Putting China's presence into perspective: media representations in Ghana and Nigeria

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Summary

This MA thesis focuses on media representations of China in Sub-Saharan Africa through a comparative case study of Ghana and Nigeria. Merely seeing China's presence within the continent as an abstract geopolitical phenomenon does not do justice to the complexity and context dependency on the ground. This leads to an underrepresentation of those on the receiving end: the African perspective. The aim of this study has been to contribute to that gap by researching African media representations of China. By studying 120 newspaper articles in six national private newspapers in Ghana and Nigeria from 2012 onwards, it has answered the call within the Africa-China media and communications scholarship to capture the particularities of Africa-China relations in certain contexts and to focus on the African perspective. This has led to the following research question: *How is China represented in Ghanaian and Nigerian media, and what are the similarities and differences between the two?* The study has used Critical Discourse Analysis in order to capture discursive representations of China, which has resulted in a large set of discursive utterances categorised into multiple categories. In addition, in order to interpret the quantities of representations on a more general level, Qualitative Content Analysis has been used.

Results do not necessarily point in one direction. Overly positive and negative representations of China appear simultaneously. A majority of those representations have been framed in a dichotomous way as either positive or negative, underlining polarisation within media representations. However, that does not mean that representations are not ambiguous and contradictory at times. In other words, representations of China in Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers are discursively varied. But maybe more importantly, discursive representations of China should be understood in their societal contexts. With regards to the similarities, both Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers tend to portray China overall rather positively. Representations of China also turn out to be polarised in both contexts. Moreover, political representations of China tend to be positively framed more often in both countries, while business/economical representations are more often framed negatively. The case studies differ in that Ghanaian newspapers portray China in a positive light more often than Nigerian newspapers. Therefore, representations of China in Ghanaian newspapers are also political in nature more often, and vice versa business/economic in nature more often in Nigerian newspapers. Such dynamics have also been identified in individual newspapers. The latter is in line with Agenda Setting Theory, which assumes newspapers to have agency in setting their own agenda. Better understanding all of these dynamics is crucial, because these representations are what eventually might shape people's perceptions of China.

African perceptions of China throughout the years were captured as ambiguous, diverging and ever-changing, which turned out to be an important precursor for the diverging and sometimes contradictory nature of media representations of China. And while those media representations were primarily captured as dichotomous, the tendency of the media to capture the more extreme and the interests certain authors have in portraying China overly positive or negative explain these polarised results to some extent.

Recommendations for further research include more extensively exploring *why* certain results have appeared and broadening the horizon by looking beyond the dynamics within national private newspapers in Ghana and Nigeria. Regarding the first recommendation, one might benefit from further exploring why Ghana represents China more positively, why representations are overall relatively positive, why political representations are more often positively framed and business/economical representations more often negatively, or why certain newspapers represent China differently. Regarding the second recommendation, one could broaden the horizon through researching the same dynamics in another context, through changing the focus towards state-owned or regional/local newspapers, or by focusing on non-traditional forms of media. And in order to move away from representations and towards perceptions, one might also consider looking beyond mechanisms within the media.

Acknowledgements

The previous semester could be characterised as rather interesting, to say the least. At times, I have experienced this process as burdensome and simply confusing – I have been lost numerous times – while also as gratifying and meaningful at other times. But most of all, I have felt privileged to be able to study dynamics that genuinely interest me, within a field of study that truly fascinates me. On another note, such an endeavour has again confirmed to me the pointlessness of getting too caught up in worrying about what might go wrong. Although easier said than done, I feel like I am increasingly getting better at this. Who knows, maybe one day I might be able to live up to the ideals of the Stoic philosophers.

Let me use this space to thank some of the people that have had an impact on my work in the previous semester. Firstly, I would like to thank my girlfriend for never shying away from thinking along and providing me with mental support throughout the process. Secondly, I would like to thank my supervisor Haley Swedlund for her constructive, critical and encouraging feedback in different stages of the thesis. Thirdly, I would like to thank my colleagues at the internship organisation for introducing me to what working at a think-tank looks like, and for inspiring me through occasionally taking my attention away from the writing process.

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1. Introduction

Two decades into the 21st century, most people are aware of China's growing geopolitical power. Many people are also interested in how this increasing power is projected on the African continent. China's trade within Africa has increased to an astonishing amount of $185 billion in 2018, while only being about $10 billion at the dawn of the 21st century (Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny & Selormey, 2020). Unsurprisingly, China's global ambitions have brought an increase in research focusing on the why, what and how of China's investments in Africa (Ado & Su, 2016). However, in most research, the focus has predominantly been on China. While very important in its own respect, this has led to an underrepresentation of those on the receiving end: the African perspective. The next paragraphs will further illustrate these dynamics and how this study aims to contribute to this knowledge gap.

1.1 <u>Societal relevance</u>

Merely seeing China's presence within the continent as an abstract geopolitical phenomenon is insufficient, resulting in inadequate context sensitive and therefore ineffective policies for Africans. In line with the basic ideas behind constructivism, the omnipresent realist discussion around hegemonic contestation and whether China's role is beneficial or not for African states does not do justice to the complexity and context dependency on the ground. Therefore, discussing Sino-African relations solely on an abstract political level does not help the people that are affected by it. The African perspective is clearly underrepresented in this discussion and little recognition is given to African agency. And while that does not mean that current debates are irrelevant, they do not give us the full picture. Benabdallah (2020) has underlined the need to look beyond these more measurable material factors and to focus instead on the investments that are made in people-to-people relations. Africans cannot be simply seen as passive recipients and interactions are often more locally mediated as is generally realised (Mohan & Lampert, 2013). Acknowledging this is crucial considering the growing footprint China has in the continent, bringing an increasingly complicated and ambiguous image of perceptions towards China (Chang & Ren, 2016).

This pattern of a lack of consideration for the complexity and context dependency of perceptions, as well as the significant role recipients may play in this, can be clearly seen in the Africa-China media and communications scholarship. More often than not, representations of China are dichotomous – either being portrayed as positive or as negative – thereby only presenting a partial picture (Wekesa, 2017). A lack of a more nuanced

understanding of perceptions towards China results in misunderstanding people's diverse needs in different contexts. Africans are still too often perceived as only acted upon (Soulé, 2020) and pure recipients instead of legitimate historical agents (Brown, 2012). This is vividly underlined by the upsetting assumption within media and communication studies that African audiences are reliant on foreign media, not comprehending the fact that domestic African media is actually consumed more (Wekesa, 2017). This lack of understanding is precisely why this research is societally relevant.

This research will explore representations of China through media, by focusing on newspapers in Ghana and Nigeria. But what makes these two countries relevant to use as a comparative case study for studying similarities and differences in media representations of China?

Nigeria and Ghana share some important similarities, but also differ in some pivotal aspects. First of all, the amount of infrastructure loans from China is relatively similar in both contexts: $7,3bn for Nigeria and $5,3bn for Ghana (Boston University Global Development Policy Centre, n.d.). Second, the countries are both West African nations, bringing them somewhat closer together institutionally (e.g. ECOWAS) as well as partly culturally (e.g. sharing the legacy of the Atlantic slave trade). Third, and related to their cultural similarities, they share a relatively similar colonial experience leaving an anglophone colonial legacy in both countries (Ado, 2020). Among other things, this results in them sharing English as an official language (CIA, 2021). Fourth, and in relation to the focus on the media here, both countries are known for a relatively high degree of press freedom (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009; Ahmad, Pride, & Corsy, 2016).

One crucial difference, however, is their diverging history of diplomatic ties with China. Ghana has had a long history of diplomatic and economic engagements with China, initially through a socialist ideological engagement to Nkrumah — the country's first president — and eventually evolving into more neoliberal economic engagements (Aidoo, 2016). According to Flint & Waddoups (2021), the relationship with Nkrumah was initially maintained in order to ensure Ghana as an early ally in China's policies against Taiwan. Particularly after the Cold War, China's presence has however shifted to a more economic one (Flint & Waddoups, 2021). Nigeria established diplomatic relations with China in 1971, only really growing closer when the United States and its Western allies isolated Nigeria's Sani Abacha Government in 1995 (Udeala, 2010).

A second interesting aspect in which they differ significantly is their demographics: Ghana currently has a population of roughly 32,4 million people, while Nigeria currently has one of 219,5 million people (CIA, 2021). While economists such as Sharma (2016) tend to point to the advantages of a large population – such as bringing leverage diplomatically – one could similarly argue such a large population to bring issues of dependency. Third, a difference related to the freedom of its people is that – despite both Nigeria and Ghana being known for a relatively free press – Nigeria scores significantly lower on the Freedom House's 'Global Freedom index'. The calculation consisting of political rights and civil liberties shows that Ghana scores 80 out of 100, while Nigeria only scores 43 out of 100 (Freedom House, 2022). The latter may be expressed through a generally less inclusive media landscape. It is important to acknowledge these dynamics in exploring media representations of China.

1.2 <u>Scientific relevance</u>

Research on China's presence in Africa has often focused on judging Chinese policies towards Africa (Maswana, 2009; Shinn, 2009; Pratt & Adamolekun, 2008; Chemingui & Bchir, 2010; Elu & Price, 2010; Sanfilippo, 2010; McKinnon, 2010; Sperbee, 2009; Taylor, 2006). China itself deliberately frames diplomatic relations with Africa as ''win-win'' (Krukowska, 2016), using the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) as one of the major diplomatic frameworks to allegedly ''advance dialogue, problem solving and mutual benefit'' (Shelton & Paruk, 2008, p. 2). Obviously, the question is whether this is really mutual.

Somewhat surprisingly, however, not many debates have focused extensively on African perceptions. Benabdallah (2020) points to this knowledge gap within the scientific debate by stating: ''A question that China-Africa scholarship has not explored is … the consequences of China's investments – not in natural resources – but in human resources in Africa on Africans' perceptions of China and China's image'' (p. 40). A comprehensive understanding of cultural, social and historical dimensions within certain contexts towards China is desperately needed (Ado & Su, 2016), and the focus of this research will therefore be precisely on that missing part in the literature: African perceptions of China. In light of all of this, a suitable and emerging scientific debate this research will embed itself in is the Africa-China media and communications scholarship, by specifically focusing on discourses and representations of China in African media (Oduro-Frimpong, 2021; Harrison, Yang, & Moyo, 2017; Wekesa, 2013; Wekesa, 2017; Jedlowski & Rôschenthaler, 2017; Diakon & Röschenthaler, 2017).

Within this scientific debate there has been a limited number of scholars writing on African media coverage of China, while most have focused on Chinese media in Africa (Wekesa, 2017). Since Africans should be seen as legitimate historical agents (Brown, 2012), the research objective is to follow up on that debate by focusing on African media coverage of China in Ghana and Nigeria, in order to effectively capture representations of China. Because in contemporary debates there is simply ''little understanding of the complexities of African media portrayals of China'' (Wekesa, 2017, p. 20). Representations are still too often only understood in binary ways (Jedlowski & Röschenthaler, 2017), which does not do justice to the complexities involved in these portrayals of China within African media.

1.3 Research questions

All of this leads to the following research question:

How is China represented in Ghanaian and Nigerian media, and what are the similarities and differences between the two?

Three sub-questions have been developed in order to answer the main research question and to realise the research aim of capturing media representations of China in Ghana and Nigeria. The first sub-question will illustrate the context in which contemporary media manoeuvre, by focusing on general African perceptions towards China as well as those particularly in Ghana and Nigeria throughout the years. Building on those findings, the second and third sub-question subsequently concentrate on discursive representations of China in Ghanaian and Nigerian media.

1. How have African perceptions of China developed throughout the years, and how so in particular in Ghana and Nigeria?
2. How is China discursively represented in Ghanaian private newspapers?
3. How is China discursively represented in Nigerian private newspapers?

1.4 Theoretical framework

1.4.1 Postcolonial theory
It is important to briefly reflect on the theoretical underpinnings of this research, since these determine the assumptions and choices made, our 'way of knowing' in other words (Aitken & Valentine, 2006). Basic ontological and epistemological assumptions within this research are

based on postcolonial theory. Postcolonialism ''offers new ways of knowing and thinking about the complex and fluid events that have shaped relations around them by stressing the varying contexts of power, identity, and value across time and space'' (Dunne, Kurki, & Smith, 2013, p. 247). A suitable way to examine these contexts of power, identity and value is through media representations. Ghanaian and Nigerian portrayals of China reveal the perspective of those living through it, thereby offering new ways of knowing. Moreover, it is in the context of colonialism that China's presence is being debated, further underlining the suitability of postcolonial theory. The country might not be a former colonial power and is often welcomed by African nations precisely because of that reason. China follows a 'five-no' approach, including for example 'no attachment of political strings to assistance to Africa' (Frankopan, 2018). But that is precisely the point. China's presence is always presented and perceived in the context of colonialism, either being hailed for providing an alternative or being accused of neocolonial tendencies (Ado & Su, 2016). Therefore, postcolonial thought is pivotal in judgements around China's presence within the African continent.

Up until now, this thesis has talked about 'representations' when discussing the portrayal of phenomena. Avraham & First (2010) pose, however, that representations are inseparable from framing: ''framing is the outcome of modes of representation, and vice versa. Both theories are fundamental parts of a process whereby meaning is produced and exchanged'' (p. 482). In succession, other authors such as Scheufele & Tewksbury (2007) have understood Framing Theory as inseparable from Agenda Setting Theory. Therefore, both theories will be discussed next. They have served as the backbone of this study's conceptual framework and empirical research, as the following paragraphs will illustrate. Overall, they brought a critical attitude towards the results in this study, by taking into consideration the dynamics of framing and agenda setting. Therefore, results have not been taken at face value and have been critically further analysed in chapter 6.

1.4.2 Framing Theory

On a macrolevel, ''framing refers to modes of presentation that journalists and other communicators use to present information in a way that resonates with … their audience'' (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 12). On the receiving end, Goffman (1974) has written extensively on the effects of framing on an individual level, discussing how certain frames allow individuals to make sense of the world. In the context of this research, however, Framing Theory is treated on the macrolevel, focusing more on the processes behind the construction of a frame (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). As a consequence of practices of framing, the media presents phenomena in a certain way, thereby performing two acts: it

gives particular attention to one thing and automatically excludes coverage of other issues (Msughter & Phillips, 2020).

One important critique comes from Benford (1997), believing Framing Theory to be too ambiguous. Hence, Benford (1997) suggests scholars to attempt to operationalise some concepts based on the debates within framing literature. Nonetheless, despite the supposedly ambiguities within Framing Theory, the theory remains crucial in this research. How Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers represent China has everything to do with practices of framing. Whether it is positive or negative, people unavoidably use certain frames in conveying their message.

Moreover, some form of operationalisation came from Entman (1993) in fact, who identified frames to perform the following four acts: define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements, and suggest remedies. It is therefore evident that practices of framing are crucial in shaping the content of newspaper articles. Framing Theory has been considered in the conceptual framework through the media equivalent of this theory: media framing. It thereby ''directs our attention to the details of just how a communicated text exerts its power'' (Entman, 1993, p. 55). The ideas behind Framing Theory will be particularly applied in analysing the overall frames of the selected newspaper articles, by identifying whether they are primarily framed as positive, neutral or negative. But also more generally, this study has been informed by the dynamics of framing. Essentially, representations of China are captured through certain frames of China. And while all aspects of framing as posed by Entman (1993) are relevant in their own respect, this study will particularly pay attention to the act of 'making moral judgements'. Because in the context of China's presence within the African continent, it is mostly the morality of China that is being judged.

1.4.3 Agenda Setting Theory

The foundations of Agenda Setting Theory were laid by McCombs & Shaw (1972), demonstrating the significant role the media plays in shaping political reality through the ability to determine what it shows and what it does not. In other words, the media sets the 'agenda'. As Cohen (1963) has famously stated: ''The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about'' (p. 13). And while this certainly does not implicate the media brainwashing people by determining their opinion, it at least does dictate *what* people think about through the salience of certain topics above others (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). It thereby determines people's perceptions towards certain issues (Nwanmereni, 2021). Furthermore, it does more than just influencing people's perceptions towards phenomena. It determines the public

agenda – as a result of the salience of certain topics above others – and can subsequently shape the policy agenda of the state as well (Awofadeju, Adeyemo, Kwembili, & Adesanya, 2015).

Over the years, Agenda Setting Theory has developed into a comprehensive theory encompassing seven different facets (McCombs, Shaw, & Weaver, 2014). While one could definitely find something to criticise within one of these facets, the broadness of the theory shows the maturity it has reached. It is especially relevant in the context of this research because it effectively sheds light on media outlets, providing a theoretical framework to researching how certain representations in Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers might be influenced by certain agendas. Two of these seven facets have been particularly relevant in this study: Basic agenda setting and Attribute agenda setting. The former refers to the overall salience of certain *objects* above others (McCombs et al., 2014), such as discussing China in the context of diplomatic ties. The latter explicitly focuses on the salience of certain *attributes* of those *objects* (McCombs et al., 2014), by for example focusing on the gains certain diplomatic deals bring.

Basic agenda setting has been applied throughout this study by identifying the salience of political, economical or cultural representations of China, as the next chapters will illustrate. By capturing in what way certain newspapers represent China, their interests might be discovered. Attribute agenda setting has been applied through doing what will be done continuously during the study: capturing specific representations of China. Such a conceptualisation has provided this study with a framework to critically analyse differences in representations between particular newspapers, as will be discussed in paragraph 5.4 and 5.5. More generally, Agenda Setting Theory brought the acknowledgement that it matters from which perspective the media writes. And as the conceptual framework will illustrate in figure 1, dynamics of agenda setting are also assumed to particularly shape media representations.

1.4.4 Similarities between theories

Important connections can be found between Framing Theory and Agenda Setting Theory. Framing Theory is occasionally also described as 'second-level Agenda Setting' (Msughter & Phillips, 2020). Other authors have understood framing as ''a more refined version of agenda setting'' (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 15). Dimitrova & Strömbäck (2005) have stated how both theories accentuate one thing above the other, as earlier discussed above. However, this study has still chosen to treat them as separate entities, since a large part of the academic debate also questions the idea that agenda setting and framing are based on

similar theoretical foundations (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). It is at least clear that the two theories are closely related. Through practices of framing, one also unavoidably sets their own agenda, and vice versa. Thus, they go hand in hand.

All things considered, the analysis part in this research has been informed by Framing Theory and Agenda Setting Theory. But particularly so in regards to the analysis on the more generic level of message construction itself, instead of concerning the consequences of certain representations (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Because representations are shaped by certain frames and agendas, subsequently shaping realities for everyday people.

1.5 Conceptual framework

On the basis of these theories we can start to develop a conceptual framework. As discussed above, it is assumed that certain frames and agendas for a large part shape media representations. They do so through the pivotal variable of *media framing*, the media equivalent of those theories. Media framing can be defined as: ''a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue'' (Gamson & Modigliani, 1994, p. 376). These practices of media framing might be both intentional and unintentional from the perspective of the sender (Gamson, 1989). According to Saleem (2007), contemporary literature on media framing indicates the significance framing plays in shaping representations and perceptions on certain issues by providing moral judgement and causal interpretation, thereby determining the 'tone' of the media.

