africa and selling manufactured products back to African market (Hook, 2013b; Lewis, 2013). *Financial Times* even quotes a Kenyan writer who has labelled China's relations with Africa as *'muscular'* and *'paternalism'* (Hook, 2013a). These two words imply the postcolonial stereotypes within the media discourse that the West still considers Africa to be under western influences. China could only serve as an outside player and Chinese economic involvement would definitely undermine western powers' traditional interests in Africa. The paternalistic media discourse has generated overarching power, through which western ideology and knowledge of orientalism are infiltrated into the public with the misleading perception of China's inferiority to the West so that China's economic expansion could only pose threats to the western traditional interests in Africa and China's business engagements could only be a zero-sum game to Africa rather than a win-win cooperation (Ferguson & New Museum of Contemporary, 1990; Said & W., 1978).

#### *Neither win-win cooperation nor zero-sum game*

Since the fall of the apartheid regime in South Africa two decades ago, there has been increased Black participation in the nation's mass media industry. However, white ideology

and viewpoints are still dominant in various media discourses (Olorunnisola, 2006). Influenced by western ideology which promotes eurocentrism and orientalism (Said & Edward, 1989), South African media texts have represented its worry over China's increase of business engagements in Africa. An article from the leading *Mail & Guardian* has described China-South African relations as '*skewed*' (Bauer, 2013) to convey its complaint about the trade imbalance between the two nations. The text cites South African president Jacob Zuma who has expressed the wish for his country to '*emulate*' China's success (Bauer, 2013). The other text uses the adjective '*insatiable*' to portray China's demand for strategic natural resources in the rainbow nation (Donnelly & Benjamin, 2013). The South African media discourse reflects that China is seen as an economic competitor rather than a co-operator. Instead, the articles repeat the imbalance in bilateral trade and convey scepticism over China's economic interests in South Africa as '*not strongly defined*' (Bauer, 2013; Donnelly & Benjamin, 2013). Moreover, South Africa has been described as being '*mollycoddled*' and '*cajoled*' (Donnelly & Benjamin, 2013) by China.

All these sarcastic and derogatory discourses imply South Africa's reluctance to heavily depend on China in achieving economic progress. In addition, a *Mail & Guardian* article associates China's engagements in South Africa with the ambition of gaining '*legitimacy on issues such as human rights and democracy*' but South Africa retaining '*political cache*' (Donnelly & Benjamin, 2013). The discourse implies criticism on China's human rights and democracy conditions and reflects the ideology that works to favour the West but to disadvantage China (Trevor Purvis and Alan, 1993). If the discourse is put into political economy and social contexts, it is not astonishing that South Africa, which was under white apartheid domination for almost a century, bears ideology quite close to that of Europeans even if the current political power is no longer in the hands of the whites. Highly influenced by "western societies and models" (Nyamnjoh, 2005, p. 43), South African media discourse unveils its postcolonialist stereotypes which hints that the West still contributes to the development of the South African economy while China's engagements have resulted in trade deficit and unpredictable economic losses (Donnelly & Benjamin, 2013).

This perception has been conceptualized and theorized through media discourse and the "dominant power" it has generated as if it were a "self-evident and inevitable" reality (Eagleton, 1991, p. 5). However, the representation in South Africa's *Mail and Guardian* shows a slight difference from *The Times* and *Financial Times*. Some positive representation of China's economic presence in Africa could be traced in some discourses. The titles of both articles, such as '*South Africa, China get cosy*' and '*China and SA cement relationship*' indicate an optimistic outlook on the bilateral ties. Vocabularies such as '*strengthen*', '*fortify*'

and 'further deepen' have conveyed South Africa's willingness to enhance relations with China motivated by China's market potential and lucrative economic interests that would bring benefits to Africa's largest economy. Consequently, articles from *Mail & Guardian* contain both positive and negative aspects of representation on China's growing business engagements. The general attitude of the representation is ambiguous as it neither defines the bilateral relations as win-win cooperation nor labels them as zero-sum game. I would argue that on the one hand, the white-dominated ideology advocating 'western hegemony' (Nohrstedt, 1986, p. 423) has exerted influences on South African media. On the other hand, I would critique that the influence of ideology on media discourse would succumb to economic interests. In this case, despite ideological differences between China and South Africa, positive aspects of representation still exist in South African media due to the huge economic benefits South Africa could achieve from Chinese business engagements.

