

**The framing of China in Nigeria: An analysis of the coverage of China's
involvement in Nigeria by *Thisday* newspaper**

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by

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ABSTRACT

This study identified the media frames that dominate *Thisday* newspaper's coverage of China's engagement with Nigeria and relate these frames to frame sponsors, who articulate and contest these framings. Frame analysis is applied to a sample of 40 news, feature and opinion articles between the sample period of 1 November 2011 and 31 December 2012. The study analysed media content from *Thisday* newspapers, drawing on the four dimensions of frames identified by Entman: define problems, diagnose causes, evaluate causal agents and their effects, and recommend treatment (Entman 1993).

Using an inductive approach to frame analysis, the study identified two overarching mega frames, contested among the ruling elites who sponsor their views on China in the media, which define China's engagement with Nigeria; partner/role model and predator. The two mega frames mirror the broad characterisation prevalent in the academic literature on China in Africa. The primary partner/role model mega frame constructs China's engagement with Nigeria as a mutually beneficial economic partnership while on the other hand the predator mega frame constructs it as unequal and exploitative.

The study identified the activities of frame sponsors who are articulating and promoting their views on China's engagement with Nigeria in the media as primarily responsible for these framings.

The study also identified the activities of frame sponsors (ruling and economic elites) was key to the exclusion of ordinary peoples' voices, civic organisations, trade unions and human rights organisation in the text. However, the study also attributes the exclusion of ordinary voices, human rights, democracy and civic engagements in the text to the weakness of *Thisday* journalism in mediating the framings of China being promoted and articulated by elite frame sponsors. This is, however, symptomatic of the fault lines of journalism practice in Nigeria.

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Dedication

To God almighty be the glory: He alone is worthy of praise. He made it possible for me to conclude my MA in Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University

I dedicate this thesis to the three women that have come to shape my life: my daughter, Ebubechukwu Awele Esther Umejei; my wife, Aboshioke Lilian Umejei and my late mother, Celestina Umejei-madam cool penny.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

COSCO: China Ocean Shipping Group Company

CGCOC: China Giant Construction Overseas Company

Sinopec: China Petrochemical Corporation

CNPC: The China National Petroleum Corporation

SEPCO: Shandong Electric Power Construction Corporation

CCECC: China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation

CSCEC: China State Construction Engineering Corporation

CNOOC: China National Offshore Oil Corporation

Sinoma: China National Materials Group Corporation

CGC: China Guodian Corporation

FOCAC: Forum on China-Africa cooperation

GWIC: The Great Wall Industry Corporation (GWIC)

ZTE: Zhongxing Telecommunication Equipment Corporation

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

EXIM: The Chinese Export-Import Bank

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SEZs: Special Economic Zones

EIA: U.S. Energy Information Administration

UNITA: Union for the Total Independence of Angola

MPLA: Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola

CBN: Central Bank of Nigeria

FDI: Foreign Direct Investments

MOFA: Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NIPC: Nigeria Investment Promotion Commission

LFTZ: Lekki Free Trade Zone

OGFTZ: Ogun Guangdong Free Trade Zone

NTA: Nigerian Television Authority

ITU: International Telecommunication Union

NBMA: Nigeria Broadcaster Merit Award

NAFDAC: National Agency for Foods and Drugs Administration and Control

PAPDA: Phones and Allied Products Dealers Association

LAHA: The Lagos state House of Assembly

ELDA: Embroidery Lace Dealers Association of Nigeria

MAN: Manufacturers Association of Nigeria

1.0 Introduction: Origins and contexts for the research

This thesis is titled ‘The framing of China in Nigeria: An analysis of the coverage of China’s involvement in Nigeria by *Thisday* newspaper’. It is the result of a study conducted to identify the frames that dominate the coverage of China’s engagement in Nigeria by *Thisday* newspaper and sources-sponsors contesting these framings of China. In particular, the study analyses journalistic texts published in *Thisday* newspaper between 1 November 2011 and 31 December 2012. My interest in this research stems from China’s involvement in my home country, Nigeria. One incident stands out: In 2002, more than 120 workers locked within a Chinese-owned rubber factory in Ikorodu, Lagos, were burnt to death (Ahiuma-Young, Akoni & Ehigiator 2002). The incident was a national disaster that culminated in the closure of the company by the Nigerian government. The disaster remains etched in the memories of Nigerians and has resulted in the stereotyping of Chinese companies as slave camps. This thesis, therefore, presented an opportunity for me to interrogate the framing of China’s engagement with Nigeria as represented in *Thisday* newspaper.