As figure 1 illustrates, it is assumed that a media frame is made up out of characteristics such as ideology, attitudes, professional norms, organisational pressures and external influences (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Scheufele, 1999). While this list is definitely not exhaustive, it provides us with a good indication of what factors play a role in the process of frame building (see figure 1). Positions taken in the media often represent a certain ideology and attitude, therefore playing an important part in shaping representations towards certain issues (Saleem, 2007). Subsequently, in line with Scheufele (1999), this study assumes media frames to shape media representations through processes of frame setting. This process is based on the same rationale as described in Agenda Setting Theory: the salience of certain things above others (Scheufele, 1999). Thus, processes that shape media representations are entangled with dynamics of framing and agenda setting.
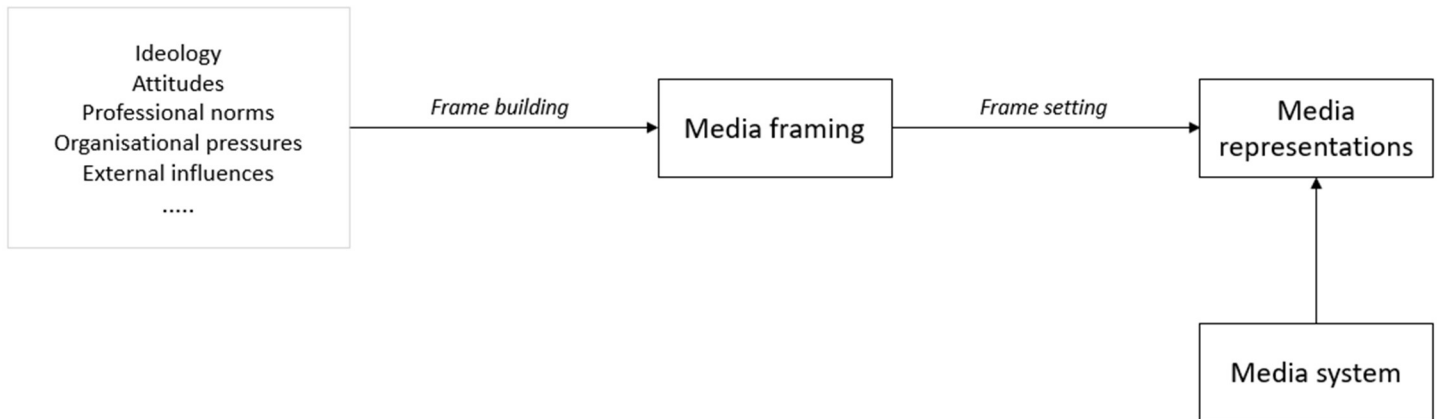
Figure 1: Conceptual framework, adapted from Scheufele (1999)

The remaining relevant concept in the conceptual framework is the *media system*, referring to the media institutions and practices in a specific context (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). It has been included in figure 1, because the media system apparent in a certain context for a notable part shapes the possibility for certain media representations. In other words, it provides us with the setting to put media frames in. While it therefore is very much related to media framing, it is only indirectly so. It is not unlikely that certain frames influence the media system in a certain situation – or the other way around – but this is not necessarily the case. Therefore, the media system is treated as a stand alone concept influencing media representations in itself.

1.6 Reading guide

The previous chapter has introduced the focus of this study, by discussing its scientific and societal relevance, the research questions, and the theoretical and conceptual framework. Chapter 2 has included the literature review in order to illustrate how this study has embedded itself into contemporary debates on Sino-African relations. Chapter 3 has provided the reader with a contextual chapter briefly discussing the histories of Ghana and Nigeria, also in relation to the media. In that same chapter, the study has aimed to answer the first sub-question regarding African perceptions throughout the years. The subsequent chapter has discussed the methodology. Chapter 5 has included the analysis and answered the remaining two sub-questions, while the chapter thereafter further discusses the implications and limitations of those results. That same chapter has also briefly reflected on recommendations for further research, and has ended with a conclusion.

2. Literature review

The following chapter will discuss contemporary debates on Sino-African relations. It will start off in paragraph 2.1 with a general overview of literature that has judged China's presence within the continent as beneficial, detrimental or something in between. The next paragraph will extensively go into the debate on media representations of China, which has been discussed largely in the framework of the Africa-China media and communications scholarship.

2.1 China's presence within Africa

China's presence within the continent can be seen as a fait accompli (Krukowska, 2016). Therefore, the discussion has long since surpassed the phenomenon itself and moved towards discussion around how China's presence is being played out on the continent. Most of the literature on Sino-African relations has focused primarily on three phenomena: natural resources, human rights and industrialisation (Ado & Su, 2016). Often, these phenomena are used to argue in favour or against China's presence in Africa. Throughout the years, many scholars have in one way or another argued in favour of Sino-African relations (Maswana, 2009; Shinn, 2009; Pratt & Adamolekun, 2008), while just as many have openly argued it to be a win-lose relationship (Chemingui & Bchir, 2010; Elu & Price, 2010; Sanfilippo, 2010; McKinnon, 2010; Sperbee, 2009; Taylor, 2006).

Unsurprisingly, not all arguments fit into this seemingly dichotomous classification between Sino-African relations being either good or bad. Many scholars have posed a much more nuanced picture of these dynamics. Kaplinsky & Morris (2009) have for example argued for the need of an integrated African response in order to benefit from the collaboration, Aguilar & Goldstein (2009) for it only being win-win for African political leaders and China, and Yin & Vaschetto (2011) for it to be mutually beneficial under the condition that Africa takes advantage of previous partnerships with Western powers.

2.2 Media representations

But in line with the goals of this study, the literature review has tried to look beyond the somewhat abstract discussion of labelling China's presence as inherently good or bad. That is why the remaining chapter will focus on literature regarding media representations of China. Overall, there seems to be a lack of extensive scientific debates on Africa-China media practices, and it generally does not adequately pay attention to the peculiarities of

China's engagement within specific countries (Oduro-Frimpong, 2021). Some studies have explored discourses around China's presence in Africa (Harrison, Yang, & Moyo, 2017), but we still lack a more in-depth understanding of these dynamics of framing and shaping certain representations in specific countries. This is especially relevant in a contemporary framework in which relationships, perceptions and representations are increasingly getting more complex and asymmetrical (Harrison et al., 2017). In line with what has been mentioned already, there is simply a lack of research on how non-African people, and other regions in the Global South in particular – such as China – are perceived in African public spheres (Jedlowski & Thomas, 2017). The following paragraphs will more extensively discuss those articles that have in fact tried to illustrate those dynamics, mostly under the banner of the Africa-China media and communications scholarship.

Wekesa (2013) is one of the seminal authors within the Africa-China media and communications scholarship, observing almost a decade ago that the scholarship was still in a very preliminary stage. Wekesa (2013) has identified several trends in regards to Sino-African media links, albeit with a focus on East Africa. What these trends show is the increasingly closer ties between China media and African media, expressed through growing support and use of East African media by Chinese media as well as competition with those East African media outlets (Wekesa, 2013). Due to the early stage this China-Africa media debate found itself in, Wekesa (2013) did not strive for an extensive analysis. Moreover, it is important to note that Wekesa (2013) seems to be more focused on Chinese media in Africa, thereby reinforcing the conventional emphasis on the great powers.

In an article four years down the road, Wekesa (2017) noted how the Africa-China media and communications scholarship had studied Africa-China dynamics from several perspectives, generally focusing on Chinese media in Africa. Wekesa (2017) is one of the first authors noting how this emphasis on Chinese media in Africa brings a knowledge gap within media coverage about China from the African perspective. And precisely due to this lack of understanding of African media representations of China, Wekesa (2017) suggests researchers to focus hereon, in order to further develop the Africa-China media and communications scholarship that is still void of theoretical and methodological depth. By expanding the research agenda to specific African case studies, we move beyond dichotomous representations of China and are able to explore the homogeneity and heterogeneity of these representations in different contexts (Wekesa, 2017).

In that same year, Jedlowski & Röschenthaler (2017) also wrote an article on China-Africa media interactions. Doing so in other words, Jedlowski & Röschenthaler (2017) similarly

indicate the need to move beyond binary representations, incorporating the ''many representations that capture more ambiguous positions, and point towards the contested or fluid nature of engagements and perceptions'' (p. 2). Jedlowski & Röschenthaler (2017) believe the tendency to discuss China-Africa relations on a macrolevel to be an important cause of these binaries, while more attention should be devoted to media produced on a more microlevel. This will allow the scholarship to explore the perceptions of specific actors in different African countries (Jedlowski & Röschenthaler, 2017). Moreover, the authors encourage the combination of traditional and non-traditional media within the analysis of China-Africa media interactions (Jedlowski & Röschenthaler, 2017). In the final paragraph, the authors discuss how a selection of articles have used a variety of mediums to do so. Most of these articles have been discussed in this literature review.

Jedlowski & Thomas (2017) are two of the scholars that have researched African perceptions of China in a non-traditional way, namely through Chinese characters in Ethiopian movies and by incorporating the concept of *otherness*. In line with other authors discussed above, Jedlowski & Thomas (2017) believe the African perspective to be underrepresented, and especially media representations of non-African and non-Western people. Their findings show multiple things. More often than not, Chinese characters in the two Ethiopian movies are used to discuss domestic social and political issues, instead of discussing Chinese people themselves (Jedlowski & Thomas, 2017). Nonetheless, Chinese people represented as the cultural and racial 'other' is not hard to find (Jedlowski & Thomas, 2017). Negative representations of China are omnipresent, which however does not mean that more positive representations are completely absent.

Diakon & Röschenthaler (2017) have written on China's complex and ambiguous connections to the Malian landscape, by analysing newspaper reports, radio broadcasts and conducting interviews with Malian journalists and business people. Their initial observation is that representations of China are diverse, but through their research Diakon & Röschenthaler (2017) actually observe a divergence between Malian journalists enjoying close ties with China and those less so. Chinese institutions are highly invested in the Malian landscape – often providing training and sometimes even a pay check – and those Malian journalists benefiting from this tend to represent China more positively (Diakon & Röschenthaler, 2017). On the other hand, Malian journalists not involved in these practices tend to critically assess China's presence, focusing on daily issues as experienced by Malian people (Diakon & Röschenthaler, 2017). What this article therefore illustrates is that we should not shy away from the complex dynamics creating certain media representations of China.

Harrison et al. (2017) have examined the historical development of visual representations of China in South Africa, and argue for the importance of those visual images in shaping Chinese representations. These representations are not always clear-cut, however. Visual imagery sometimes simplifies ambiguous realities, thereby reinforcing stereotypical representations, while at other times doing the exact opposite (Harrison et al., 2017). Through the latter, visual imagery is able to represent the complexities around China more thoughtfully than text (Harrison et al., 2017). These visual representations, according to Harrison et al. (2017), should be understood through *orientalism* and the complex post-colonial dynamics in South Africa.

Musanga (2017) has examined Chinese representations in a non-traditional way as well, by studying popular music and literature in the context of Zimbabwe. Musanga (2017) has captured everyday Zimbabwean perceptions of Zimbabwe-China relations, in order to counter the ZANU PF 'Look East' narrative around Zimbabwe-China relations framed as friendly and mutually beneficial. The song 'Made in China' vividly illustrates how ordinary Zimbabweans feel completely disconnected from the very optimistically framed discourses around bilateral relations with China, resulting in scepticism and cynicism (Musanga, 2017). In line with that, the novel 'We Need New Names' portrays China's presence as exploitative and therefore detrimental to the development of Zimbabwe (Musanga, 2017). It is important to realise these potentially huge differentiations in representations and perceptions between state actors and private actors.

Van Staden (2017) has investigated the role of Hong Kong martial arts cinema in South Africa during apartheid. Self-evidently, Hong Kong is not interchangeable for China. However, as Van Staden (2017) has argued, African perceptions of 'China' should not necessarily be seen as that reductive; perceptions of China comprise of ideas and images from all kinds of regions throughout East Asia, due to a lack of exposure to Asian culture. These Hong Kong martial art films were an important phenomena in South Africa, because they were received and interpreted by Africans as a means to express anti-hegemonic narratives (Van Staden, 2017). In other words, representations of 'China' in films during apartheid in South Africa should be read in the context of the geopolitical and cultural shift from the West towards Asia, thereby playing a significant role in the formation of the contemporary deepening diplomatic and economic ties between China and Africa (Van Staden, 2017).

In line with Jedlowski & Röschenthaler (2017), Oduro-Frimpong (2021) argues for the inclusion of non-traditional media formats in research on Africa-China media communicative

practices. According to Oduro-Frimpong (2021), it will thereby contribute in two important ways: breaking down the incorrect assumption of African audiences' dependency on foreign media, and illustrating the diversity of Africa-China media interactions. This contemplation is based on the earlier arguments of Wekesa (2017). Oduro-Frimpong (2021) contributes to the Africa-China media and communication debate by focusing on Ghanaian visual imagery and thereby providing a novel theoretical perspective. Analysis showed the contradictions, concerns and complex connections in Africa-China relations as experienced by Ghanaian people (Oduro-Frimpong, 2021).

Concluding thoughts
All in all, this research will contribute to the need within the Africa-China media and communication scholarship to explore more extensively media that ''examine the specificities of Africa-China relations on the ground'' (Oduro-Frimpong, 2021, p. 223), in line with the arguments of Wekesa (2017), Jedlowski & Röschenthaler (2017), Jedlowski & Thomas (2017) and Oduro-Frimpong (2021). The call to focus on the African perspective within specific contexts has been answered to by studying national private newspapers in Ghana and Nigeria. And while this research will not necessarily respond to the call of analysing non-traditional media – newspaper being a relatively traditional media format – it will systematically research African perspectives through analysing 120 newspaper articles. This study will be one of the first to do so on a larger scale, thereby widening the foundation the scholarship is built upon. Moreover, it will fill the gaps by drawing on the concept of media framing, which is assumed to shape media representations through dynamics of framing and agenda setting (see conceptual framework in figure 1). It will do so through what has been discussed in the theoretical framework, which includes among other things identifying overall frames of China and the salience of political, business/economical and cultural representations.

In addition, the analysis has been informed by the complex and sometimes contradictory dynamics most authors within the debate have pointed to, such as the indirect control Chinese institutions might have through seemingly independent media outlets (Diakon & Röschenthaler, 2017), or the potential differences between articles echoing state actors or focusing on private actors/individuals (Musanga, 2017). At the end of the day it is still the individual private newspapers publishing certain articles and not others, but it is crucial to acknowledge these dynamics creating certain representations of China in the first place. Other complex and sometimes contradictory dynamics can be found within representations and perceptions themselves, as authors such as Wekesa (2017), Jedlowski & Röschenthaler (2017) and Harrison et al. (2017) have clearly illustrated.

3. Overview Ghana and Nigeria

The following chapter will be contextual in nature, by briefly discussing the histories of Ghana and Nigeria in paragraph 3.1 and 3.2 respectively. This has provided us with the broader framework to see the contemporary media landscapes in, as discussed in paragraph 3.3. The latter is important to grasp, because the nature of certain media landscapes for a large part shape the possibility for certain media representations. Paragraph 3.4 will take this study a step further by addressing the first sub-question regarding African perceptions of China throughout the years.

3.1 A brief history of Ghana

Ghana came into existence in 1957 as a result of the amalgamation of the Gold Coast and the Togoland trust territory, thereby being the first African nation to gain independence (CIA, 2022). Under the 'father of the nation' Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana announced a bold Five-Year Development Plan in 1959, albeit mainly focusing on government investments (Gocking, 2005). To explain this state-centred focus in those first years as an independent nation, one needs to understand Nkrumah and his anti-capitalist tendencies. Gocking (2005) vividly summarises the dilemmas Ghana and Nkrumah in particular had to deal with in those first years:

> Nkrumah … had criticized capitalism as too complicated a system for a newly independent nation and had advocated the need for a socialistic society. Not surprisingly, he maintained an ambivalence toward foreign capitalist investment. However, if Ghana was going to attract such investment to fund its development, his government had to make the economy attractive to foreign capital. (p. 120)

As this clearly illustrates, Ghana had to find a balance between the ideological on the one hand – socialism – and the more practical capitalistic investments needed in order to develop the country on the other hand. This pragmatism was not reflected, however, in perceptions of Nkrumah as a leader. Adoration of Nkrumah attained extraordinary proportions, even bringing an official ideology called Nkrumaism (Meredith, 2014).

Notwithstanding the pivotal role Nkrumah has played in shaping Ghanaian history as well as that of Pan-Africanism worldwide, his leadership – at least physically – was short-lived. Already in 1966, Nkrumah was overthrown by the military, the latter feeling deep bitterness after attempts by Nkrumah to interfere with its affairs (Meredith, 2005). While the coup was

framed by the military along broader grievances having to do with Nkrumah's way of ruling the country, Nkrumah's attempt to interfere was actually the primary reason to do so (Gocking, 2005). The decades thereafter were characterised by disorder and mismanagement with a regime change each few years being the norm, eventually resulting in a decade-long military regime under JJ Rawlings and the PNDC in the 1980s (Hess & Aidoo, 2014). The regime lived up to the, at that time, relatively conventional phenomena of untransparent politics and lack of freedom of speech (Meredith, 2005). And again, these years brought a balancing act for Ghana between maintaining close ties with left-wing factions worldwide, while simultaneously taking advantage of Western IMF and World Bank loans (Gocking, 2005). Unsurprisingly, opposition towards the regime eventually grew. In that light, Rawlings eventually organised 'free' elections in 1992, while giving the opposition very limited time to prepare for it as well as fully utilising government resources for his own campaign (Meredith, 2005). Rawlings won elections again in 1996, this time the results being commonly accepted (Hess & Aidoo, 2014).

Therefore, two elections had already taken place by 2000, but the 'real' transition to democracy came when Rawlings was succeeded by Kufour of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the largest opposition party at that time (Hess & Aidoo, 2014). While this is also what technically had to happen according to the 1992 constitution – requiring a maximum of two terms for a president – the consideration to not amend the constitution for the ones in power had more to do with the risk for protests and image damage in the international sphere (Gocking, 2005). Not amending the constitution to stay in power should not be seen as self-evident here, as the continent-wide picture has shown us throughout the years. In any case, these events laid the basis for the contemporary democratic institutional set-up of the country. According to Hess & Aidoo (2014), the embodiment of these democratic values – which can also be seen in how vocal the media is – also explains the success of Ghana economically. Overall, present-day Ghana is generally seen as a relatively stable and democratic nation within its region (CIA, 2021).

3.2 A brief history of Nigeria

Nigeria as an independent nation came into existence in 1960, after a long and tedious process of negotiations and compromises between the three major ethnic groups: Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo (Meredith, 2005). Already in 1966 – as was the case for Ghana – Nigerian political leaders were toppled by a military coup, on the basis of corruption (Ogbeidi, 2012). This marked the beginning of decades of coups and for the most part military rule (CIA, 2021). These events reinforced grievances between the major ethnic groups, since

Northerners grew increasingly suspicious of the majority of representatives being Igbo, which eventually led to a counter-coup by a group of Northern officers under the leadership of general Yakubu Gowon (Meredith, 2005). But while Gowon succeeded in the North, the Eastern region refused to accept this as the new status quo, thereby laying the roots for Biafra and the Nigerian Civil War only a year later (Meredith, 2005).

Biafra was short-lived in the end, and Gowon continued to rule the country throughout the 1970s, while Nigeria profited from an influx of wealth due to the oil boom (Ogbeidi, 2012). Unsurprisingly, this brought optimism and hope for the country. Unfortunately, Nigeria turned out to not be able to deal with the macro-economic as well as domestic issues that oil brought in the 1970s and 1980s (Iliffe, 2011). This is actually not that surprising considering the turbulent recent events, which only took place a couple years earlier. While initially the oil boom was able to hide the structural problems Nigeria faced, this could not last forever. That is also why the Gowon administration was toppled in 1975, with the intention to end mismanagement and corruption (Ogbeidi, 2012). Another coup did not spare Nigeria from its structural problems and its dependency on oil in particular, as is clearly illustrated by the following record of events (Meredith, 2005):

> In 1979 Nigeria had a favourable trade balance of $1.4 billion and gross international reserves of $5.8 billion. By 1982 it had a balance of payments deficit of $7.3 billion and gross international reserves were down to $1.9 billion, about one month's average requirement. Its external debt in 1982 was more than $6 billion. The following year the price of oil fell by 25 per cent; simultaneously Nigeria's quota of oil production under OPEC agreements was cut, reducing daily output by two-thirds. In 1983-4 Nigeria's earnings amounted to only half of the revenue it had earned in 1980, far less than its development plans had envisaged. Its external debt now stood at $18 billion. The boom had turned to bust. The collapse in confidence precipitated capital flight. Nigeria was, in effect, bankrupt for the foreseeable future. (p. 284)

As becomes clear by the citation above, the bankruptcy was a result of these macro-economic trends, therefore hardly the result of Nigerian actions you might say. Nigeria had to deal with the continent-wide picture of recession and foreign debts that characterised the 1980s (Iliffe, 2011). However, one always needs to consider those events as inherently linked to the political situation in Nigeria at that time. Corruption was not exactly solved in those years, thereby also partly explaining the bankruptcy, and was actually further institutionalised in the decades thereafter (Ogbeidi, 2012). While Nigeria eventually returned to civilian rule in 1999, it was now plagued by the institutionalisation of corruption,

mismanagement and chronic inefficiency (Meredith, 2014). Nonetheless, the political situation in Nigeria has significantly improved in recent years, marked by a long unbroken period of civilian rule, several civilian-to-civilian transfers of power, and the relative credibility of recent elections (CIA, 2021).