*The Times vs. Financial Times: Debate on differences in representation*

Based on previous research, the selected two British newspapers *The Times* and *Financial Times* have commented critically on China's growing business and investment activities in Africa. Postcolonialism and orientalism discourses could be traced in both newspapers' texts. *The Times* article criticizes some Chinese companies for taking advantage of 'corruption' and 'low cost of finance' (Wighton, 2013) in a bid to win the bidding for lucrative projects in Africa. The British International Development Secretary is also quoted as belittling China as a nation with 'corporate governance standards lower than our own (British)' (Wighton, 2013). In the *Financial Times*, China is criticized for its 'poor record of compliance with local labour and environmental rules' (Hook, 2013b). All these discourses portray an illustration of postcolonial stereotypes, characterized by western development styles and management patterns which bear superior and predominant authority over those from the developing world (R. Shome & R. S. Hegde, 2002). These discourses also reflect that the ideology of Orientalism is embedded in those media texts. The notion that China is a nation closely associated with corruption, poor environment conditions and lower corporate governance standards than western nations has been used to make the argument that China is inferior to the West from a perspective of political transparency and economic development (E. Said, 1985), which could be regarded as an Orientalism stereotype since stereotyping minimizes differences and homogenizes China's authoritarian characteristics (Dyer & British Film, 1977). However, I would argue even if the British media representation accords with the concept of Orientalism, there is little bias and prejudice which misrepresent China's business engagements in Africa since the texts have only covered the reality rather than distorting China's image with ulterior intentions and motives (Cao, 2011).

Both newspapers quote Chinese officials who have made comments on China's economic expansion in Africa. However, striking differences have been observed in the representation between the two. *Financial Times* cites Wang Zhiping, board secretary of Sinohydro, a Chinese state-owned enterprise who has rebutted the western claims that Chinese businesses and investments in Africa are neo-colonialist activities. President Xi Jinping is also quoted as hitting back '*a rising tide of criticism*' (Hook, 2013b) on China's economic engagements. Despite some criticism of Chinese enterprises' controversial business projects, this media text seems to have defended China's contribution to African economic development and the improvement of livelihoods. Here I would argue against Hall's argument that no representation is neutral (Hall, 1997). Actually, the discourse from the quotation is a kind of rebuttal of postcolonialist discourse, highlighting the cooperation potential between China and Africa in the investment in infrastructure construction. Therefore, *Financial Times* has represented China in a comparatively neutral way. However, subjectivity could not be guaranteed since it was the Chinese entrepreneur rather than non-Chinese ones who was quoted to defend China's business activities.

By contrast, *The Times* article cites Chinese vice-foreign minister Zhai Jun who warns Chinese businesses not to '*exploit Africa*' and reminds Chinese enterprises not to '*drain the pond*' for economic benefits (Lewis, 2013). The entire article presents the Chinese vice-foreign minister's advice on China's growing business engagements in Africa. He criticizes China-African '*one-hammer deals*' and '*one-off transactions*' as being '*short-sighted*' (Lewis, 2013). Unlike other western media texts which directly criticize China's economic expansion in Africa due to ideological stereotypes, this text cites a Chinese senior diplomat in criticizing some misbehaviour and myopic business plans conducted by Chinese enterprises and advising them on how to achieve mutual benefits with Africa. This critical representation proves to be more convincing than others which directly cite western officials' criticism. Compared to the *Financial Times*, the article from *The Times* bears a more objective representation since it was the Chinese official who criticized his own country. Generally speaking, the overall position of *The Times* article portrays a more negative but more objective image of China than *Financial Times*.

*Tanzania vs. South Africa: Chinese propaganda discourse outweighs postcolonialist discourse?*

Based on my analysis and observation, all the four articles from *China Daily* present a promising outlook on Xi Jinping's African trip and take positive positions on China's

business engagements in Africa. They also harshly criticize western representations in which China is labelled as neo-colonialist. As CCP's 'ideological front' and 'political propaganda machine' (Hu, 2007, p. 336; Reilly, 2011), *China Daily* has reinforced its emphasis on representing China's African policy based on mutual benefits and win-win cooperation. The propaganda discourse has transmitted and generated media power (Foucault, 1979) by which all critical representation is censored. On the basis of China-Tanzanian traditional friendship since the 1960s, similar socialist ideology is shared between the two nations (Pratt, 1999). The common ideology has rendered China's foreign policy of 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence' and Xi Jinping's notion of the China-Africa 'community of shared destinies' (Wa, 2013) to be well endorsed by Tanzania. Accordingly, discourse from *Daily News* hails Xi Jinping's visit to Africa bringing mutual benefits and promoting common development between the two developing economies. Chinese propaganda discourse has produced power by which difference in representation is induced (Hall & Open, 1997). Furthermore, Chinese media texts have placed China's win-win cooperation policy on Africa a top priority in representation.