The essence of this chapter is to offer appropriate background to what the study is about, what informs it, its significance, and how it was conducted. This chapter also outlines an overview of the thesis and the content of the remaining chapters.

The chapter is presented in the following format: the first section describes the context of the study; the second presents the goals, the third section provides a brief overview of the methods, procedures and techniques employed to conduct the research; and the fourth gives the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Context of the research

1.1.1 *Thisday* newspaper

The study comprises 40 articles published in *Thisday* newspaper. It is a textual study and is concerned with the framing of China’s engagement with Nigeria by *Thisday* newspaper. The *Thisday* newspaper hit the Nigerian newsstand in 1995 (Ette 2012: 48) and is owned by

Nduka Obaigbena¹, a businessman and media baron, who also owns the London-based Arise Cable Television, and is connected with both the ruling and business elite in Nigeria.

Thisday² is the first newspaper in Nigeria to go to full colour printing and also the first to commence satellite printing in three destinations. *Thisday*, with its headquarters in Lagos, is an elite newspaper, with national circulation (Ette 2012: 48). The newspaper is published in English, the official language of Nigeria. It has no link to any ethnic groupings or regions and enjoys national circulation in Nigeria. It describes itself as a “player on the global stage by bringing the world to Nigeria and taking Nigeria to the world³”. An initial survey of Nigerian newspapers affirmed its international orientation because it has the highest number of stories on China in Nigeria. The *Thisday* publishes three titles, Sunday, Daily and Saturday newspapers with different editors

1.1.2 China in Africa

China’s rapid economic growth and increasing role in global politics over the past few decades have led to shifts in the global geopolitical landscape. These shifts, in turn, have had an impact on China’s engagement with Africa (Kaplinsky et al. 2010). To strengthen its relations with Africa, China established the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (Focac) in 2000 to engender trade, aid, cooperation and bilateral relations between it and African countries (Brautigam 2009). Its launch in October 2000 attracted forty African leaders who converged on Beijing for the summit (Moyo 2012; Brautigam 2009: 77). In 2006, China proclaimed Africa a mutual partner at the Focac and declared it “Africa’s year” (Focac 2006).

Over the past few decades, China has invested heavily in Africa. An important example of this can be found in the case of Nigeria, where levels of Chinese Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) are the second-highest in Africa, surpassed only by South Africa (Egbula & Zheng 2011: 6). China is Africa’s largest trading partner and two-way trade between Africa and China has grown from US\$10.6 billion in 2000 to US\$166 billion in 2011 (Taylor 2012). In 2010, Nigeria was China’s fourth biggest African trading partner and second largest Chinese export destination in Africa (Egbula & Zheng 2011: 6). Bilateral trade between the two countries has experienced exponential growth, reaching \$17.7 billion by 2010 (Egbula &

¹ <http://www.thisdaylive.com/about>

² <http://saharareporters.com/news-page/revealed-how-then-governor-goodluck-jonathan-gave-obaigbena-1-million-bayelsa%E2%80%99s-poverty-al>

³ <http://www.thisdaylive.com/about>

Zheng 2011: 6). Chinese companies in Nigeria include state enterprises organisations (SEOs) and private investors, with investments concentrated in the oil industry, manufacturing, construction and telecommunications (Egbula & Zheng 2011: 9).