3.3 Media systems

The historical contexts discussed above have profoundly shaped the media landscape in both Ghana and Nigeria. In turn, the media landscape in a specific context shapes the possibility for certain media representations. Hallin & Mancini (2004) have categorised three sorts of media systems: Polarized Pluralist Model, Democratic Corporatist Model, and Liberal Model. Ngomba (2011) argues African media systems to generally fall under the Polarized Pluralist Model, implicating: "a strong role of the state in the media sector; the media serving as an instrument of political struggle; the limited development of mass circulation press; and also the relative weakness of common professional norms among journalists" (p. 55). It is crucial to take into consideration how such a media system influences representations of China. However, perceiving Ghanaian and Nigerian media systems only under the broad banner of the Polarized Pluralist Model could take attention away from the particularities in specific African countries and does not do justice to the complex media dynamics within these countries. Therefore, the next paragraphs will go further into the media landscapes of Ghana and Nigeria.

3.3.1 Ghanaian media

The media in Ghana can be classified as relatively vocal. The roots of the contemporary Ghanaian media system can be found in the 19th century, and the press therefore already contributed significantly to the formation of a national political culture during the years around independence (Diedong, 2008). Throughout the first decades of Ghana as an independent country, the press slowly but surely evolved itself into the voice of opposition against the state (Diedong, 2008). Most newspapers at that time increasingly had less room to manoeuvre in, except from a handful of opposition newspapers such as *The Ghanaian Chronicle* and *Daily Guide* (Ahmad, Pride, & Corsy, 2016). This is one of the reasons why we can assume private newspapers to represent the voice of the people, generally more so than state-owned newspapers. In the meantime, developments were underway that eventually shaped the contemporary state of press freedom. For example, the early 1980s brought a code of ethics for journalists in the field through the Ghana Journalist Association (GJA), while the National Media Commission (NMC) was established in order to secure press freedom (Diedong, 2008). Eventually, ''the return to full-scale democratic governance opened

the floodgates of media liberalisation and free speech in Ghana, and saw the emergence of many privately owned newspapers'' (Ahmad et al., 2016, p. 63).

3.3.2 Nigerian media

Just as was the case for Ghana, the Nigerian press already existed before one could talk of an independent Nigeria, although the Ghanaian trajectory preceded the Nigerian one (Oso, Odunlami, & Adaja, 2011). The roots of an independent press were already laid during colonial times, when the press slowly grew into the voice of the oppressed (Koper, Babaleye, & Jahansoozi, 2009). Through the fight for Nigerian independence this attained hitherto unseen proportions (Koper et al., 2009; Oso et al., 2011). But while until 1980 most of the newspapers were state-owned, they are now primarily privately owned (Oso et al., 2011). Exceptions during the prevalence of state-owned platforms were newspapers such as *The Punch* and *Vanguard*, who were considered especially vocal and transparent (Koper et al., 2009). This is one of the reasons why private newspapers can be assumed to represent societal affairs more accurately in Nigeria. In a contemporary context, ''press freedom in Nigeria is impressive as demonstrated in openly addressing any issue, whether political, business, societal or individual'' (Koper et al., 2009, p. 318). However, it is important to understand the Nigerian media system in the historical context of ethnic politics. While nowadays no major newspaper is explicitly aligned with a specific ethnic group, it nonetheless to a large extent influenced the socio-historical evolution of Nigerian media outlets (Oso et al., 2011).

All in all, media systems in Ghana and Nigeria are relatively similar in certain aspects – with a vocal independent press already during colonial years – but they also differ in some fundamental aspects, such as in the specific historical context within both countries. Another fundamental difference not discussed in the paragraph above is how their free press relates to political rights and civil liberties in general. As reflected upon in chapter 1, Nigeria scores significantly lower on these aspects than Ghana (Freedom House, 2022). Therefore, press freedom in Nigeria is the exception. In Ghana, it is the norm amongst broader political and economic liberties.

3.4 What do we know about African perceptions of China?

Following the general historical overview of Ghana and Nigeria and their particular media systems, the next paragraph will illustrate the evolution of African perceptions of China – and Ghanaian and Nigerian ones – throughout the years. This will provide us with the contemporary context to put media representations of China in, by demonstrating where we

currently are on the timeline of African perceptions of China. Herewith, the following sub-question will be answered:

Q1: *How have African perceptions of China developed throughout the years, and how so in particular in Ghana and Nigeria?*

Before going into African perceptions of China, it is important to state that the vividness of phenomena in people's minds are dependent on the presence of that particular phenomena in people's everyday life. China and Chinese people have taken an increasingly prominent place in Africans everyday life, thereby bringing more evocative perceptions of its presence.

3.4.1 African perceptions

First of all, it is important to briefly outline the context in which these perceptions take place. China's engagement in Africa could be roughly classified into three periods: a first period in the early 1950s to end its isolation from world affairs, a second relatively inactive period from the 1980s onwards, and a third period of intensive diplomatic and commercial ties since the dawn of the 21st century (Zhao, 2014). That Chinese engagement really took off in the 21st century is underlined by the fact that between 2000 and 2014, approximately $20bn was being invested in the construction of roads, railways, power plants, energy grids and pipelines across Africa (Frankopan, 2018). This seems to indicate that African perceptions of China also grew more vivid and evocative throughout the years, but it might have to do with better documentation of those perceptions in recent years as well.

But how have they exactly developed throughout those years? A moment in time appropriate to start seems to be around 2010, after roughly the first decade of China's contemporary presence in the continent. At that moment in time, perceptions of Chinese were predominantly positive (Gadzala & Hanusch, 2010). These results are reflective of the popular discourse of China as an alternative to the West at that time, exemplified by popular science books such as *Dead Aid* by Dambisa Moyo (2009). This should not blind us, however, to the variety of perceptions of China. While a decade ago China was seen as a welcoming force to address power inequities in multilateral institutions, it was also considered by some as exploitative and dubious (Gadzala & Hanusch, 2010).

Roughly five years later, Lekorwe, Chingwete, Okuru, & Samson (2016) have concluded in a survey across 36 African countries that views on China were still generally perceived as favourable. To put that into perspective, these generally positive perceptions resulted in the

country ranking as the second-best development model for African countries, after the United States (Lekorwe et al., 2016). Even more outstanding is how in three out of five African regions – Southern Africa, North Africa, Central Africa – China was seen as either as popular as or more popular than the United States as a development model (Lekorwe et al., 2016).

But at the same time, ambiguous and negative perceptions of China were growing louder. Suspicion of China varied from concerns over human rights and corruption, to resource exploitation and insensible labour practices (Zhao, 2014). Wang & Elliot (2014) have captured these complex and ambiguous dynamics vividly by underlining ''the diverse, complicated and evolving African perceptions about China's presence that now range from love to suspicion and worse'' (p. 1012). Part of these variances can be explained by the degree of Chinese involvement; the larger the amount of investments, the more positive perceptions of China generally are (Wang & Elliot, 2014).

In a contemporary context, China is still perceived as generally positive according to Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny & Selormey (2020). This observation is underlined by Kimuhu (2022), who nonetheless also notes the increasingly critical African perceptions of China, in particular in relation to the potential disruptive effect of piling debt. The paragraphs above seem to point to a relatively more optimistic view of China initially around 2010, a generally more sceptical view five years later, and a slightly more positive view again more recently. But in order to move from the abstract to the concrete, the next paragraphs will zoom in on perceptions of China in Ghana and Nigeria.

3.4.2 Ghanaian and Nigerian perceptions

In chapter 1, this study has briefly discussed notable similarities and differences between Ghana and Nigeria, as part of the societal relevance. One difference worth mentioning was their diverging history of diplomatic ties with China – Sino-Ghanaian relations going back earlier than bilateral relations between China and Nigeria. But while each country has their own particularities, both conform to the continent-wide trend of economic interactions really setting off in the 1990s and 2000s (Udeala, 2010; Flint & Waddoups, 2021).

According to Lekorwe et al. (2016), Nigeria sees China's economic and political influence as generally positive and its economic development assistance as relatively helpful, while people in Ghana remain very divided and ambiguous about Chinese economic and political influence as well as the helpfulness of its development aid. Interestingly enough, however, both Nigeria and Ghana perceive Chinese influence to be almost as prevalent as US

influence (Lekorwe et al., 2016). In these cases, it therefore does not seem that positive or negative perceptions truly influence perceptions of prevalence.

The data is anything but static, however. Around ten years ago, 75% of those surveyed in Nigeria, as well as Ghana had favourable views of China (Gadzala & Hanusch, 2010). In 2014/2015, 67% in Nigeria perceived China's influence as positive and 34% in Ghana (Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny & Selormey, 2020). The former was measured by asking respondents about views towards China's influence in general, while the latter specifically asked respondents about China's economic and political influence. Regarding the measurement of 34% for Ghana, Wang & Elliot (2014) underlined these widely diverse Ghanaian views of China by observing how positive perceptions tend to be more apparent within groups of people benefiting more from China's engagement. For the case of Nigeria, a 2016-2017 Globescan study underscored the generally positive (67%) Nigerian perceptions of China at that time (Anunne, 2018).

In recent years, Ghanaian perceptions on China have grown more positive towards 47%, whereas Nigerian perceptions have slightly decreased to 62% (Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny & Selormey, 2020). As can be seen in figure 2, however, Nigerian perspectives are still significantly more positive towards China.

Figure 2: Ghanaian and Nigerian perceptions of China (Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny & Selormey, 2020)
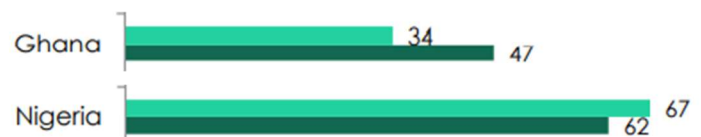
Concluding thoughts

The paragraphs above have answered the sub-question by illustrating how perceptions of China in Africa have developed over the years in general, and how they have done so particularly in Ghana and Nigeria. Overall, perceptions of China are expressions shaped through a variety of complex and contradictory societal dynamics. Therefore, African perceptions of China are ambiguous, diverging and ever-changing. China is perceived as beneficial and disastrous simultaneously. These observations are important to take into account during the analysis part of the study.

4. Methodology

This chapter will provide an overview of the methodological considerations within this research. First, it will briefly reflect upon the qualitative nature of the research, after which the methods of Critical Discourse Analysis and Qualitative Content Analysis will be discussed. Subsequently, this chapter will go into the sampling method and way of collecting data, including the rationale behind the selection of newspapers as well as the practicalities regarding the sample process. The last section details how the data was analysed.

4.1 Qualitative vs Quantitative

The aim of this research has been to effectively capture representations in the media towards China. This could have been executed in a more quantitative or qualitative way, whereby this research has chosen the latter. The basic assumptions of this research are rooted in constructivism, which acknowledge the inherently subjective nature of things. While quantitative methods would definitely be able to outline the more general dynamics within Ghanaian and Nigerian national newspapers, the positivist assumptions it brings is not in line with this research's epistemology. This research does not believe that there is an objective truth out there, which could be captured by such a quantitative research. Qualitative research methods are therefore more suitable in the light of this thesis. In order to avoid superficially discussing representations in its abstract, this research will benefit from taking a comparative case study approach to investigating media representations towards China. In particular, it will focus on the importance of discourses of power, representation and knowledge, pivotal in a postcolonial approach. The next paragraph will go further into this method of discourse analysis.

4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

This research has used discourse analysis as the core research method in investigating media representations. According to Clifford, French, & Valentine (2010), ''a discourse is a specific constellation of knowledge and practice through which a way of life is given material expression'' (p. 490). What it essentially does is situate, through the analysis of language, constellations of knowledge and power within a broader context (Clifford et al., 2010). In this study, discourse analysis will be able to capture the underlying meanings of language within media representations. In addition, discourse analysis fits well with the epistemological assumptions behind constructivism, and postcolonial thought is closely related to the idea of discourses as well (Aitken & Valentine, 2006).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in particular is a method relevant in the framework of this study, because it ''studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context'' (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 466). Especially the act of *resisting* power inequalities fits well with the wider research objective of critically assessing representations of China from the perspective of the recipient. This study thereby aligns with multiple core characteristics of CDA: addressing social problems, understanding power relations as discursive, and acknowledging discourses as a form of social action (Van Dijk, 2005). CDA also offers a functional framework for grasping the social construction of phenomena through language (Phillips, Lawrence, & Hardy, 2004), and is able to capture different layers of discourses. For these reasons, CDA has been used as the method of discourse analysis.

Widdowson (1995) reflects upon one of the major potential weaknesses of CDA: discourse analysis can bring someone's own ideological position, resulting in biased selections of text that reflect that specific ideology. What this criticism assumes, however, is that a binary distinction can be made between facts and interpretations (Taylor, 2013). Other quantitative methods that are seemingly more 'objective' also inevitably bring certain interpretations and value judgements in the first phases of a research, before these so-called objective results are presented (Taylor, 2013). This research, therefore, does not assume there to be a subject-object split. In other words, the assumption is that an object can only make sense in relation to a subject. And as a response to Widdowson (1995), Fairclough (1996) has also stated how in this regard, CDA is at least accompanied by an awareness of its own partiality, in contrast to most theories.

This research acknowledges in line with Fairclough (1992, 1995) that discursive utterances always exhibit more discursive layers, identified as linguistic practice, discursive practice and social practice (see figure 3). Using this multidimensional framework is especially relevant in the framework of this research, because media representations intrinsically consist of a combination of these three practices. For instance, pure linguistic representations in the media are relatively meaningless without taking into consideration the broader social practices. Also, in media discourse analysis in particular, the field has increasingly moved away from merely focusing on the dimension of the text, also encompassing the dimension of production of the text as well as the role of the audience (Cotter, 2005). It is therefore not a coincidence that media discourse analysis has an established position within CDA (Van Dijk, 2005).

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│              Social practice                │
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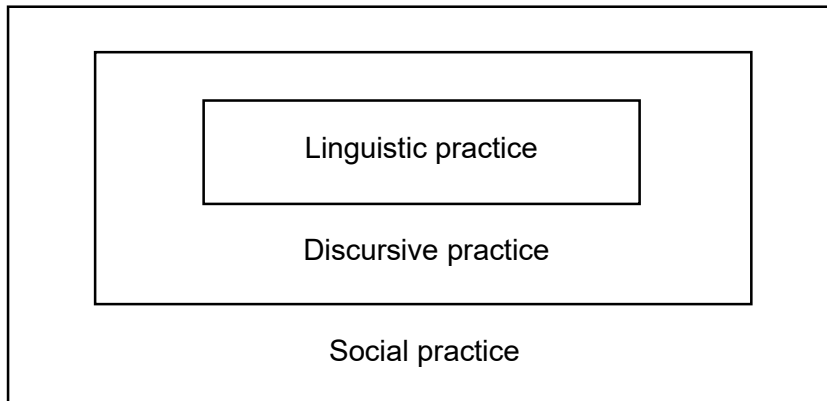
Figure 3: Three-dimensional model of discourse (Fairclough, 1992, 1995)

The three-dimensional framework as illustrated in figure 3 was used in analysing media representations of China. This model is what connects linguistic analysis – the textual – with intertextual analysis, drawing upon *orders of discourse* (Fairclough, 1992). The intertextual level – or the interdiscursive, as in a later stage framed along these lines by Fairclough (1995) – consists of:

> A mediating 'interlevel': on the one hand, discourses, genres and styles are realised in the more concrete form of linguistic and multimodal features of texts; on the other hand, discourses, genres and styles are categories … of analysis of orders of discourse, which are the discoursal element … of social practices, social organisations and social institutions. (p. 7)

In other words, this is what constitutes the discursive practices and social practices in the model. During the analysis phase of this research, this three-dimensional framework was continually used. Capturing the linguistic and discursive practices was done through coding specific utterances and their explicit (linguistic) or more implicit (discursive) expressions. The second layer of discursive practices has also specifically focused on references to the context in which the text was produced, while the third layer has tried to capture the broader social contexts in which these representations of China occur in newspaper articles.

In addition, to further operationalise the application of CDA, this study has followed the rationale of Reynolds (2019) in using Saldaña's (2013) classification along first cycle codes and second cycle codes in order to execute CDA in a systematic way. By doing so, this study has provided a transparent framework for coding discursive representations, whereby it also tackles the conceptual vagueness CDA brings (Reynolds, 2019). Those methods of data analysis will be further discussed in paragraph 4.5.

4.3 Qualitative Content Analysis

In addition, some elements of Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) have been used in categorising and structuring the obtained data (using CDA), based on the motivation that this categorisation has provided the researcher with extra layers of dynamics to understanding discourses on China. Hsieh & Shannon (2005) have defined Qualitative Content Analysis ''as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns'' (p. 1278). Using such classifications have helped the researcher in critically interpreting discourses of power, representation and knowledge, and in finding patterns throughout the data. Note that this will only be used as a secondary tool, because the study ultimately tries to grasp *discourses* and the context in which they take place, instead of treating the *content* of the articles as isolated phenomena. It has purely used elements of QCA to classify and categorise the identified discourses, in line with the mixed-method discussed below by Hardy, Harley, & Phillips (2004) and Bennett (2015).

One could pose questions about the qualitative nature in this process of classification, because this will essentially lead to themes with certain quantities of representations. However, these quantities are still inherently built up through qualitative methods of analysis: coding discursive representations. Krippendorff (2019) takes this argumentation further by questioning the functionality of the distinction between quantitative and qualitative content analyses: ''ultimately, all reading of texts is qualitative, even when certain characteristics of a text are later converted into numbers'' (p. 21).

And while Critical Discourse Analysis and Qualitative Content Analysis might seem incompatible at first – since they evolved out of the very different academic traditions of positivism and interpretivism – they should not be seen in such binary ways. As Bennett (2015) has argued, we should consider the substantial epistemological middle ground between discourse analysis and content analysis. Particularly more qualitative forms of content analysis, that are less based on these positivist assumptions and bring an awareness of the social context in which they are produced, are compatible with discourse analysis (Hardy et al., 2004). And by combining the two, this research responds to the call by Bennett (2015) to take advantage of the opportunities a combination of the two brings. Moreover, multiple studies have already used such a mixed-methods approach (Reynolds, 2019).

Hardy et al. (2004) have pointed to several concrete ways in which discourse analysis and content analysis might go together. One of these is in the following situation: ''the categories that emerge from the data allow for coding schemes involving counting occurrences of meanings in the text. Analysis is an interactive process of working back and forth between the texts and the categories'' (Hardy et al., 2004, p. 21). This reasoning aligns very well with this study, which aims to capture representations of China, categorise them according to how often certain representations occur, and subsequently alternate between analysing in-text discursive representations and categories of sub-codes.