The similar political context under which China and Tanzania shared the destiny of being colonized by western powers has led to a similar ideology in representing China's economic engagements in Africa. Tanzania's *Daily News* has endorsed China's development paradigm based on equality and mutual benefits and stood together with China in the rebuttal of the paternalistic and overarching model from the West. By comparison, the representation from South Africa's *Mail & Guardian* focuses more on China's scramble for Africa's natural resources and the China-South African trade imbalance resulting from the growing inflow of Chinese cheap commodities. Although the titles of both articles carry positive messages of enhancing bilateral ties, critical discourses could be traced which warn other African nations to keep alert on the expansion of Chinese business in Africa. The article advises other African nations to form up '*clearly defined commercial diplomacy strategies for dealing with China*' (Donnelly & Benjamin, 2013). This discourse implies that China's foreign policy which promotes mutual benefits and win-win cooperation is not completely endorsed by South Africa since the nation, under the rule of apartheid regime for decades (Olorunnisola, 2006), shares an ideology more similar to that in western nations. All in all, there is no critical discourse against China throughout *Daily News* but in *Mail & Guardian*, Nigeria's central bank governor labels China's economic presence as neo-colonialist (as was cited by *The Times*). Consequently, by placing the representation patterns into political and historic contexts, postcolonialist discourse, characterized by the knowledge of developing China being regarded as 'subalterns' (Green, 2002) by the West and here also by South Africa with shared western ideology exerts more influence than Chinese propaganda discourse on South African

media representation. On the contrary, the Chinese propaganda discourse would have more impact on Tanzanian media representation rather than South African, because of the ideological similarities shared by China and Tanzania, which were formulated during the socialism period decades ago (Pratt, 1999).

## CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to study the power relations and ideological differences embedded in media discourses by comparing the representation from Chinese, British and African newspapers about China's expansion of business and investment engagements in Africa on occasion of Xi Jinping's first visit to Africa as Chinese new president in 2013. Despite some limitations due to the researcher's ideological subjectivity and the limited number of newspaper articles, the research findings, which portray the nuances in the representation of media from different ideological contexts, are still applicable to further studies.

Through an effective use of discourse analysis, composed of textual and contextual dimensions (Lupton, 1992), three distinctive themes around Chinese growing economic ambition in Africa were distilled across twelve newspaper articles from *China Daily*, *The Times*, *Financial Times*, *Daily News* and *Mail & Guardian*: win-win cooperation, a zero-sum game and neither of the two. The observation shows that *China Daily* has portrayed a promising outlook on Xi Jinping's visit and viewed China's economic engagements with Africa as an equality-based model of win-win cooperation, which would bring mutual benefits to both sides. The power generated from the propaganda discourse (Foucault & Sheridan, 1972; Hu, 2007) under Chinese authoritarian media has forced the information recipients to accept completely positive prospects of China's African policy regardless of the distorted and subjective representation shaped by CCP ideologies. It is noteworthy that the shared socialist ideology between China and Tanzania (Pratt, 1999) as well as the bilateral economic interests have rendered *Daily News* resemble *China Daily* in representing the optimism about China's economic potential in Africa. Therefore, I would argue against Uka Uche's (1991) argument that western ideological stereotypes seem to have deeply influenced African media representation. The claim is subjective and vague since African nations differ from each other so that specific African nations should be taken into consideration rather than the entire continent.

By comparison, the research found that both *The Times* and *Financial Times* took a generally critical stance on China's business engagements in Africa although there are nuances between the two. Postcolonialism and orientalism discourses, featuring western dominance on the development paradigm (R. Shome & R. S. Hegde, 2002) and western superiority over the developing world (Said & W., 1978) have produced power leading British newspapers to label China as an economic competitor which poses threats to western traditional interests in Africa and Chinese economic involvement as a zero-sum game. However, the nuances indicate that *The Times* cited a Chinese senior diplomat who criticized China's bad performance and misbehaviour in Africa while the *Financial Times* quoted a Chinese entrepreneur who defended China's contribution to African economic development. Accordingly, the *Financial Times* representation proved to be more neutral and objective than *The Times*. This conclusion critiques Hall's (1997) argument that no representation is neutral. Last but not least, the theme of South Africa's *Mail & Guardian* is neither win-win cooperation nor a zero-sum game. On the one hand, the post-apartheid media discourse is formed by the influence of Eurocentric ideology (Said & Edward, 1989), the legacy left from the former apartheid regime. This discourse still regards China's increasing business and investment in South Africa as the leading factor of trade imbalance. On the other hand, willingness to cooperate with China was represented given the condition that economic benefits could be gained through cooperation instead of competition. Lastly, the research also unveiled that Tanzanian media are inclined to follow the Chinese propaganda discourse in representing China's rising economic power in Africa amid ideological similarities while South African media tend to be more influenced by western postcolonialism and orientalism ideology which highlight western dominance over the developing world (Spivak, 1988).

This research has filled the gaps related to the comparative analysis on the representation of China's expanding business activities in Africa of media from different ideological contexts. However, subject to the word limit and the researcher's ideological stereotype, the research could only explore the representation from perspectives focussing on ideology and power relations. I would suggest that future research be conducted with an interdisciplinary approach to further analyze the reasons for the differences in representation from sociological, ethnographic, anthropological and historical perspectives to guarantee more comprehensive and authoritative results.

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