Scholars have presented a varied account of China's multiple engagements with Africa, ranging from Chinese aid, infrastructure-for-oil deals, China's 'charm offensive' and its non-interference policy in Africa (Brautigam 2007; 2009; Gaye 2007; Kurlantzick 2007; Alden & Large 2011; Taylor 2012). In this literature, China is usually portrayed as either a 'mercantilist predator' or as a 'partner in development' (Le Pere 2007).

In her book, *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*, Deborah Brautigam argues that Chinese aid is good for Africa's development (Brautigam 2009: 133). According to Brautigam, China appeals to Africa's economic and political elites principally because Chinese aid and investments do not come with many political and economic strings attached, unlike those of the West (Brautigam 2009). On the other hand, it is also argued by scholars (Gaye 2007; Alden & Large 2011) that China is in Africa for its own benefit. China's need for resources and its bid to consolidate its place in the new world order drive its engagement with Africa (Alden & Large 2011: 25). Gaye (2007) argues that China is an imperial power in the pursuit of its national interest and that it cannot be trusted, despite its claim of mutual partnership with Africa.

Meanwhile, different stakeholders and interest groups within Nigeria view China's engagement with Nigeria through similar prisms of 'predator' or 'partner' (Le Pere 2007; Obiorah 2006). Some actors in the Nigerian state consider China a friend of Nigeria; since the advent of democracy in 1999, every democratically elected president in Nigeria has visited China (Mofa 2013). In 2006, Nigeria and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the establishment of a strategic partnership, making Nigeria the first African country to sign such a pact with China (Taylor 2007: 631). A key outcome of the buoyant relations was the oil-for-infrastructure deal, in which Chinese companies were offered right-of-first refusal for oil processing licenses (Mthembu-Slater 2009; Taylor 2007; Obiorah 2006).

However, after his election to office in 2007, the late President Umaru Yar'Adua terminated all infrastructure-for-resources arrangement reached between Nigeria and China by the previous Olusegun Obasanjo-led administration. Also, Paul Orhii, director-general of the

National⁴ Agency for Foods and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC) considers China as a “problem to Nigeria” because it remains the “highest exporter of counterfeit drugs” to the country. Sanusi Lamido, the Central Bank Governor of Nigeria, argues that by taking primary goods from Nigeria and selling them back as manufactured products, China’s actions amount to colonialism (Sanusi 2013). China exports a diversified range of manufactured goods such as machinery and equipment to Nigeria, while 87% of Nigeria’s exports to China are oil and gas products (Egbula & Zheng 2011: 6).

Meanwhile, pro-worker organisations and textile manufacturers view China’s engagement with Nigeria as problematic. Their criticism stems from Chinese companies’ harsh labour practices, the importation of sub-standard Chinese products that threatens local manufacturers and the importation of Chinese labour to the detriment of local workers (Obiorah, Kew & Tanko 2003: 280). In 2002, more than 120 workers locked within a Chinese-owned rubber factory in Ikorodu, Lagos, were burnt to death (Ahiuma-Young, Akoni & Ehigiator 2002). Meanwhile, in 2010, Shelter Watch, a pro-artisan NGO, marched on the head office of Dangote Industries in Lagos to protest the loss of jobs by Nigerian artisans to the Chinese (Nairaland 2013). The artisans called on the Nigerian government to deport Chinese artisans who were taking over their jobs (Nairaland 2013).

There are, therefore, several stakeholders and interest groups in Nigerian society — political elites (including the executives of various state agencies), various sectors of business (including oil and textiles), worker groups, human rights organisations and other actors – who contest the definition of the various aspects of Sino-Nigerian engagement and interaction and attempt to promote in the wider society their definition of China’s role in Nigeria.

The mass media becomes one crucial arena where these interests contest these definitions. *Thisday* newspaper is one space in which such framing frequently happens. *Thisday* was chosen for this study because a preliminary study of Nigerian newspapers shows it has the highest number of stories on China in Nigeria.