4.4 <u>Data collection</u>

Data will be collected through analysing newspapers. There are a lot of ways to investigate the media, especially considering that the 21st century media landscape includes more than merely print and broadcast (Cotter, 2005). This research will use newspapers because of the accessibility of data as well as its usability for discourse analysis. The latter has to do with the room a newspaper article generally offers to bring across a message, in contrast to more volatile mediums such as television and social media. A disadvantage to consider might be that newspapers are relatively static and generally less dynamic than other forms of media in conveying a message. Apart from the specific pros and cons newspapers might bring, it is important to acknowledge the different accentuations distinct forms of media bring (Lin & Jeffres, 2001). Inevitably, this influences the sort of findings a researcher obtains from their analysis. Often, the challenge with newspapers is to narrow down the obtained material to something feasible to analyse (Taylor, 2013). Narrowing the scope down to just national private-owned newspapers already provides ample data to study.

4.4.1 Selection of newspapers

Just as one has to make a decision between a medium to analyse, one has to decide which newspapers to focus on as well. For feasibility reasons, I have selected three newspapers within both Ghana and Nigeria, amounting to a total of six newspapers. In each country, three private-owned newspapers have been selected, based on the assumption that those newspapers are relatively less restrained in what it is that is published. Media history of both countries underlined this assumption. In addition, accessibility via LexisNexis also played a role here.

Newspaper	Private/state	Reach	Daily readership
Ghanaian Chronicle	Private	National	173,000
Daily Guide Network	Private	National	726,000
Business & Financial Times	Private	National	148,000

Table 1: Newspaper selection Ghana

Table 1 provides an overview of those newspapers selected for the case of Ghana. *The Ghanaian Chronicle* and *Daily Guide Network* are the largest national private-owned newspapers of Ghana (Kuehnhenrich, 2012), with the latter often being regarded as the most trustworthy and therefore most widespread private newspaper in Ghana. Both bring a certain amount of representativeness and reliability and are relevant because their representations of China reach a large audience. *The Ghanaian Chronicle* has a daily readership of 173,000 and *Daily Guide Network* of 726,000 (Elliott, 2018). The third largest private-owned newspaper – *Business & Financial Times* – is actually not much smaller than *The Ghanaian Chronicle* with a readership of 148,000 (Elliott, 2018). It therefore also reaches a significant audience.

Newspaper	Private/state	Reach	Circulation
The Punch	Private	National	80,000
Vanguard	Private	National	120,000
Sahara Reporters	Private	National	n/a

Table 2: Newspaper selection Nigeria

Table 2 illustrates the selected newspapers for the case of Nigeria. *The Punch* and *Vanguard* are selected here since they are generally known as the most popular newspapers online in Nigeria, with a print circulation of 80,000 and 120,000 copies (Chigozie, n.d.). One could assume Chinese representations within these newspapers to be the most relevant, since these reach the largest audience and therefore potentially shape perceptions to the largest extent. The third newspaper, *Sahara Reporters,* is the fourth largest online newspaper in Nigeria, known for its dedication for unbiased reporting from a Nigerian-African perspective (Chigozie, n.d.). The combination of its large presence with a dedication for unbiased journalism makes this newspaper relevant in the context of this research. Since it does not have a physical presence, no circulation has been attributed to it in table 2. To give an indication of its popularity, however, their website gets approximately six million pageviews per month (Sahara Reporters, n.d.).

4.4.2 Non-probability sampling

The next element to discuss is the sample method. The first choice that has to be made concerns the decision between using either probability or non-probability sampling methods. On the one hand, probability sampling methods make sure that all cases in a population are as likely to be selected for a sample, by using random selection (Shorten & Moorley, 2014). Non-probability sampling methods, on the other hand, bring a non-random selection based on the inherently subjective judgement of the analyser (Berndt, 2020).

Given my research objective, non-probability sampling is more suitable. Rather than testing a hypothesis about a population in general, I aim to develop a better in-depth understanding of how China is portrayed in Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers. Not all newspaper articles are as relevant as others to scrutinise. A random selection would pose the risk of generating articles not sufficient for discourse analysis. With the non-probability sampling method of *purposive sampling*, the researcher can weigh the quality of the information, selecting those that meet the purpose of the research.

Purposive sampling has certain advantages and disadvantages. An important strength of this approach is that it gives the researcher the freedom to select those cases that align with the analytical and theoretical goals of the research, while a relevant weakness is the sampling bias this inherently brings (Berndt, 2020). To minimise this weakness, it is crucial to draw up clear and concise selection criteria. The next paragraph further reflects on these criteria.

4.4.3 Sample procedure

Before going into the sample procedure, one should acknowledge there to be no universal 'right' quantity of data to analyse. One of the major misconceptions within discourse analysis is that more data automatically increases the standard of the research, while it can actually be considered more important to build a chain of argument and accompanying theory (Taylor, 2013). As stated vividly by Taylor (2013): ''qualitative research does not and cannot use statistically representative samples; the basis for generalisation is different'' (p. 68).

The relatively straightforward search term 'China AND Chinese' was used for all newspapers in LexisNexis, producing a minimum of 102 results for *The Ghanaian Chronicle* and 655 results for *Vanguard* at most (see table 3). After some rounds of trial and error, this search term turned out to provide the right balance between a sufficient amount of relevant articles as well as an adequately narrowed down selection of those articles. One of the criteria – the time frame of 2012 to contemporaneity – was already applied in this stage.

Unfortunately, LexisNexis unavoidably generates articles that are simply not relevant in the framework of this study. Therefore, purposive sampling was used in this stage in order to assure applicability of articles. Since this process inherently brings a form of researcher bias, it is crucial to clearly display the followed criteria. These can be summed up as:

1. The title of the article must contain the word 'China', 'Chinese', 'China's' or something clearly related to China such as 'FOCAC', in order to make sure that the content also explicitly discusses something in relation to China.

2. The article cannot be older than ten years, practically implying that articles before 2012 will not be selected. This in order to make sure that outdated articles will be eliminated, while at the same time using a time frame that is wide enough to identify patterns. On one side of the spectrum, articles from before the second decade of the 21st century are not very likely to represent contemporary views of China. On the other side of the spectrum, a shorter time frame would pose the risk of certain issues – such as Covid-19 or illegal gold mining practices – to be overrepresented. Herein, 2012 served as the ideal middle way, which served practical purposes as well.

3. While somewhat less objective than the two above, the newspaper article must clearly represent China in some way; either positive, neutral, or negative. Articles that for example mention China, but only in the context of another issue, are eliminated in this way.

These criteria have provided the researcher with the *purposive population* per newspaper as enumerated in table 3. All newspapers produced a similar purposive population relatively speaking in relation to the overall results, as the reported percentages show. Considering the minimum sample to population ratio of 10% often used in social sciences, the purposive population is fairly representative of the whole universe with an average purposive population of 21%.

From these populations, 20 newspaper articles per newspaper have been randomly selected through an automatically generated lottery method, in which each article had an equal chance of being selected. Indeed, the research has therefore still used some elements of probability sampling, but only after the purposive non-probability sample had already been drafted. A total of 120 articles has been assumed to provide the researcher the space to genuinely delve into each individual article, while at the same time being large enough to make some preliminary claims. Table 3 provides insight in the percentual representativeness of each newspaper sample in relation to the purposive population, which is relatively high for all newspapers except from *Vanguard* and *Business & Financial Times*. The latter has to do with the many articles sufficient for analysis within these newspapers. In spite of that, guaranteeing equal representation for each newspaper was considered more important in

order to balance newspapers' ideological views. See appendix 1 and 2 for an overview of all the analysed articles, including contextual information such as the newspaper it was published in, the date it was published, the length of the article, and the author if applicable. Note again that the percentages of the sample in relation to the purposive population have more than met the minimum sample to population ratio of 10%, with an average sample size of 30%.

Newspaper	Whole universe	Purposive population	Sample size
Ghanaian Chronicle	102	*25/102*= (25%) 25	*20/25*= (80%) 20
Daily Guide Network	265	(15%) 40	(50%) 20
Business & Financial Times	485	(19%) 94	(21%) 20
The Punch	171	(22%) 37	(54%) 20
Vanguard	655	(24%) 156	(13%) 20
Sahara Reporters	208	(21%) 43	(47%) 20
Total	1,886	(21%) 395	(30%) 120

Table 3: Newspaper sample procedure

4.5 Method of data analysis

The last important step to think about methodologically is the procedure of data analysis. ATLAS.ti has been used as a qualitative data analysis software tool to systematically and methodically code the collected empirical data. Within this process of coding, the researcher has had to decide between *manual coding* or *automatic coding*. As vividly stated by Munn, Stefano, & Pelz (2008): ''a large advantage of manual coding over automatic coding is the human's powerful and accurate ability to perform pattern recognition'' (p. 35). And while manual coding is also known for being time-consuming (Munn et al., 2008), it is preferred here over automatic coding. Utilising this human ability to recognise patterns and relations is of importance in capturing Chinese representations. The risk with automatic coding is that these deeper and more subjective layers will not be represented properly. In other words, manual coding will be more thorough, important in the context of this topic.

Within the process of manual coding, one can use either *inductive coding* or *deductive coding*, if not a combination of the two. Since this research tries to approach the data with an open mind and without a preconceived theoretical framework about what is expected to be represented, the emphasis has been on inductive coding. As the literature review has vividly shown, we do not know very well what dynamics play a role in media representations in

specific contexts such as Ghana and Nigeria. There is plainly no extensive research on this, which would make it naive to approach this coding process deductively. Inductive coding will take place in multiple phases, initially focusing more on outlining the data and later on moving towards exploring patterns and relations (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Eventually, these different phases of coding ideally lead to the researcher being able to embed itself into existing literature (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019).

4.5.1 First cycle coding

This study has used multiple methods of coding. Within first cycle coding, the possibilities range from grammatical and elemental methods to more affective and exploratory methods (Saldaña, 2013). In line with Linneberg & Korsgaard (2019), this research especially considers *attribute coding* and *descriptive coding* to be of significant value. Attribute coding is relevant in the sense that it provides the researcher with the broader context behind the collected data, by focusing more on these basic descriptive aspects of a text (Saldaña, 2013). Attributes regarding for example the newspaper itself and the author are just as relevant to code as the content of the article itself. Descriptive coding has been useful in capturing the content; the basic meaning of certain sentences and paragraphs (Saldaña, 2013). This has led to an extensive coding list of topics, capturing what the texts discuss on a general level. Through line-by-line coding, this cycle has involved extensive and thorough reading of all the articles.

4.5.2 Second cycle coding

The second cycle of coding consisted of classifying and categorising the identified codes. According to Linneberg & Korsgaard (2019), this stage should entail ''prioritising, integrating, synthesising, abstracting and conceptualising'' (p. 17). In other words, it entails reorganising the first cycle codes (Saldaña, 2013). This step included eliminating infrequent codes, merging similar codes, and categorising the descriptive sub-codes into one of two code groups: positive representations or negative representations. These categorisations were informed by the optimism-pessimism dichotomy, as posed by Shinn & Eisenman (2012). In the terminology of Saldaña (2013), the process described above can be classified as *pattern coding*: the categorisation of codes into broader and more meaningful groups of codes. ''Pattern coding develops the 'meta-code' – the category label that identifies similarly coded data'' (Saldaña, 2013, p. 209). This process of pattern coding has also been applied in the categorisation of all sub-codes in one of three theme groups: politics, business/economy, culture, in line with the categorisation of Anunne (2018).

5. Results

The following chapter will extensively discuss the results of this study by using multiple dynamics. It will start off by reflecting on the results on a generic level in paragraph 5.1, after which it will turn to positive and negative representations in paragraph 5.2 and 5.3 respectively. These paragraphs will extensively discuss the identified sub-codes and their distribution across political, business/economical and cultural representations using Critical Discourse Analysis and Qualitative Content Analysis. The last two paragraphs will examine the particularities within individual newspapers. The chapter will end with some concluding thoughts. By discussing all of these dynamics, the following two sub-questions have been addressed:

Q2: *How is China discursively represented in Ghanaian private newspapers?*

Q3: *How is China discursively represented in Nigerian private newspapers?*

The study has tried to capture representations of China in newspapers through coding phrases and sentences that portray China in a certain way. These portrayals are essentially acts of 'making moral judgements', one of the core aspects of Framing Theory this study has focused upon (Entman, 1993). Examples of such representations identified in the data include: 'China as a role model', 'China as capable', 'China as destructive' and 'China as ethically questionable'. In a later stage, these sub-codes were categorised into positive/negative code groups and theme groups, as discussed in paragraph 4.5.2. In addition, articles were separately categorised into positive, neutral or negative frames to capture the general representation of an article. In the categorisation of the latter, the intermediate category framed as 'Sino-pragmatism' by Adem (2014) was additionally used. This study has framed this simply as 'neutral'. It should be noted that this intermediate category was also considered in the categorisation of specific sub-codes, but that results did not identify a sub-code neutrally representing China. A combination of dynamics explain why this might be the case. The media has the inherent tendency to capture extremes in order to attract viewers (Luyendijk, 2006). Therefore, the neutral is less regularly displayed. And in those articles that seemed to point to a relatively neutral stance towards China overall, results indicated that this was not necessarily due to specific neutral discursive representations within the articles, but as a result of balancing out positive and negative representations.

Prior to discussing the results, it might be beneficial to briefly reflect on how decisions were made on what was categorised as positive or negative, and how the researcher's coding process might have influenced the data. The majority of the identified discursive representations were clearly positive or negative. Examples include those discussed above, with 'China as a role model' and 'China as capable' vividly portraying China as positive, and 'China as destructive' and 'China as ethically questionable' portraying China as openly negative. However, some discursive representations turned out to be somewhat more ambiguous in their underlying frame. Two prominent examples are those in which China is portrayed as a partner, either diplomatically or business-wise. As also will be reflected upon in the analysis of those sub-codes, such representations tend to linguistically stick to the facts. Many of these discursive utterances solely report on a new diplomatic or business deal. It thereby appears to be neutral and authors such as Anunne (2018) therefore also classify those articles as neutral. However, this study has understood such sub-codes as positive ones, since they still discursively represent China as a significant and capable actor. By reporting about a new deal between China and Ghana or Nigeria, newspapers represent China as a partner bringing opportunities and prosperity. Considering this rationale behind the categorisation of sub-codes and taking into account the discussed tendencies of the media, it is not entirely surprising that representations turned out to be this polarised. While this is an important finding in itself, we should not forget that these results are also partly shaped by the researcher's inherently unavoidable assumptions about the world.

Before going into the analysis, let us first briefly discuss the results on an aggregate level. A total of 1284 quotations have been assigned, divided into 38 sub-codes. Subsequently, all sub-codes have been grouped into one of the two following categories: positive representations and negative representations. To be more specific, 17 different types of positive representations and 14 types of negative representations were identified and coded. The remaining 7 sub-codes consist of 1 attribute code group, 3 theme groups (politics, business/economy, culture), and 3 general positive/neutral/negative frames. Appendix 3 provides an overview of all these sub-codes, including how often they were used. An important caveat to these seemingly objective categorisations is the difficulties in classifying representations into unambiguous code groups. In line with Adem (2014), articles seldom signify a singular perspective. Whether something is for example meant as positive or negative is therefore not always clear-cut. And regarding the theme groups, not many quotations are always 100% one of the three; a political representation is for instance often closely linked to certain economical interests. The influences of the researcher's assumptions about the world should therefore not be underestimated here. Nonetheless, this

study has tried to categorise quotations as objectively as possible by using the prevalence of certain categories to classify them.

5.1 <u>Representations on a generic level</u>

Each article has obtained a general label of either positive, neutral or negative, by analysing the overall distribution of sub-codes in that particular article. The results can be found in figure 4. Representations of China in Ghanaian newspapers were predominantly positive, in contrast to what has been identified in the previously discussed Afrobarometer study of Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny & Selormey (2020). 36 articles framed China as primarily positive, 4 articles as relatively neutral, and 20 articles represented China as negative. Also with regards to the Nigerian newspaper articles, each article has obtained the general label of positive, neutral or negative, by examining the overall distribution of sub-codes in the article under investigation. Representations of China in Nigerian newspapers were predominantly positive as well, albeit slightly less so than in the case of Ghana. In spite of the latter, these overall positive results for Nigeria are in line with the findings from Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny & Selormey (2020). As figure 4 illustrates, 32 articles were mostly framed as positive, 9 as neutral and 19 as generally negative. Therefore, a notable amount of articles have represented China more neutrally.
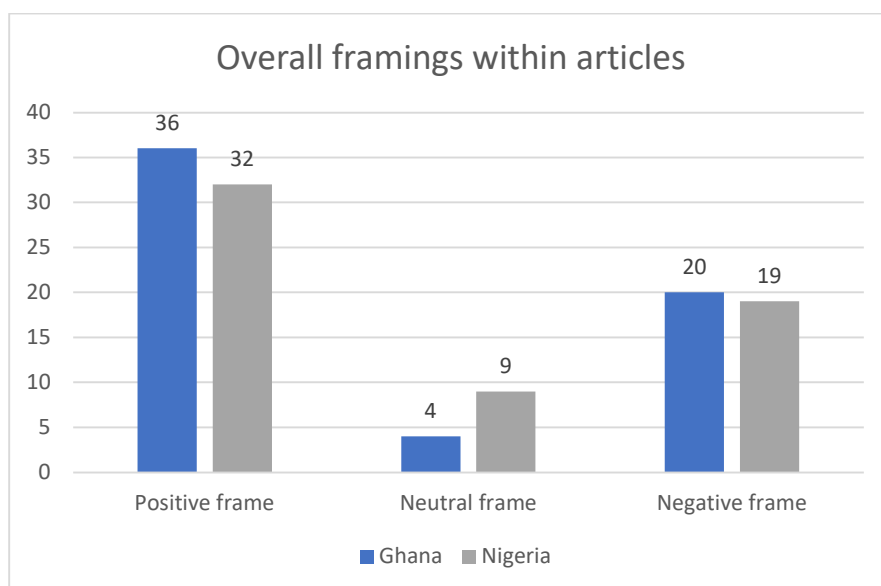
Figure 4: Ghanaian and Nigerian framings of articles

A total of 553 individual codes (excluding attribute codes) have been used in analysing the Ghanaian newspapers – *The Ghanaian Chronicle, Daily Guide Network, Business & Financial Times* – of which 373 were positive and 180 negative. As expected, these

proportions are relatively similar to the overall proportions discussed in figure 4. A total of 519 codes (excluding attribute codes) were used to analyse the sixty Nigerian newspaper articles within *The Punch*, *Vanguard* and *Sahara Reporters*, which is relatively similar to the Ghanaian ones. Hereof, 303 were positive and 216 negative. Again, this is somewhat less overtly optimistic than in Ghana, with a notable larger proportion of negative sub-codes.

To provide more nuance to the results, each quotation has been categorised into one of three theme groups – politics, business/economy, and culture – inspired by the categorisation of Anunne (2018). This study has thereby shed light on Basic agenda setting practices, as one of the central aspects of Agenda Setting Theory. Each individual quotation in the dataset has obtained one of these categories, instead of each general sub-code attaining one of those categories, because not all sub-codes fit perfectly in one of the three categories. While it intuitively makes sense that a sub-code such as 'China as a business partner' is primarily business/economy related, China represented as a role model can be politically as well as business-wise/economically or culturally. As figure 5 illustrates, Ghanaian representations of China are primarily political (51%) with the vast majority of the remaining (44%) being related to business/the economy. Only 5% of Chinese representations in Ghana could be classified as 'cultural'. Nigerian representations exhibit a similar pattern, with slightly more business/economy codes (48%) and fewer political frames (43%). Another interesting observation is the larger portion cultural representations take up in Nigerian newspapers. See figure 6 below for the accompanying graph.
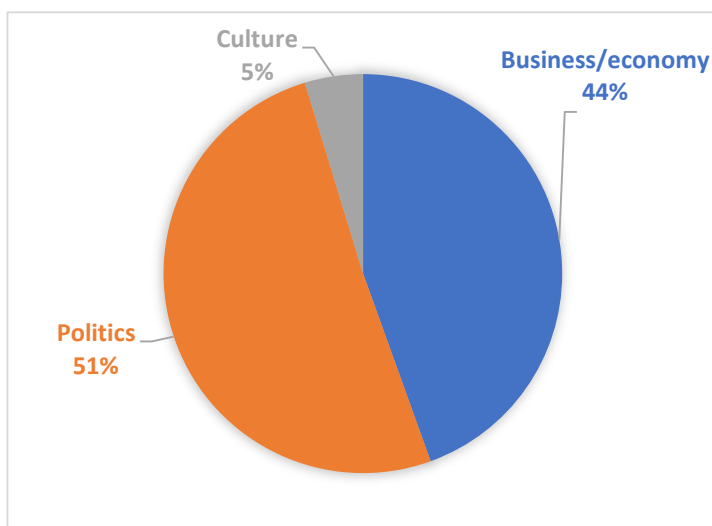
Figure 5: Ghanaian representations across categories
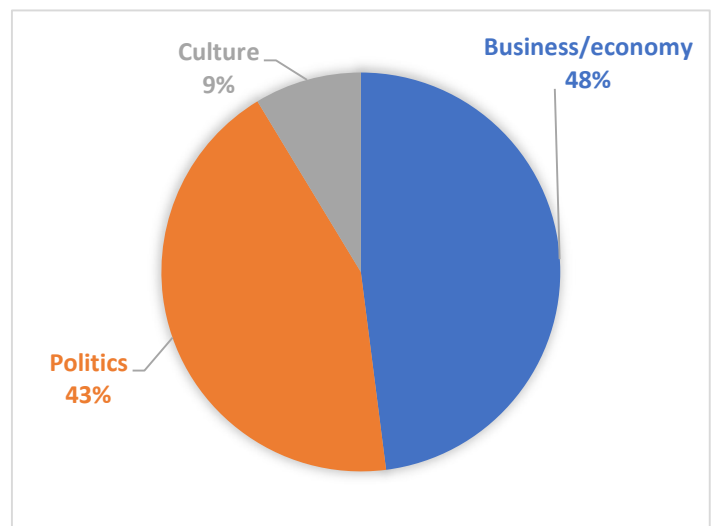
Figure 6: Nigerian representations across categories

5.2 <u>Positive representations</u>

Let us dive into articles that are predominantly positive of China's presence. Figure 7 illustrates the quantity of all sub-codes within Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers. In both countries, China is most often represented as a partner, both business-wise and diplomatically. However, in Ghana China is portrayed as such more frequently in absolute and relative terms. Other sub-codes that stand out for the case of Ghana are China as helpful, as equivalents, and as providing opportunities. For Nigeria the proportions are much more dispersed throughout the range of sub-codes. Many forms of positive representations are identified in similar quantities, such as: China as a role model, as helpful, as providing opportunities and as equivalents. But overall, as discussed in the previous paragraph, Ghanaian newspapers have represented China as positive more often than Nigerian newspapers: 373 codes for Ghana and 303 for Nigeria. The most notable sub-codes will be extensively analysed below using CDA, after their distribution throughout political, business/economical and cultural representations has been discussed.
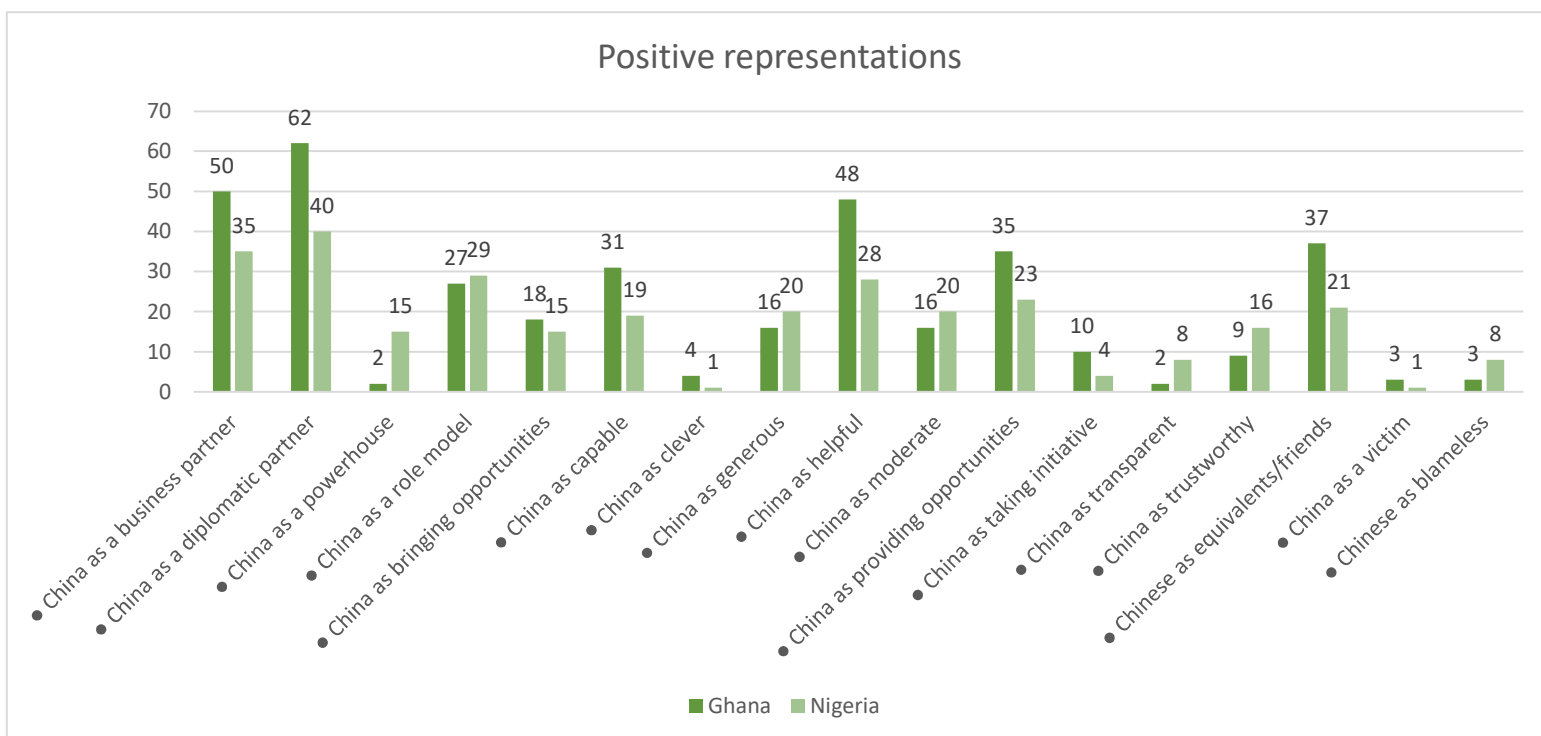
Figure 7: Positive representations of China in Ghana and Nigeria

When China is depicted positively in Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers, it is largely in the context of politics and business/economy, and less so culturally (see figure 8 and 9). These proportions within positive representations of China are relatively similar to the overall picture of representations. In both countries, positive representations are slightly more political than the overall picture, and slightly less business/economical and cultural. These small

differences suggest that representing China positively is not done in a very different context than usual.
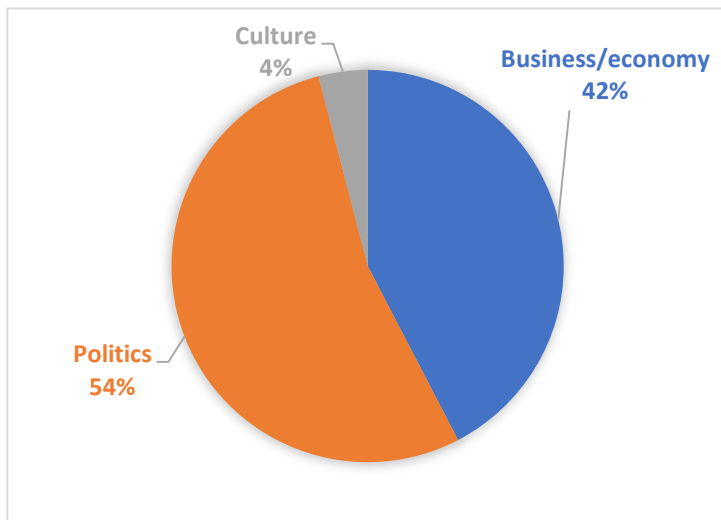
Figure 8: Positive representations across categories in Ghana
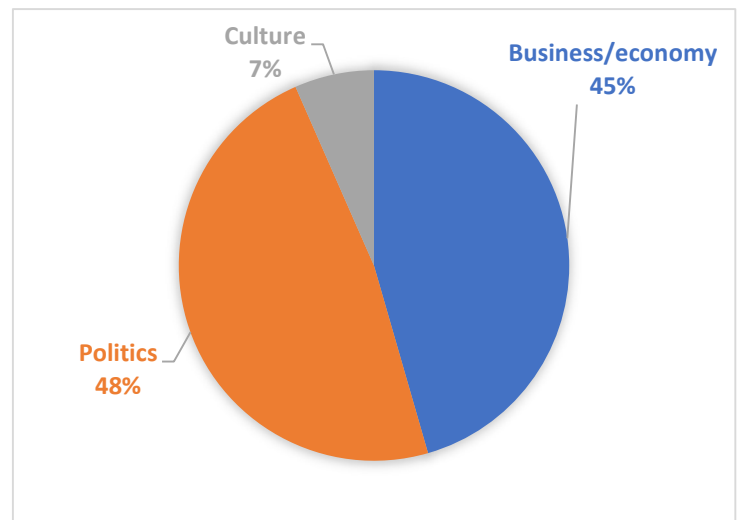
Figure 9: Positive representations across categories in Nigeria

China as a business partner

Many articles point to China as a business partner, and primarily in the context of business and economy related affairs. The sub-code has been identified 50 times in Ghanaian newspapers, and 35 times in Nigerian ones. This specific sub-code might be generally less explicitly positive than others in its linguistic utterances, since a significant part of the articles stick to the more factual. However, some articles clearly include a discursive judgement of the author, next to the factual trade relations, such as in the following paragraph:

> While Europe continues to be Africa's trading partner, China, in particular, has emerged as an important and dynamic export destination for Africa. China's share of exports from Africa has increased significantly over the last decade from 3% in 1998 to 15% in 2008.[1]

The paragraph above explicitly portrays China as an important export destination, next to portraying China as merely a business partner. Most articles do not do so explicitly though, as the following paragraph illustrates:

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[1] Frimpong, P. (2014, 17 February). The anti-China question. *The Ghanaian Chronicle*.

A Chinese company, Chinese Civil Engineering Construction Corporation, has handled the majority of railway projects in Nigeria worth over $25.51bn.[2]

A similar paragraph illustrating this is:

Trade between Ghana and the People's Republic of China is now estimated at US$7.5billion, recorded in 2019.[3]

These two latter articles stick to the facts. But through emphasising in linguistic terms that a Chinese company handles the majority of railway projects and that trade is at a very high point – although these are not judgements or opinions – the articles still discursively represent China rather positively, because it underlines how significant and capable the Chinese state is. In regards to the societal practice, these discursive utterances fit into the growing economic relations between China and Ghana throughout the last fifteen years and China and Nigeria in the last decade (Boston University Global Development Policy Centre, n.d.).

China as a diplomatic partner/China as equivalents
The sub-code assigned most regularly in Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers has been China as a diplomatic partner, as figure 7 illustrates. Unsurprisingly, this is mostly in the context of political affairs news. A remarkable number of articles discursively celebrate the well-established bilateral relations between China on the one hand, and Ghana or Nigeria on the other hand. This is typically done through linguistic frames such as 'strong', as can be discovered through the next paragraph:

Cui commended the strong bilateral relations between China and Nigeria over the past 50 years and called for a more holistic, comprehensive approach to build our bilateral relations in another 50 years.[4]

As most articles exemplify, however, there is a thin discursive line between China as a diplomatic partner and China as equivalents. The next paragraph shows this middle way vividly:

[2] Tunji, S. (2022, 18 January). Chinese company dominates Nigeria's N10.5tn railway projects, says Fitch report. *The Punch.*
[3] Ghana-China's trade value reaches US$7.5bn. (2020, 17 September). *Business & Financial Times.*
[4] China ready to help Nigeria reduce poverty – envoy. (2021, 29 September). *Vanguard.*

Sino-Ghana friendship and cooperation have grown from strength to strength as exemplified by high-level visits, economic cooperation, people-to-people exchanges and cultural partnerships.[5]

Next to just political relationships in the abstract, the paragraph above also represents China with linguistic frames such as 'friendship' and 'cultural partnership'. Therefore, the discursive consideration of China as an equivalent is a bit more explicit, but in essence it is still about diplomatic relations.

The next cultural-related paragraph illustrates what a clear example of 'China as equivalents' looks like:

Nigeria and China have [a] longstanding friendship. We share the same October 1 as China's National Day as well as Nigeria's Independence Day, and every Chinese national and Nigerian national know clearly that independence is quite hard to achieve. As China's good brother, good friend and good partner, we think Nigerians share the same mindset as ours.[6]

In this paragraph, the emphasis is put on their mutual friendship with China being considered as a 'good brother, good friend and good partner' in linguistic terms, substantiated by the overall discursive representation of China as an equivalent. Both sub-codes are based on the societal practice of China as an alternative to Western forms of diplomatic ties (Zhao, 2014). One interesting aspect in which the sub-codes diverge, however, is their distribution throughout the three topical categories. China as a diplomatic partner is by and large categorised as political. China represented as equivalents is often categorised as political as well, but also regularly in the context of business/economy or culture.

China as a role model
Although not in the same quantity as the sub-codes above, the analysed Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers have also represented China as a role model 27 and 29 times respectively. Paragraphs exemplary of this discourse are the following:

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[5] Tarlue, M. (2020, 6 July). Ghana, China mark 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations. *Daily Guide Network.*
[6] Hang, Y. (2021, 4 November). RE: Wake-up call against Chinese interventionism. *The Punch.*

> As a country that has so successfully brought millions of its own people out of poverty, China is perfectly positioned to take a leading role in the global fight against hunger.[7]

> The country has become famous for a steady economic growth that is knowledge-based and driven principally by a focused leadership; a vibrant and hard-working population by patriotism.[8]

Both examples lean somewhat towards the cultural spectrum, and are therefore also categorised as such. It is not hard to see this as politics-related as well though, in line with the previous observation that no representation is 100% one of the three. Overall, the distribution of the three theme groups within this sub-code lean disproportionally towards the political, with a notable amount of quotations classified as cultural. Within the paragraphs above and throughout the quotations within this sub-code, China is adored in linguistic terms, since it is framed as successful, driven, focused, hard-working and more. This implies China as a role model, as an actor to look up to and to learn form. This discourse should be seen in the context repeatedly discussed previously: the shift towards non-Western alternative forms of development. Or in other words, South-South Cooperation often under the banner of the Non-Aligned Movement (Udeala, 2010).

China as bringing opportunities/providing opportunities
Both China as bringing opportunities as well as providing opportunities is frequently discussed in Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers, with the latter being somewhat more prominent in both contexts (see figure 7). Both sub-codes are largely discussed in the context of business/economical matters, with a small minority being political in nature. While the two seem very similar, there is a notable difference: the former refers to China as bringing opportunities for Ghana to take advantage of (pull), the latter to China in itself as a provider of opportunities (push).

A vivid example illustrating China as bringing opportunities can be found in the following paragraph:

> Over the years, China has been a strategic import hub for Nigerian manufacturers.[9]

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[7] Ankiilu Kunateh, M. (2013, 28 May). Chinese firm to feed Ghanaian kids. *The Ghanaian Chronicle.*
[8] Enekwechi, C. (2018, 30 April). Building a beautiful China for everyone. *Vanguard.*
[9] Ikpoto, E. (2022, 27 January). LCCI, CABC seek to strengthen Nigeria-China economic ties. *The Punch.*

Another paragraph showing China as providing opportunities was discovered through the next discursive utterance:

> Sectors such as energy, railway and health, just to mention a few, have all experienced [a] massive boom on the African continent within the last few years thanks to the commitment and efforts of China.[10]

Both examples point to what is to be gained, by framing China as a strategic import hub and as the source of an economic boom in linguistic terms. These paragraphs discursively underline the push and pull factors playing a role, either by acknowledging the benefits of attracting China to invest or by appreciating China's investments in themselves. These discourses should be seen in the same societal context as discussed above: alternative non-Western forms of development.

China as capable

A notable number of articles in both countries have also represented China discursively as a capable state, a state willing and able to act on its intentions. The sub-code has been used 31 times in Ghanaian newspapers and 19 times in Nigerian ones. China is mostly portrayed as politically capable, but also regularly as capable in relation to business and economic matters. A political representation of China as capable can be found in the following paragraph written in the context of Covid-19:

> China launched a resolute battle to prevent and control its spread. This is as a result of ensuring that people's lives and health is the most priority and achieving that, China … adopted extensive, stringent and thorough containment measures, and has for now succeeded in turning the situation around.[11]

China is portrayed as capable with linguistic frames such as 'resolute' and 'extensive, stringent and thorough'. This is in line with the broader narrative around China allegedly being decisive in contrast to Western slow-moving bureaucracies. The latter is often seen as being too caught up in reform under certain terms and conditions (Singh, 2021).

China as generous

Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers represent China as being generous 16 and 20 times respectively, from for example donating military equipment and IT equipment to assisting

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[10] Awuah Jr., J. (2018, 5 September). Buhari okays China-Africa marriage. *Daily Guide Network.*
[11] Chinese community donates PPE to 2 hospitals. (2020, 1 July). *Business & Financial Times.*

orphanages and giving aid for Ebola education. In these deceptively simple linguistic frames of 'donating', 'assisting' and 'giving' lies a deeper discursive layer of China as a generous actor. The next paragraph illustrates this clearly:

> The Chinese government had donated and shipped a total of 6,779 metric tons of rice, which is 271 trucks and approximately 162,696 bags of rice into the country's seaport.[12]

These representations need to be understood in the broader context of Western concerns over Chinese morality (Sperbee, 2009), which China is trying to counter through acts of generosity. These representations are therefore also by and large political in nature.

China as helpful
A notable amount of portrayals has also represented China as a helpful ally, equally split up between political and business/economical frames. Interestingly, this sub-code has occurred clearly more often in Ghanaian newspapers than in Nigerian newspapers, with 48 and 28 times respectively. This suggests that China is seen as more helpful in Ghana. While similarities with bringing/providing opportunities could definitely be found, the emphasis within this sub-code is on the helpfulness of China in itself, and not on how this results in certain opportunities. The following politically focused articles illustrate this clearly through the next paragraphs:

> China was willing to support [the] government of Ghana's strong competence and determination to tackle the illegal mining menace in the country.[13]

> The Chinese government has sent the procedure on treating Coronavirus patients to Nigeria and other countries.[14]

These paragraphs illustrate China as providing a helping hand through textual elements, with words such as 'support'. In line with the representation of China as generous, this represents China discursively as a legitimate and moral actor, in an attempt to counter the predominant Western discourse of China as ethically questionable.

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[12] Over 160,000 bags of rice donated to IDPs by China rots away in NEMA stores. (2018, 15 November). *Sahara Reporters.*
[13] Kofi Adu, E. (2017, 8 August). Chinese embrace One District One Factory. *Daily Guide Network.*
[14] China shares Coronavirus treatment techniques with Nigeria, others. (2020, 11 February). *Sahara Reporters.*

China as moderate

Newspapers in both contexts have represented China frequently as a moderate actor, with Nigerian newspapers doing so slightly more often. These representations are precisely as often political as business/economic in nature, with a small minority being cultural. An example of China as moderate in a political context can be discovered through the next paragraph:

> According to the Chinese, it was not appropriate to utilize a Chinese concessionary loan to implement these projects, adding, otherwise it may increase the burden of your country.[15]

In regards to the linguistic practice, China is represented in this paragraph and throughout the quotations as moderate with frames around appropriateness, normalisation and understanding. These linguistic framing rest upon a deeper discursive layer of China as an actor of moderation, considerateness and rationality. One should see these kinds of representations as an attempt to change the omnipresent discourses very critical of China.