1.1.3 Theoretical context

This study is located in Journalism Studies and within a constructivist approach to news. The study accordingly recognises news as a social construct which is influenced by political,

⁴ Fake drugs come from China – NAFDAC. <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/05/fake-drugs-come-from-china-nafdac/>

economic, social and ideological factors (Tuchman 1978: 12). In particular, this research draws on a rapidly expanding literature on news frames (Koenig 2004). In this tradition, the news frame is the “central organising idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration” (Tankard 2001: 100). Frames, then, define problems, diagnose causes, make judgements and suggest remedies (Entman 1993: 52). There are three approaches in framing research: first, the communicators’ approach which concentrates on journalists’ cognitions or on media coverage; second, the public discourse or social movement approach in which the media serve as a carrier of frames promoted by actors; and, third, is the media effects approach which examines how media frames influences schemata, attitudes, emotions and decisions of the audience (Scheufele 2004: 402). This study is located within the second approach. It acknowledges that journalistic frames do not develop in a political or cultural vacuum - they are instead seen to be influenced by the frames sponsored by multiple social actors, including corporate and political elites, advocates and social movements. News stories, then, become a forum for framing contests in which these actors compete in sponsoring their definitions of political issues. The ability of a frame to dominate news discourse depends on multiple complex factors, including its sponsor’s economic and cultural resources, its sponsor’s knowledge of journalistic practices, and its resonance with broader political values or tendencies in the wider culture (Gamson et al. 1992). Therefore, news framing is understood to have an “ideological power” (Hall 1982: 69). For a particular frame to dominate, for it to come to be regularly produced, it must gain some “kind of credibility, legitimacy or taken-for-grantedness for itself” (Hall 1982: 67).

The advantage of framing is that it has the potential to get beneath the surface of news coverage and expose hidden assumptions (Tankard 2001: 97). Framing also “recognises the ability of a text to define a situation, to define the issues, and to set the terms of a debate” (Tankard 2001: 96). Therefore, dominant frames signify a set of social meanings that help to define social relations within a particular social context (Durham 1998: 102). Journalists do not manufacture news on their own but are “cued in” to news topics by regular and reliable sources (Hall et al. 1978: 57), which are “central to the practice of journalism” (Harcup 2004: 59).

In his exploratory study of the media framing of China among East African newspapers, Wakesa (2013) concludes that the image of China in East Africa is under the “inter-play of

both negative and positive media frames” (Wakesa 2013: 35). Gamson & Modigliani (1989), in their study of nuclear power for over a period of more than 40 years, show how various pro-and-anti nuclear power groups contested to define the issue of nuclear power to suit their interests. Durham (1998), in a study of the *New York Times*’ coverage of the crashed TWA flight 800, showed that there is always competition between various interest groups to produce dominant frames in news stories.

1.1.4 Significance and justification

This study was undertaken at a time of growing interest in China’s engagement with Africa. The study is also very relevant because there is, as yet, no other study on the representation of China in the Nigerian media. Implicit in this is that this study is a pioneering effort in this area of intellectual engagement.

Therefore, the study of China’s engagement with Africa, with particular emphasis on Nigeria, will add to the scholarship on China in Africa, considering that the study is also a pioneering research in this area. I chose the *Thisday* newspaper for this study because it is a national newspaper in Nigeria and a preliminary study of Nigerian newspapers shows that, as noted previously, it has the highest number of stories on China in Nigeria.

1.2 Goals of the research

The study examines *Thisday* newspaper’s coverage of China’s engagement in Nigeria between 1 November 2011 and 31 December 2012 and frames the various interests contesting to promote their perspectives on China in the media. The key objective of this study is to identify the frames that dominate the coverage of China’s engagement in Nigeria by *Thisday* newspaper and relate these frames to the various stakeholder and interest groups – frame sponsors – contesting these framings.