China as a powerhouse

China is also frequently represented as a powerhouse, albeit largely in Nigerian newspapers. Whereas the sub-code 'China as capable' treats China as capable in dealing with certain phenomena, this sub-code refers to China as powerful in geopolitical terms. While Ghanaian newspapers have only represented China as a powerhouse twice, Nigerian ones have done so 15 times, suggesting that Nigerians perceive China more often as a potent actor. This is not very surprising considering that Ghana perceives China as a partner more frequently than Nigeria, both diplomatically and economically. These representations of China as a powerhouse are predominantly political, with some exceptions being categorised as business/economy. One political focused example of such a representations can be found in the next phrase:

> China is obviously a behemoth of a country and you ignore it only at your own peril.[16]

China is represented in linguistic terms as a 'behemoth of a country' in this article, and as muscular, rising, and powerful throughout the sub-code. Hereby, China is discursively represented as a competent actor to reckon with. This is characteristic for the general societal context in which this study is written: China as a growing geopolitical actor.

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[15] Yaw Owusu, W. (2015, 23 July). China barks over road funding. *Daily Guide Network.*
[16] Otti, A. (2019, 21 April). Made in China. *Sahara Reporters.*

China as trustworthy

Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers portray China as trustworthy every now and then, the sub-code being used 9 times for the former and 16 times for the latter. These representations are relatively equally divided within political and business/economical ones. The next sentence in the context of the political ties between China and Africa illustrates this well:

> Xi Jinping stated that China had stayed faithful in its cooperation with Africa over the years.[17]

Regarding the linguistic practice, China is represented as 'faithful' here, thereby confirming the discursive representation of China as trustworthy. These discursive utterances of China as an actor to be trusted should be seen in the context of China's principle of non-interference within international relations (Singh, 2021).

5.3 Negative representations

Many different negative representations of China have been identified, adding up to a total of 14 sub-codes (in contrast to 17 positive sub-codes). Figure 10 illustrates the quantities of sub-codes for Ghana and Nigeria respectively. In both contexts, China is portrayed as destructive most often. Thereafter, the picture is different for both countries. Representations of China in Ghana are generally more equally dispersed, without many outliers. Nonetheless, the most notable negative sub-codes in Ghana (next to China as destructive) are China as vulnerable, untrustworthy, blameworthy, greedy and ethically questionable. Figure 10 illustrates a different picture for Nigeria, where certain representations stand out. In addition to China as destructive, China as untrustworthy, a threat, ethically questionable and intransparent stand out. One should remember that, as discussed in paragraph 5.1, the selection of Nigerian newspapers represent China overall more often as negative. 180 negative codes have been identified for Ghana, and 216 for Nigeria. The most notable sub-codes will be analysed next using CDA, after their distribution throughout political, business/economical and cultural representations have been debated.

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[17] Awuah Jr., J. (2018, 4 September). FOCAC summit takes off in Beijing. *Daily Guide Network.*
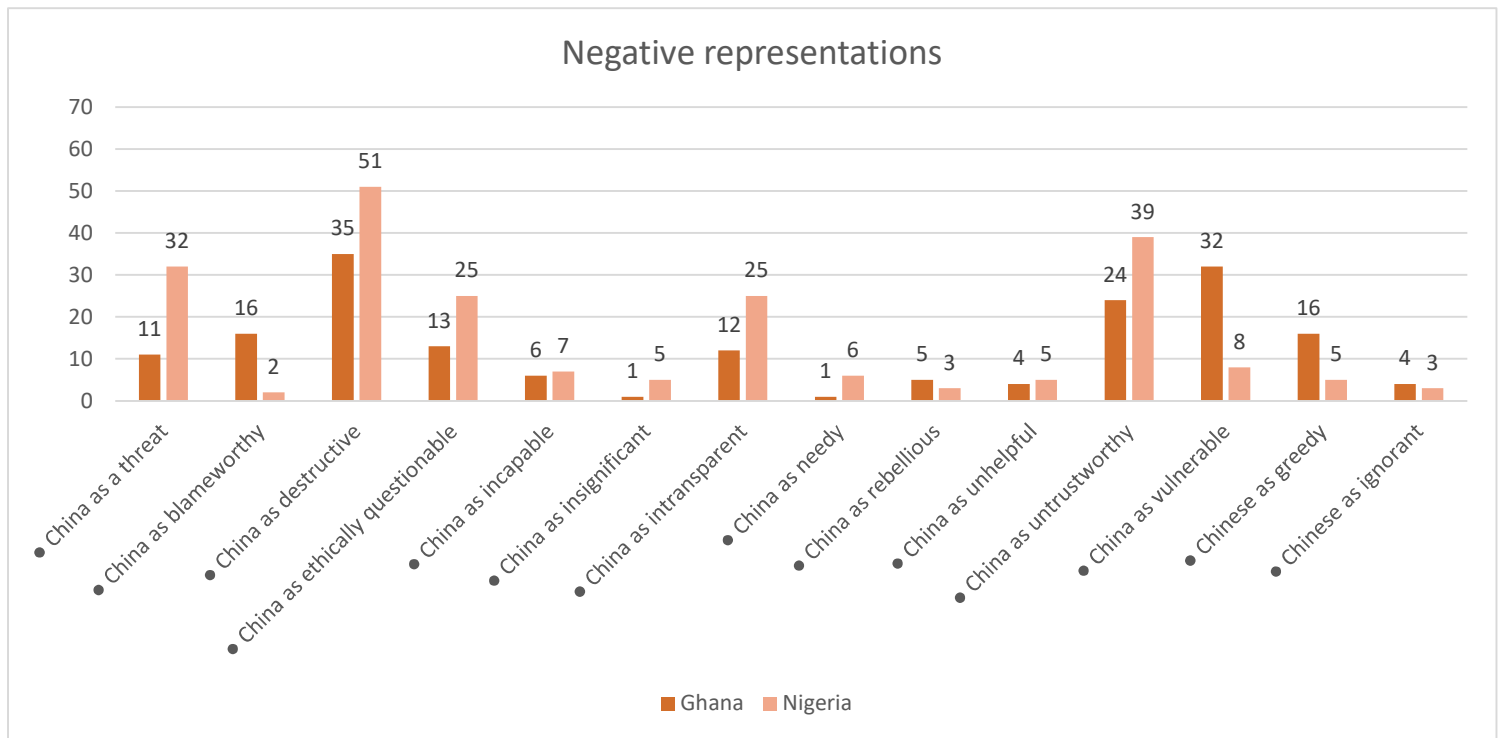
Figure 10: Negative representations of China in Ghana and Nigeria

Figure 11 and 12 shed light on the proportions of negative representations of China throughout the three categories of politics, business/economy and culture. When China is depicted negatively in Ghanaian newspapers, the representation is primarily business/economical (49%) and political (45%) in nature, with the former being somewhat more prominent. The same is also the case for Nigeria, although business/economical representations (51%) take up a larger proportion and politics (37%) a smaller one. As figure 12 shows, with 12% a notable proportion of representations in Nigeria is also labelled as cultural. Note that this is twice as much as in Ghana. When comparing these results to the overall proportions within the two contexts, it becomes clear that negative representations are business/economic in nature more often than at the aggregate level. This also indirectly means that politics takes up a relatively smaller part in both countries. Negative representations categorised as cultural show a relatively similar picture as compared to the overall proportions.
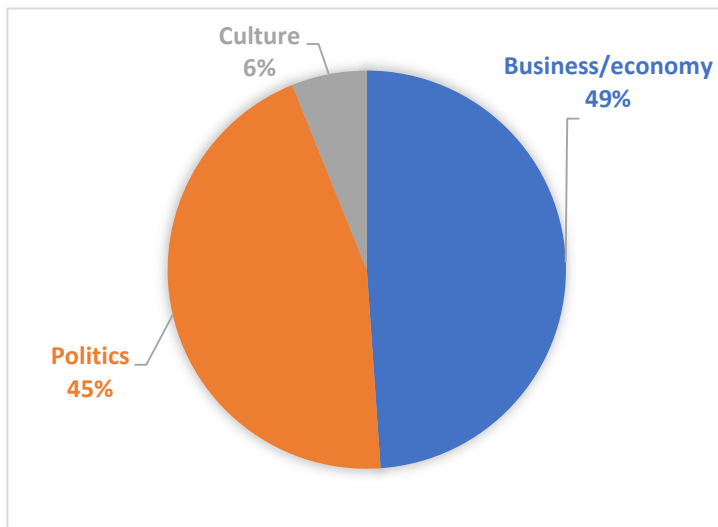
Figure 11: Negative representations across categories in Ghana
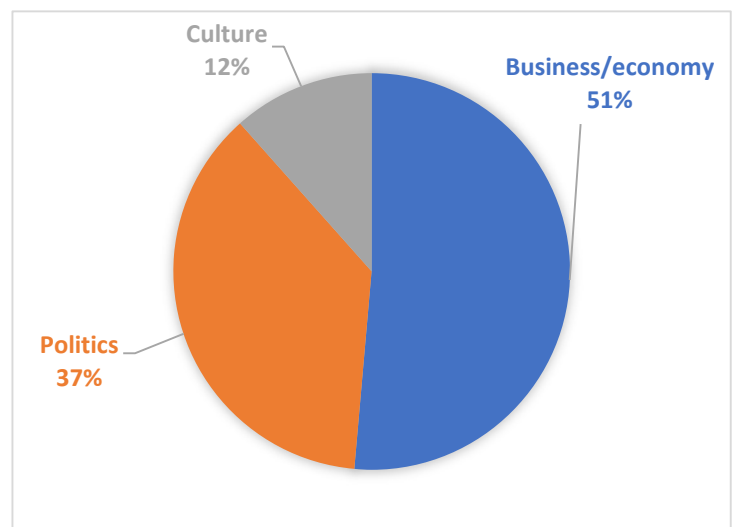
Figure 12: Negative representations across categories in Nigeria

China as destructive/ethically questionable

Negative representations of China are most often framed around China as destructive. This sub-code has occurred 35 and 51 times in Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers respectively. Interestingly, representations of China as destructive are highly dispersed over political, business/economical, and cultural ones, with the former two both comprising of roughly 40% and the latter of about 20%. A very illustrative – but rather extreme – political portrayal of China as destructive in Ghanaian newspapers is captured in the next discursive utterance:

> Ghanaians were shocked to the marrow … when news broke that some Chinese had shot and killed two Ghanaians, and critically wounded another who challenged them for trespassing on the small-scale mining site of their employer.[18]

Events of assassinations are not the norm, but they clearly capture discursive representations of China as destructive. Other linguistic frames frequently used within this sub-code are illegality, maltreatment and devastation. A remarkable amount of these articles are discussed in a broader context of *Galamsey* – referring to illegal small-scale gold mining practices in Ghana – whereby the involvement of Chinese individuals and companies have significantly increased anti-Chinese sentiment (Aidoo, 2016).

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[18] Those murderous Chinese… (2013, 13 May). *The Ghanaian Chronicle.*

However, there is a thin line between China as destructive and China as ethically questionable. To say that killing Ghanaian people is 'ethically questionable' is clearly an understatement, but the extreme representation makes 'destructive' a more accurate label. So there is clearly some overlap, as also underlined by the next business-related paragraph:

> Local media reports regularly decry the inhuman treatment of African workers by Chinese employers.[19]

This paragraph represents China as ethically questionable by using a linguistic frame around 'inhumane treatment'. Discursively, the emphasis lies on questioning the morality and ethics of China, which is in line with a broader concern regarding the commitment of China to the African continent (Zhao, 2014). These two examples illustrate how the emphasis is generally on one thing – which is why they have been categorically divided – but also how that often does not mean the exclusion of the other. It is obviously not that difficult to see inhumane treatment as more than just ethically questionable, for example. Regarding the overall use of the sub-code China as ethically questionable, it has been used roughly twice as much in Nigerian newspapers as in Ghanaian ones. Slightly more than half of these representations were political in nature, and the rest of the quotations were relatively equally divided into business/economical and cultural ones.

China as a threat
Another recurring sub-code is China as a threat. Interestingly, it is much more frequently assigned in Nigerian articles, as figure 10 illustrates. This implies that China is more often seen as a potential threat in Nigeria than in Ghana. Approximately two thirds of these representations are in a business/economical context, whereas the majority of the remaining representations are political in nature. An example of the former is illustrated in the next paragraph:

> The various stakeholders who have asked for a proper audit of all agreements with China are definitely aware of how the $6.6 billion judgment against Nigeria which became $9.6 billion in the P&ID case poses a serious risk to the country's economic survival.[20]

An article illustrating the latter – the political – can be found in the following phrase:

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[19] Boyo, H. (2018, 10 September). Is China Africa's father Xmas? *Vanguard.*
[20] Abati, R. (2020, 4 August). Nigeria and Chinese loans. *Sahara Reporters.*

Everything culminates in China's clear intention of territorial expansion.[21]

China is discursively framed as a threat by using linguistic frames such as 'serious risk' and 'territorial expansion'. These examples and the quotations throughout the set of codes clearly illustrate the allegedly disastrous consequences China as an actor might have. Whereas the sub-code China as destructive has demonstrated representations of China as destructive in itself, the emphasis within this sub-code has been on the threat China poses, and the consequences these might bring. A notable number of articles identified here do so in the context of Chinese loans and the potential consequences for the country's sovereignty. As discussed above, this should be seen in a context of suspicion about China's intentions within the continent (Zhao, 2014).

China as vulnerable
Ghanaian newspapers portray China very frequently as vulnerable, while Nigeria does much less so, as figure 10 shows. This suggests that Ghana might be somewhat more sceptical of China's power. Representations are relatively equally divided between political and business/economical ones. In light of current events in Ukraine, a politically focused article has for example stated:

> Russia's war against Ukraine – which China has tacitly supported, and which has pushed the US and the EU closer together – seems likely to drive the EU toward a broader economic decoupling from China.[22]

The last part of the phrase above clearly shows this vulnerability of 'economic decoupling' from the rest of the world. Each in their own words, this article and many others discursively point to the risk of a Chinese slowdown in growth. In regards to the societal practice, this discourse is definitely not new and in line with the popular Western discourse questioning China's continuation as a global powerhouse (Sharma, 2016).

China as untrustworthy/intransparent
Another sub-code repeatedly applied in both contexts is China as untrustworthy, albeit much more often in Nigerian newspapers. The sub-code has been assigned 39 times in Nigeria, in contrast to 24 times in Ghana, thereby suggesting Nigerian newspapers to be more distrustful towards China. China was primarily portrayed as untrustworthy in the context of business-related matters, with roughly two thirds of the representations being categorised as

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[21] Liang, X. (2021, 27 October). Wake-up call against Chinese interventionism. *The Punch.*
[22] Pei, M. (2022, 19 April). China will be deglobalisation's big loser. *Business & Financial Times.*

such. The remaining portion of codes is largely political in nature, with a couple of exceptions being cultural. Illustrating examples of why allegedly China should not be trusted can be discovered through the following paragraphs. The first one should be seen in an economical context, and the second paragraph in a political one.

> In any loan agreement with China, we have to read in between the lines. We have to make sure we really understand their agreements.[23]

> Is our country so loose as to allow easy access to Chinese who are unable to show what they intend doing in the country?[24]

With expressions of wariness such as in the phrases above, China is discursively represented as an untrustworthy actor. Other articles shed light on this discourse by pointing to China's baffling actions in certain situations.

However, the borderline between China as untrustworthy and China as intransparent is not always clear-cut. While the paragraphs above clearly emphasise the untrustworthiness of China, there is also an aspect of intransparency involved. The opposite tendency – a discursive representation of intransparency with an aspect of untrustworthiness – is illustrated by the next paragraph:

> On paper, the company says it is owned by Nigerians, but a Chinese investor steers the company's charcoal factory and timber trade.[25]

In this example, intransparency is underlined in-text by pointing to the contradictions in ownership. And indeed, you could also argue this to highlight the untrustworthiness of China. Nevertheless, paragraphs like these thereby discursively represent China as an intransparent actor full of contradictions and ambiguities. In line with what has been discussed previously, these representations of China as untrustworthy and intransparent fit into a broader narrative of doubt regarding China's intentions. And with regards to the proportions for China as intransparent, approximately two thirds of those representations were found in Nigeria. Therefore, just as Nigeria seems to be more distrustful of China, it also seems to perceive China as more intransparent. Another interesting observation is that,

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[23] Orjiude, A., & Ojatunji, S. (2021, 28 November). Nigeria risks losing assets to China over $3.48bn loan, experts warn FG. *The Punch.*
[24] The impunity of Chinese Galamseyers. (2018, 7 August). *Daily Guide Network.*
[25] Omeje, C. (2021, 27 September). Chinese-run company aided by Govt Officials exports charcoal and timber despite ban, threatening Nigeria's forests. *Sahara Reporters.*

in contrast to China as untrustworthy, the representations are relatively equally divided into political and business/economical ones. That implies that China is generally more often seen as untrustworthy in a business/economical context, while this is not the case for intransparency.

China as blameworthy

Although somewhat less frequently, China is portrayed as blameworthy in different circumstances. However, this is by and large in a Ghanaian context. As figure 10 illustrates, 16 out of the 18 quotations within this sub-code have been identified in Ghanaian newspapers, suggesting that Ghana generally blames China more regularly for certain issues. The majority of these representations of China as blameworthy are portrayed in a political context, with roughly two thirds, while the remaining quotations are largely made up of representations in a business context. Many identified codes are in the context of Galamsey or Covid-19. The latter is illustrated by the next politically oriented paragraph:

> Far from sounding the alarm when the new coronavirus was detected in Wuhan, the Chinese government concealed the outbreak, allowing it to spread far and wide. This is why China cannot be exonerated of a wilful deception and eventually a chief causer of the world's problem today.[26]

This article blames China for the world's problems around Covid, which might be an exaggerated statement for some people, just as other articles blame China for Galamsey. Hereby, these paragraphs discursively represent China as blameworthy. To put this into a broader context, just as Galamsey had increased anti-Chinese sentiments (Aidoo, 2016), Covid-19 has similarly done so through what is illustrated above.

China as greedy

From time to time, China is portrayed as greedy in both newspapers. However, with 16 times in Ghanaian newspapers and only 5 times in Nigerian newspapers, representations of China as greedy are definitely not equally dispersed. Such representations are mainly in the context of Chinese Galamseyers in Ghana, which explains the differences to a certain extent. Galamsey is also the reason why the majority of those representations are categorised as business/economy. This is illustrated by the following paragraph:

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[26] Does China stand to blame for Covid-19 pandemic? (2020, 21 May). *Daily Guide Network.*

> They cannot come to Ghana, engage in Galamsey and destroy our beautiful water
> bodies, lands and forests, with the sole aim of making money at our expense.[27]

This paragraph and many others point to the destructiveness of Chinese involvement in Galamsey in linguistic terms as a result of their 'aim of making money at our expense'. Discursively, it therefore represents China as an actor acting out of simple greed. These discourses should be understood in the context of Galamsey, as well as in a broader societal narrative around China's interest in African natural resources (Ado & Su, 2016).

5.4 Particularities within Ghanaian newspapers

It might be interesting to explore differences between *The Ghanaian Chronicle*, *Daily Guide Network* and *Business & Financial Times*. In line with Agenda Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), these media outlets all have significant agency in setting their agenda, which is why it is important to acknowledge those differences. Several observations stand out.

One thing that stands out is how the three newspapers differ in their relative amount of positive versus negative representations of China. *The Ghanaian Chronicle* is unquestionably the newspaper most critical of China, with almost as many negative representations as positive ones. This is not entirely surprising considering that *The Ghanaian Chronicle* is known for its bold reporting (Diedong, 2008). But note that this still means that positive representations within *The Ghanaian Chronicle* are in the majority. One negative sub-code that stands out in this newspaper is China as destructive, occurring 16 times. On the other side of the spectrum, *Daily Guide Network* leans the most towards positive representations of China, with roughly three quarters being labelled as positive. This is underlined by the positive sub-code China as helpful, which has appeared remarkably often with 20 times. The popularity *Daily Guide Network* enjoys due to its emphasis on sensational and exclusive stories (Akyema Adofo, 2015) does not clearly indicate whether representations should be expected to be more positive or negative. The *Business & Financial Times* is located somewhere in between with roughly 65% being positive representations of China. The distribution of sub-codes underscore this middle way with a positive and a negative sub-code as an outlier: China as capable (22) and China as vulnerable (28). Why the *Business & Financial Times* is somewhere in between is not entirely

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[27] Fight against Galamsey must go on, despite Bawumia's visit to China. (2017, 20 June). *The Ghanaian Chronicle.*

clear, but it may have to do with the objective of the newspaper in reporting on business and financial issues, instead of focusing on whether this represents China as positive or negative.
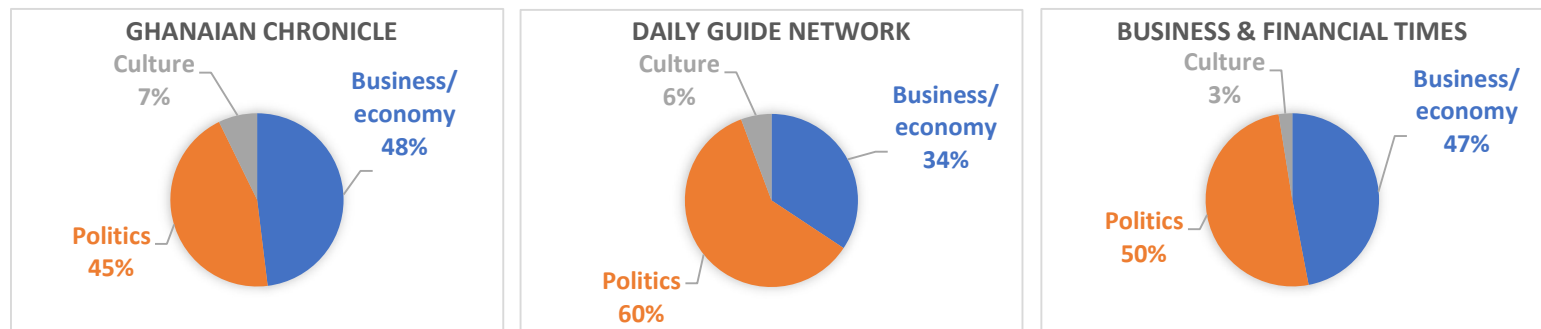
Figure 13: Categories across Ghanaian newspapers

Another aspect is the particular proportions between political, business/economical, and cultural representations within each newspaper. They are illustrated in figure 13. *The Ghanaian Chronicle* has represented China most often in a business/economical context, with almost half of the quotations (48%) being labelled as such. It thereby is the only analysed Ghanaian newspaper with more codes categorised as business/economical than political. This is in line with the findings above: negative representations being predominantly business/economic in nature (see figure 11), and *The Ghanaian Chronicle* being the most critical of China. In regards to *Daily Guide Network*, the same train of thought could be applied, albeit the other way around. The predominantly political representations in figure 13 are in line with the mostly positive representations political-related content brings (see figure 8) and the overall positive representations of China in *Daily Guide Network*. Also conforming to these patterns, just as the *Business & Financial Times* is somewhere in between the other two in relation to positive versus negative representations, it is also somewhere located in between the other two in relation to the three thematic categories. Both representations in a political as well as in a business/economical context regularly occur, which is somewhat ironic given the focus on business and finances in the newspaper. Cultural representations are relatively negligible in all three newspapers.

5.5 Particularities within Nigerian newspapers

Again, it might be appropriate to briefly reflect on differences between the three Nigerian newspapers: *The Punch*, *Vanguard* and *Sahara Reporters*. Informed by Agenda Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) and considering the relatively high level of freedom of press Nigeria enjoys, these newspapers have notable agency in setting their agenda.

The variations in the proportions of positive versus negative representations of China are also worthy of discussion for Nigerian newspapers. *The Punch* and *Vanguard* turn out to be relatively similar in their distribution of positive representations and negative representations. Out of the three, *The Punch* is the newspaper portraying China the most positive with roughly two-thirds doing so. *Vanguard* has represented China positively approximately 60% of the time. In *The Punch*, not a lot of sub-codes truly stand out, suggesting that positive representations are relatively varied. Nonetheless, China is quite often portrayed as a partner, both diplomatically and economically. Somewhat surprising, the sub-code standing out in *Vanguard* is actually a negative one: China as destructive (17). Again, this only underlines that positive representations are relatively varied, and negative representations less so in *Vanguard*. Both newspapers are openly committed to principles of justice (Nwanmereni, 2021), which does not seem to help us in explaining these overall positive representations. But considering that these principles are already calculated into the results, it might also simply underline the overall positive perceptions Nigerian people have of China.

On the contrary, *Sahara Reporters* has portrayed China more often as negative than positive. Roughly 60% of Chinese representations in the newspaper have been classified as negative. These results are actually not that surprising considering the relatively activist nature of *Sahara Reporters*; it actively encourages citizen journalists to expose social injustices in Nigeria (Sahara Reporters, n.d.). Negative sub-codes that stand out are China as destructive (25) and China as untrustworthy (23). Another interesting observation is that *Sahara Reporters* portrays China notably less so as a diplomatic or business partner, which is understandable in the context of largely negative representations.
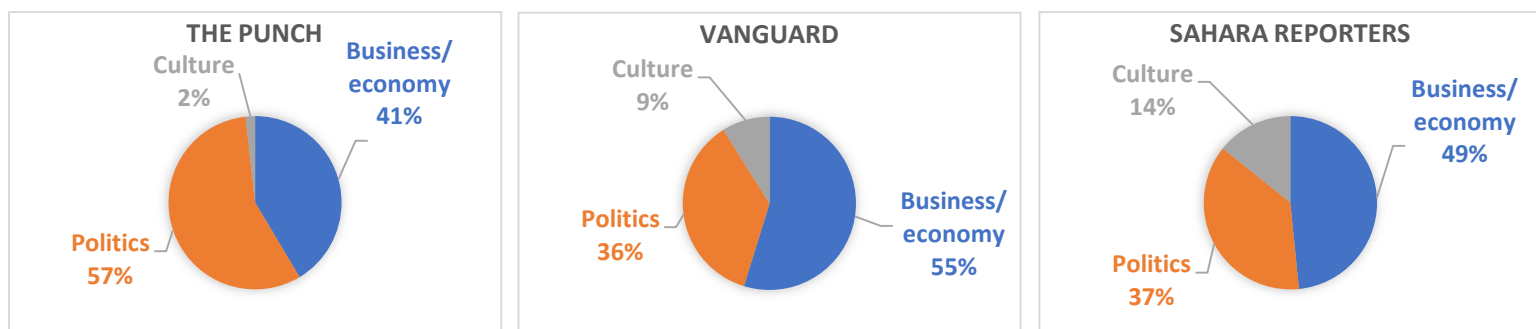
Figure 14: Categories across Nigerian newspapers

In addition, another interesting aspect to further scrutinise is the proportions between the thematic categories within each newspaper. Representations in *The Punch* are predominantly political in nature, with 57% of the quotations being labelled as such. As figure 14 illustrates, it thereby is the only Nigerian newspaper with predominantly political

representations of China. The same pattern as previously identified therefore also holds up for *The Punch*: rather positive representations of China in combination with a relatively large amount of political representations. On the other side of the spectrum, figure 12 also underlines how business/economical representations are generally negative in nature in Nigeria. In line with that thought, it makes sense that representations within *Vanguard* – which is somewhat less openly positive of China – are less political and more business/economical. This pattern does not completely hold for *Sahara Reporters*, however, where the relatively large amount of negative representations are not reflected in an extremely large proportion of business/economical representations. Nonetheless, the somewhat lower proportion of those representations are compensated through a remarkably large proportion of cultural representations in *Sahara Reporters*.

Concluding thoughts

Taking into consideration all that has been said in discussing discursive representations of China in Ghanaian and Nigerian private newspapers, it does not seem appropriate to try to come up with a catchphrase grasping all the findings. Representations of China in both countries are simply not captured in universal discourses, but in complex and sometimes contradictory utterances that should be understood in their own societal contexts. However, some observations still stood out.

First of all, to start on a very aggregate level, differences in discursive representations are to be found between Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers. This chapter started by observing Nigerian newspapers to be somewhat more critical than Ghanaian newspapers of China's presence. But only relatively, since representations of China in Nigeria are still predominantly positive. In chapter 3, research by Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny & Selormy (2020) has illustrated how perceptions of China in Nigeria are generally more positive than those in Ghana. Therefore, the findings in this study seem somewhat contradictory. However, one should consider that, as noted, perceptions in Nigeria are also still relatively positive. On another note, measuring perceptions through surveys and capturing representations in newspapers are two rather different methods. That this leads to somewhat different results is therefore not surprising.

Second, no neutral representations have been identified throughout the set of newspaper articles. This suggests that representations of China are rather polarised. We should not underestimate the role of the researcher in classifying certain discursive representations as positive, neutral or negative. As has been discussed in the beginning of this chapter, this study has for example understood discursive representations of China as a diplomatic and

business partner as positive, based on the rationale that those still implicitly represent China as a partner bringing opportunities and affluence. This is in contrast to some other studies (Anunne, 2018). Nonetheless, that representations of China are consistently positive or negative is no coincidence. The media has the inherent tendency to capture the more extreme, because this is what attracts the attention of the viewer. News is not necessarily about the most relevant, but about the exception to the rule (Luyendijk, 2006). It is about those phenomena that differ from the ordinary. Therefore, we should be careful not to jump to the conclusion that perceptions of everyday people are just as extreme.

Third, differences can be identified in representations written within either a political, business/economical or cultural context. Political representations of China seem to be regularly positive in nature, while business/economical representations tend to be somewhat more critical of China. It is therefore not a coincidence that representations in Nigerian newspapers – which are generally more critical of China – tend to also be business/economical representations more regularly.

Fourth, which newspaper you focus on has implications for the results you will find, since there are notable differences in how certain newspapers discursively portray China. Taking into consideration the somewhat more openly positive representations of China in Ghanaian newspapers discussed above, *The Ghanaian Chronicle* is relatively critical of China, *Daily Guide Network* relatively positive, and the *Business & Financial Times* somewhere in between. In Nigerian newspapers, *The Punch* and *Vanguard* represent China rather positively, while *Sahara Reporters* is the only newspaper representing China more regularly as negative than positive. And as figure 13 and 14 have illustrated, the observed pattern between the sort of portrayal of China (positive, negative) and the context in which it is portrayed (politics, business/economy, culture) generally also holds up for individual newspapers.

Fifth, the particularities of certain sub-codes are important to consider. Some tend to be much more prominent than others, both within and between the case studies. For instance, it has been evident that newspapers in both countries portray China very frequently as a diplomatic and business partner. At the same time, between the two countries, sub-codes such as for example China as a powerhouse and China as vulnerable have been very unevenly dispersed. In addition, contradictions between sub-codes are to be found too from time to time. For example, China has been portrayed as vulnerable in Ghanaian newspapers much more regularly, suggesting scepticism of China's power. This is in line with the limited use of China as a powerhouse in Ghana. At the same time, however, Ghana has

represented China also more regularly than Nigeria as capable. These observations underline the complexity and contradictory nature discursive representations of China might have. That Ghana or Nigeria is sceptical of China's power in certain aspects does not mean it cannot be so in other aspects.

It therefore seems to be in place to end where we have started: representations of China are captured in complex and sometimes contradictory utterances that should be understood in its societal context. Understanding these particularities is important, because this is what eventually might shape realities for everyday people.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The following chapter will take the analysis a step further by providing an interpretation of the data in the extension of the previous chapter in the first paragraph. The paragraphs thereafter will discuss the limitations and recommendations regarding this study. The chapter will end with a conclusion.

6.1 Interpretations and implications

In line with the findings in chapter 5, there are some interesting dynamics that deserve further discussion and reflection. First of all, regarding the polarisation within the results of this study, on both extremes of the positive-negative spectrum, one will need to ask themselves whether the author has a certain interest in portraying China as extremely optimistic or pessimistic. Many overly optimistic newspaper articles analysed were those written by Chinese ambassadors and then published by the newspaper and those quoting and paraphrasing the opinions of Chinese envoys. The authors very critical of China were mostly independent journalists with no explicit ties to China or the government. Also with respect to those extremely negative representations of China, one might take those with a grain of salt. It may be unjust and potentially racist to blame China for most of the wrongdoings on the continent (Wekesa, 2017). These observations remind us of the writings of Diakon & Röschenthaler (2017), who illustrated how sometimes reporting can be rather biased due to the power dynamics creating certain media representations of China. Although China might not openly invest in Ghanaian and Nigerian newspaper outlets – as done in Mali for example – it is still important to consider that China might occasionally influence what is published through more subtle tactics. This is underlined by the regularly recurring phenomena of articles written by Chinese ambassadors. But also vice versa, it would be naive to rule out the possibility of other actors influencing media outlets to be more critical. Therefore, on both sides of the spectrum, we should consider the bias certain extreme representations might bring. In addition, to further nuance the polarised results, one should also take into consideration that the neutral is harder to capture and less often displayed considering the extreme nature of the media. Although a notable selection of articles might be written relatively neutral overall – as figure 4 has illustrated – by balancing out positive and negative representations they are still captured through primarily positive and negative ones. These tendencies are problematic, since they eliminate all forms of nuance.

Second, in line with the discussed difficulties in classifying representations into unambiguous categories (Adem, 2014), certain articles have underlined the complex and sometimes contradictory nature of representations of China. Examples that portray China as positive and negative simultaneously are two articles in *The Ghanaian Chronicle* written in the context of Galamsey: In the wake of Ghana's crackdown on illegal Chinese miners – Chinese diplomat calls for new era in Ghana-China relations, and Ghana, China to institute committee to check influx of Chinese miners. As the titles already suggest, they do so through differentiating between China as a state and Chinese individuals. The former is represented as positive through being helpful in punishing Chinese illegal miners, and the latter as negative because of the illegal mining activities. These dynamics underline the need to embrace the ambiguity within representations of China, in line with Wekesa (2017) and Jedlowski & Röschenthaler (2017).

Third, it seems appropriate to discuss and hypothesize from some of the results found within the analysis. Let us start with one of the broader questions: Why are representations of China in Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers overall relatively positive? This might have to do with the general tendencies of the media: capturing what is 'newsworthy'. More often than not, this tends to portray China as positive. People critical of China express this more generally through opinion pieces, which are less regular due to the lower degree of 'news' it brings. News is about what is different from the ordinary (Luyendijk, 2006). This tends to be something in line with 'China built this new dam, bringing prosperity' more regularly than a nuanced article pointing out the potential risks regarding political or economic related affairs with China. The same reasoning could be applied to the question regarding differences in representations between newspapers. Newspapers such as *Daily Guide Network*, *Business & Financial Times*, *The Punch* and *Vanguard* – all portraying China relatively positively – tend to publish articles more in line with 'newsworthy' events discussed above. On the other hand, *The Ghanaian Chronicle* has a notable amount of opinion-based articles and *Sahara Reporters* is quite a particular newspaper focused on citizen journalists sharing their opinions on certain issues. Therefore, it is not entirely coincidental that these latter two newspapers tend to portray China as negative more often than the others. And more importantly, this shows that it matters what you expose yourself to, because this might eventually shape your perceptions of China's presence.

Another interesting question to briefly discuss is that of why political representations are more often positively framed and business/economical representations more often negatively. The results seem to point to a tendency of political news to be that of diplomatic events and diplomatic deals the majority of the time, while business/economical news is

more regularly about what people lose economically from China's presence. Last but definitely not least, an important question that is very difficult to answer is the following: Why does Ghana represent China more positively than Nigeria in newspapers? It is very challenging to answer whether this truly implies that Ghanaian representations are more positive, or that this is merely due to the particular sample chosen in this study. And in generalising from there, it is even more difficult to suggest whether this also implies that perceptions of China are more positive in Ghana, which is also somewhat contrary to the results from Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny & Selormey (2020). One of the limitations discussed in the following paragraph further reflects on this tension between representations and perceptions.

6.2 Limitations

First of all, this study has captured representations of China, which are not necessarily interchangeable for perceptions of China. There is definitely a certain connection to be found between representations and perceptions, as multiple authors have pointed towards. For example, the central argument of Luyendijk (2006) is built around the idea that media shapes public opinion; it shapes people's perceptions of reality. Maybe even more relevant for this study, Dankwah & Valenta (2019) have argued that views of China in Ghana are affected by media news on China. In addition, the quote previously used to illustrate the workings of Agenda Setting Theory – ''The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about'' (Cohen, 1963, p. 13) – could also be applied to perceptions. In determining what people think about, the media might indirectly also influence their perceptions of certain affairs (Nwanmereni, 2021). However, this research has not been able to explicitly prove that connection to be present in the case of Ghana and Nigeria, although we seem to come close in the company of the existing literature. It has made intuitive sense to make suggestions in those places where there seems to be a link, but the lack of a clear causal path should leave us wary of generalising too far from representations in newspapers to arguing how everyday people perceive China's presence.

Second, subjectivity has played a part in multiple phases of this study. Decisions have been made on the basis of the inherently unavoidable assumptions of the researcher about the world. These subjective assumptions are shaped by the researcher's own experiences in life. That subjectivity has played a part is particularly important to consider in the sample selection, the coding process and the Critical Discourse Analysis. As discussed in the methodology, the process of purposive sampling unavoidably brings a certain sampling bias

(Berndt, 2020). This is also the reason why concise selection criteria have been drawn up, in order to minimise the subjective decisions the researcher had to make. Furthermore, the first cycle and second cycle coding processes have especially brought the researcher assumptions in deciding what is and is not relevant to discursively code. The research bias this brings is well known and somewhat compensated by what manual coding brings instead: the human ability to recognise patterns (Munn et al., 2008). At last, the application of CDA has inherently brought the researcher's ideological position in the interpretation of the data, in line with what Widdowson (1995) has suggested. The Qualitative Content Analysis applied as an extra mechanism has prevented the study to become overly dependent on this interpretation of discourses, and has therefore combined the best of both worlds: the ability to analyse in-depth what representations look like with CDA and the ability to provide a general overview of representations with QCA.

Third, a limitation is that it has been beyond the scope of this study to extensively explore *why* certain results have appeared. Indeed, the study has considerably explored and captured what representations of China are in Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers, and has tried to identify patterns where possible. The concluding thoughts in the analysis part and paragraph 6.1 have especially tried to do so. Nonetheless, a systematic study regarding the *why* is relatively absent.

Fourth, only national private newspapers have been considered in this study, thereby not providing the opportunity to explore similarities and differences between different sorts of platforms. But as argued, national private newspapers were assumed to generally represent the voice of the people the best, considering the history of opposition newspapers such as *The Ghanaian Chronicle*, *Daily Guide*, *The Punch* and *Vanguard* (Koper et al., 2009; Ahmad et al., 2016). And coincidentally or not, those newspapers also turned out to be the most accessible.

6.3 Recommendations

In line with the third limitation discussed in the previous paragraph, additional research might benefit from further exploring *why* certain results have appeared. Although already briefly discussed in paragraph 6.1, the field might benefit from exploring one or more of the posed questions. Why does Ghana represent China more positively than Nigeria in private newspapers? Or why are representations of China in Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers overall relatively positive? Why are political representations more often positively framed and why are business/economical representations more often negatively framed? And why do

certain newspapers represent China differently than others? The majority of these questions are quite overarching, and therefore challenging to answer. One way to systematically explore these tendencies better is through taking a larger sample. However, in order to be able to accurately answer such broad questions, it might be necessary to move away from just the field of media – in other words the Africa-China media and communications scholarship – towards other debates capturing these dynamics. The next recommendation will further reflect hereupon.

In the extension of the fourth limitation discussed, another overarching recommendation is to broaden the horizon and look beyond the dynamics within national private newspapers in Ghana and Nigeria. There are different directions to take here. First of all, one could simply start researching the same dynamics in other countries. One could also change the focus towards state-owned newspapers or newspapers with a more regional/local focus. This will facilitate the ability to study similarities and differences between state-owned and private newspapers, or similarities and differences between different regions. In anticipation of the dynamics between state-owned and private, preparatory research for this study already seemed to point to the tendency within state-owned newspapers to represent China as more positive. This was also underlined by Musanga (2017). Another way of broadening the horizon might be by focusing on non-traditional forms of media, in line with Jedlowski & Thomas (2017), Harrison et al. (2017), Musanga (2017) and Oduro-Frimpong (2021). However, in order to move away from representations and towards perceptions, one also needs to look beyond mechanisms within the media. Methods used such as by Afrobarometer (Gadzala & Hanusch, 2010; Lekorwe et al., 2016; Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny & Selormey, 2020) might be a good start, but they still only give us information on the aggregate level. In trying to research perceptions of people, one should consider the difficulties they are likely to encounter. In the context of the MENA region, Luyendijk (2006) has reflected on the difficulties in effectively capturing perceptions of people in repressed societies. And if you are able to find something, it is often hard to generalise from those limited results. And while people in Ghana and Nigeria do not live under such repression (Freedom House, 2022), it is still quite challenging, since public opinion is generally not very well documented. One could argue that on one side of the spectrum, macro-level research in order to find causal paths between the discussed dynamics might be very useful but difficult, and on the other side of the spectrum, something such as a phenomenological approach with interviews might be more accessible but harder to generalise from.

6.4 <u>Conclusion</u>

All of this leads us to conclude with the main research question: *How is China represented in Ghanaian and Nigerian media, and what are the similarities and differences between the two?*

In an increasingly complex and dynamic world, we are not necessarily heading into one direction. Things that seemingly do not go together, such as overly positive and negative representations of China, coexist at the same time. Media representations are often portrayed dichotomously in either positive or negative terms – underlining the polarised nature – but also as more ambiguous and contradictory at times. In short, China is represented in Ghanaian and Nigerian media in discursively varying ways. But above all, it is important to understand these discursive utterances in their societal contexts. Ghanaian and Nigerian newspapers are similar in that they represent China relatively positively, in that representations are polarised, and in the distribution of those representations across political, business/economical and cultural forms of portrayals. The countries differ in the distribution of positive versus negative representations, with Ghanaian newspapers clearly portraying China as more positive than Nigerian newspapers. Another difference is between individual newspapers, in line with the basic assumptions of Agenda Setting Theory. Exploring those similarities and differences increase our understanding of media representations in particular contexts, in line with the need within the Africa-China media and communications scholarship. This has been crucial, because these representations are what eventually might shape everyday people's perceptions of China.

This research question has been addressed by using the first sub-question regarding African as well as Ghanaian and Nigerian perceptions of China throughout the years to sketch the broader context. This sub-question illustrated the complex and contradictory dynamics shaping perceptions of China, resulting in perceptions to be ambiguous, varying and volatile. These findings turned out to be an important precursor for the findings regarding media representations in the subsequent sub-questions focusing on discourses of China in Ghanaian and Nigerian private newspapers. Media representations also turned out to be rather diverse and contradictory at times, even though these representations gave a relatively binary and therefore polarised view overall. The tendency of the media to capture the more extreme and the potential interests of authors to represent China as extremely positive or negative explain these results to some extent. These tendencies are dangerous in that they provide less and less room for nuance and understanding for people *perceived* as different.

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Appendix 1: Ghanaian articles

Title	Newspaper	Publication date	Words	Author, if applicable
China revives faith in Ghana's economy	Ghanaian Chronicle	27 June 2017	1042	I.K. Gyasi
The anti-China question	Ghanaian Chronicle	17 February 2014	1598	Paul Frimpong
The difficulties in accessing the U.S. three billion loan for development – Can we negotiate with China?	Ghanaian Chronicle	15 January 2014	846	Alhaji Alhasan Abdulai
Fight against Galamsey must go on, despite Bawumia's visit to China	Ghanaian Chronicle	20 June 2017	674	-
Ghana-China trade is more than U.S. $5 billion	Ghanaian Chronicle	7 July 2015	350	-
In the wake of Ghana's crackdown on illegal Chinese miners – Chinese diplomat calls for new era in Ghana-China relations	Ghanaian Chronicle	12 July 2013	395	-
China to donate military equipment to Ghana	Ghanaian Chronicle	28 October 2016	341	-
Do we hate the Chinese?	Ghanaian Chronicle	8 April 2013	1025	-
'Obroni' Chinese & illegal mining	Ghanaian Chronicle	19 June 2013	1410	Emmanuel Akli
Red flag over Ghana-SINOPEC deal	Ghanaian Chronicle	19 September 2012	879	Stephen Odoi-Larbi
Chinese explore investment potential in energy sector	Ghanaian Chronicle	27 February 2012	258	-
Chinese firm to feed Ghanaian kids	Ghanaian Chronicle	28 May 2013	400	Masahudu Ankiilu Kunateh
Chinese loan may cost U.S. $8.5 billion	Ghanaian Chronicle	27 January 2012	463	Daniel Nonor
Ghana, China to institute committee to check influx of Chinese miners	Ghanaian Chronicle	16 April 2013	631	Masahudu Ankiilu Kunateh
China friendship union worried over attacks on Chinese	Ghanaian Chronicle	8 August 2012	668	Masahudu Ankiilu Kunateh
Chinese govt to build capacity of railways ministry	Ghanaian Chronicle	31 May 2017	416	Gideon Ahenkorah
Inusah Fuseini pledges to stop Chinese illegal miners	Ghanaian Chronicle	14 March 2013	534	Masahudu Ankiilu Kunateh
Lands minister orders illegal Chinese miners to leave sites	Ghanaian Chronicle	30 May 2013	485	Masahudu Ankiilu Kunateh
Those murderous Chinese	Ghanaian Chronicle	13 May 2013	531	-
NAMDO's secret Chinese loan	Ghanaian Chronicle	10 June 2013	466	-
Ghana, China mark 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations	Daily Guide Network	6 July 2020	705	Melvin Tarlue

Does China stand to blame for Covid-19 pandemic?	Daily Guide Network	21 May 2020	829	-
Buhari okays China-Africa marriage	Daily Guide Network	5 September 2018	444	Joe Awuah Jr.
Ghanaians in Norway condemn China over maltreatment of Africans	Daily Guide Network	4 May 2020	276	-
Ghanaian journalists undergo training in China	Daily Guide Network	12 August 2019	449	-
Expect great Ghana-China golf	Daily Guide Network	12 September 2019	232	-
Ghana-China golf rocks Sakumono	Daily Guide Network	30 September 2019	203	Kofi Owusu Aduonum
Your investments safe – Akufo-Addo to China business people	Daily Guide Network	5 September 2018	767	-
China barks over road funding	Daily Guide Network	23 July 2015	555	William Yaw Owusu
FOCAC summit takes of in Beijing	Daily Guide Network	4 September 2018	598	Joe Awuah Jr.
Ghana making progress in utilizing $3bn Chinese cash – Foreign Minister	Daily Guide Network	17 July 2019	397	Melvin Tarlue
Chinese community assists four orphanages in Cape Coast	Daily Guide Network	12 November 2018	433	-
Chinese embrace one district one factory	Daily Guide Network	8 August 2017	385	Ernest Kofi Adu
The impunity of Chinese Galamseyers	Daily Guide Network	7 August 2018	498	-
China donates IT equipment to Osudoku schools	Daily Guide Network	20 December 2019	397	Nii Adjei Mensahfio
COCOBOD solicits $1.5bn Chinese support	Daily Guide Network	14 May 2018	551	-
Ghana partners China to develop agric sector	Daily Guide Network	8 July 2019	436	Melvin Tarlue, Susana Bart-Plange
Chinese govt gives $1m for Ebola education	Daily Guide Network	28 January 2015	253	-
China gives to cardio centre	Daily Guide Network	20 October 2016	376	Jamila Akweley Okertchiri
China banks court African gov'ts	Daily Guide Network	25 June 2019	786	Fortune Alimi
China will be deglobalisation's big loser	Business & Financial Times	19 April 2022	877	Minxin Pei
The pandemic's impact on China's growth prospects	Business & Financial Times	27 August 2021	1014	Yu Yongding
Carry forward the spirit of China-Africa friendship and cooperation and build a China-Africa with a shared future in the new era	Business & Financial Times	16 December 2021	3556	-
Could China's entry into cocoa production benefit Ghana?	Business & Financial Times	31 May 2021	1997	Kwame Asamoah Kwarteng

China's deepening geopolitical hole	Business & Financial Times	17 July 2020	836	Minxin Pei
China's accelerating fertility crisis	Business & Financial Times	24 March 2021	990	Zhang Jun
Ghana-China's trade value reaches US$7.5bn	Business & Financial Times	17 September 2020	873	-
China's green gambit	Business & Financial Times	21 December 2020	822	Minxin Pei
Chinese community donates PPE to 2 hospitals	Business & Financial Times	1 July 2020	404	-
China's Shandong Gold to buy Ghana-focused Cardinal Resources for $221 mln	Business & Financial Times	18 June 2020	282	-
COCOBOD eyes Chinese market	Business & Financial Times	30 January 2018	749	Lilipearl Baaba Otoo
Is Ghana modelling China's development?	Business & Financial Times	24 September 2018	1942	-
Coronavirus ends China's honeymoon in Africa	Business & Financial Times	20 April 2020	1536	-
Ghana-China partnership set to bear more fruits	Business & Financial Times	22 June 2017	891	-
China's Xiaomi opens first West Africa office in Ghana	Business & Financial Times	18 October 2021	368	-
Chinese market to absorb 1D1F products	Business & Financial Times	15 May 2018	480	-
Boost for 'one district, one factory'… as Chinese company sets up factories in K'si and Sogakope	Business & Financial Times	13 October 2017	515	Eugene Davis
Ghana to foster stronger ties with China – Finance Minister	Business & Financial Times	8 February 2017	394	Norvan Acquah
Local cement manufacturers call on Ghana Standards Authority to investigate Chinese producers	Business & Financial Times	19 October 2018	350	-
China to fund 700MW VRA coal plant	Business & Financial Times	15 March 2016	577	Dominick Andoh

Table 4: Selection of Ghanaian newspaper articles

Appendix 2: Nigerian articles

Title	Newspaper	Year	Words	Author, if applicable
Opportunities of Nigeria-China cooperation in 2022	The Punch	19 January 2022	1331	Charles Onunaiju
Nigeria asks China to fast-track $500m loan	The Punch	18 March 2022	114	Deborah Tolu-Kolawole
Help fast-track approval of $500m NTA loan, Lai Mohammed urges Chinese envoy	The Punch	17 March 2022	395	Deborah Tolu-Kolawole
LCCI, CABC seek to strengthen Nigeria-China economic ties	The Punch	27 January 2022	518	Edidiong Ikpoto
Nigeria risks losing assets to China over $3.48bn loan, experts warn FG	The Punch	28 November 2021	1562	Amarachi Orjiude, Sami Ojatunji
FG to partner China on renewable energy technology	The Punch	18 December 2021	195	Sami Tunji
Why China may never surpass America	The Punch	13 September 2021	718	Sani Thompson
On China's increasing influence in Africa	The Punch	12 August 2021	1037	Nick Onoja
Bayelsa seeks China's partnership to boost development	The Punch	18 October 2021	383	Taiwo Ojoye
Why Xi Jinping looks desperate at home	The Punch	10 February 2022	1166	Duncan Clarke
My China trip yielded over $6bn investments – Buhari	The Punch	15 April 2016	416	Zovoe Jonathan
Nigeria, China trade volume tops $20bn	The Punch	22 September 2021	243	Adelani Adepegba
Chinese company dominates Nigeria's N10.5tn railway projects, says Fitch report	The Punch	18 January 2022	467	Sami Tunji
Wake-up call against Chinese interventionism	The Punch	27 October 2021	1585	Xi Liang
Re: Wake-up call against Chinese interventionism	The Punch	4 November 2021	732	Yi Hang
Chinese envoy urges Nigerian parties to cooperate for development	The Punch	22 October 2021	288	Adelani Adepegba
Chinese president, Xi, seeks stronger relation with Nigeria	The Punch	23 October 2021	136	Stephen Angbulu
COVID-19: Buhari, Chinese president, Jinping, to participate in virtual summit today	The Punch	17 June 2020	336	Sodiq Oyeleke
COVID-19: China's investment in Africa rises to $2.96bn	The Punch	21 September 2021	281	Nike Popoola
UPDATED: we are prudent with our borrowings from China – Onyeama	The Punch	18 November 2021	166	Stephen Angbulu
China ready to help Nigeria reduce poverty	Vanguard	29 September 2021	652	-
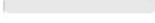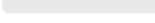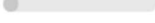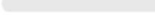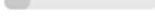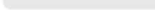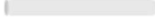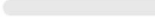
Nigeria is China's major investment destination in Africa – envoy	Vanguard	9 February 2021	553	David O Royal
Racial discrimination – stop ignoring our complaints, Nigerians in China tell govt	Vanguard	1 June 2020	1015	Victor Ajihromanus
Is China Africa's father Xmas?	Vanguard	10 September 2018	1210	Henry Boyo
China seeks more crude oil export from Nigeria	Vanguard	13 March 2016	457	-
China is no stranger to Nigeria, many African countries	Vanguard	11 March 2016	659	Vera Samuel Anyagafu
China boost future cultural ties with Nigeria through film	Vanguard	11 January 2016	456	Japhet Alakam
Nigeria-China currency deal to boost economies of both countries – FG	Vanguard	21 April 2016	379	-
China reassures Nigerians of standard imported products	Vanguard	28 May 2014	234	-
Chinese firm mobilises to site for MMA's additional terminal	Vanguard	24 September 2013	381	Kenneth Ehigiator
Land encroachment – communities beg Buhari, Amosun to stop Chinese now	Vanguard	17 May 2019	1432	Adekunle
Building a beautiful China for everyone	Vanguard	30 April 2018	856	Chukwudi Enekwechi
Zamfara, Chinese investors sign agreement on agric, mining	Vanguard	27 December 2019	168	Temisan Amoye
We support Nigeria to manage its internal affairs – Chinese govt	Vanguard	22 February 2019	145	Nwafor Sunday
Cotton farmers accuse China over collapse of textile industries	Vanguard	19 March 2018	684	Gabriel Ewepu
My $1bn China-Exim bank story, by Okonjo-Iweala	Vanguard	16 August 2015	613	Emma Ujah
China to sanction companies for disobeying Nigerian laws	Vanguard	17 November 2015	305	-
Nigeria, China resume talks on Port Harcourt-Maiduguri rail project	Vanguard	21 November 2019	368	Hamed Shobiye
Most sub-standard goods, not from China	Vanguard	26 November 2015	566	Vera Samuel Anyagafu
Fake drugs come from China – NAFDAC	Vanguard	10 May 2013	456	Chioma Obinna
China seriously appalling: ''Haven't Africans suffered yet enough?''	Sahara Reporters	11 April 2020	1979	Maxi Obi
Nigerian government begins talks with China over COVID-19 vaccines	Sahara Reporters	5 January 2021	356	-
BREAKING: Oshiomhole explains Peter Obi's obsession with China	Sahara Reporters	5 February 2019	415	-
Chinese don't want Africans in China – Abike Dabiri-Erewa	Sahara Reporters	11 May 2020	342	-
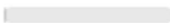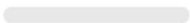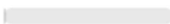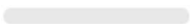
58 Nigerians get scholarships from China	Sahara Reporters	16 August 2019	219	-
Nigeria will pay China loan back in 20 years – Minister of Transportation, Amaechi	Sahara Reporters	2 August 2020	415	-
Made in China	Sahara Reporters	21 April 2019	2399	Alex Otti
China donates N2billion to Nigeria to support fight against insurgency	Sahara Reporters	11 January 2019	332	-
Nigerian man goes to China to find 'American dream', launches social network - PRI	Sahara Reporters	22 May 2012	446	Nina Porzucki
Nigeria and Chinese loans	Sahara Reporters	4 August 2020	2359	Reuben Abati
Nigerian lawmakers move to cancel Chinese loans over alleged fraudulent terms	Sahara Reporters	13 May 2020	1270	-
Chinese-run company aided by govt officials exports charcoal and timber despite ban, threatening Nigeria's forests	Sahara Reporters	27 September 2021	2547	Chikezie Omeje
Amaechi, Abati, Nigeria and Chinese loans	Sahara Reporters	15 August 2020	2277	David Iyofor
How importation of 15 Chinese nationals to 'help' coronavirus fight exposed Nigerian government's insincerity	Sahara Reporters	17 May 2020	937	-
Reps probe NNPC, contractors over $2.6billion pipeline project, replacement of Nigerian firms with Chinese	Sahara Reporters	24 February 2021	770	-
Coronavirus: Nigerians in Chinese city, Wuhan, get financial support from government	Sahara Reporters	27 February 2020	246	-
China orders business owners to take down Islamic, Arabic signs as it intensifies clampdown on Muslims	Sahara Reporters	1 August 2019	421	-
Chinese national loses $300.000 to Nigerian government	Sahara Reporters	11 May 2020	314	-
China shares coronavirus treatment techniques with Nigeria, others	Sahara Reporters	11 February 2020	186	-
Over 160,000 bags of rice donated to IDPs by China 'rots away in NEMA stores'	Sahara Reporters	15 November 2018	326	-

Table 5: Selection of Nigerian newspaper articles

Appendix 3: Coding scheme

◇ Business/economy	492	0	[Theme]
◇ Politics	502	0	[Theme]
◇ Culture	70	0	[Theme]
◇ China as generous	36	0	[Positive representation]
◇ Chinese as equivalents/friends	58	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as helpful	76	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as clever	5	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as transparent	10	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as blameless	11	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as trustworthy	25	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as bringing opportunities	33	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as a victim	4	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as a role model	56	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as capable	50	0	[Positive representation]
◇ Positive frame	68	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as providing opportunities	58	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as a diplomatic partner	102	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as moderate	36	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as a powerhouse	17	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as taking initiative	14	0	[Positive representation]
◇ China as a business partner	85	0	[Positive representation]
◇ Neutral frame	13	0	[Neutral representation]
◇ China as untrustworthy	63	0	[Negative representation]
◇ China as unhelpful	9	0	[Negative representation]
◇ China as incapable	13	0	[Negative representation]
◇ Negative frame	39	0	[Negative representation]
◇ China as destructive	86	0	[Negative representation]
◇ Chinese as greedy	21	0	[Negative representation]
◇ China as intransparent	37	0	[Negative representation]
◇ China as needy	7	0	[Negative representation]
◇ China as a threat	43	0	[Negative representation]

◇ Chinese as ignorant   7   0   [Negative representation]

◇ China as blameworthy   18   0   [Negative representation]

◇ China as rebellious   8   0   [Negative representation]

◇ China as insignificant   6   0   [Negative representation]

◇ China as vulnerable   40   0   [Negative representation]

◇ China as ethically questionable   38   0   [Negative representation]

◇ Attribute code   91   0   [Attribute codes]