1.3 Methods, procedures and techniques

The primary method of analysis is frame analysis, which enables a researcher to uncover the basic strategies of selection, emphasis and exclusion embedded in “complex and contradictory” media artefacts (Lenz 1991: 12). Frame analysis is a form of textual analysis which comprises deductive and inductive methods. A deductive approach involves

operationalising frames prior to the analysis of texts, to verify the extent to which they occur in the news and is suited to large samples. The inductive approach involves analysing media content with an open view to identify possible frames, an approach well-suited to small samples (De Vreese 2005: 53). This study adopted an inductive approach to identifying frames in a relatively small sample of articles in *Thisday* newspaper. The study analysed media content from *Thisday* newspapers, drawing on the four dimensions of frames identified by Entman: define problems, diagnose causes, evaluate actions and recommend treatment (Entman 1993). In particular, the study examined keywords, sentences, metaphors, catch-phrases, exemplars and depictions (De Vreese 2005: 45; Entman 1993: 52) in headlines, leads, sources selection, quotes selection and concluding paragraphs to identify the various contesting frames in the coverage of China's engagement in Nigeria by *Thisday* newspaper.

The sample of texts drawn from this newspaper is a purposive sample, and coincides with a period when there were no major hostilities or social engagements between both countries which could unduly tilt the coverage of China's engagement in Nigeria. Editorials, news and features articles were the units of analysis because frame analysis favours whole articles as main discourse units (Marthtes 2009: 355). A total of 40 texts were selected comprising 34 news stories, three feature stories and three opinion articles by *Thisday* columnists between 1 November 2011 and 31 December 2012. This period was chosen to accommodate enough media content on China's engagement in Nigeria.

1.4. Structure of the thesis

Chapter one forms the first part of the two-part contextual framework and literature review chapters. It explicates the literature on China-in-Africa discourses while chapter two focuses specifically on China-Nigeria relations. However, there is very little theoretical literature on China-Nigeria, which required that I looked at other kinds of secondary sources such as newspaper articles, and information sourced from the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Nigeria Investment Corporation (NIPC). Chapter three explicates the theoretical framework that informs the study and chapter four presents research methods and data analysis techniques. In chapter five, the study presents an explication and interpretation of the findings.

Chapter One: China in Africa

1.0 Introduction

China's rapid economic growth and increasing role in global politics over the past few decades have led to shifts in the global geopolitical landscape which, in turn, have impacted China's engagement with Africa. China is already Africa's largest trading partner and two-way trade between Africa and China has grown from US\$10.6 billion in 2000 to US\$166 billion in 2011 (Taylor 2012). Over the past few decades, China has invested heavily in Africa. However, China's motive for intensifying its engagement with Africa has come under suspicion (Gaye 2007; Alden & Large 2011). While some scholars such as Brautigam (2009) and Ofon (2006) view China's engagement as beneficial to Africa's development, others (Gaye 2007; Alden & Large 2011) argue to the contrary.

Despite engaging with Africa in a gamut of spheres, the literature on China-Africa relations is dominated by views that construct China as either partner or predator (Le Pere 2007). Whether China's engagement with Africa is beneficial or detrimental to Africa remains hotly debated. This is also the case for Nigeria, where China's engagement with Nigeria is a matter of debate between adherents and opponents.

This is the first chapter, in the two-part contextual framework chapters. This chapter is divided into four main sections: historical ties; modern era of China-Africa relations; China's policies of engagement in Africa; and the geopolitics of China-Africa relations.

1.1 Historical ties

China-Africa relations date to the 14th century when, during the *Ming* dynasty voyages, Admiral Zheng He sailed to African countries (Waldron 2008). The essence of the expedition was to spread Chinese culture and promote its strength (Miller, et al. 2009: 2). Zheng also brought with him gifts and granted titles from the Ming emperor to the local rulers with the aim of establishing tributary states (Waldron 2008: VI; Miller et al. 2009: 2). The relations between China and Africa witnessed reduced activities during the leadership of Mao Zedong when China had to contend with its own internal challenges (Gaye 2007). However, in the Cold War era, China allied with liberation movements on the continent and some newly-independent African states in an effort to counter American and Soviet influences, and to politically emasculate Taiwan (Taylor 2012).

1.2 Modern era of China-Africa relations

The framework for China-Africa relations in the modern era was laid at the Bandung conference⁵ of 1955, where the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, elucidated what has become the fulcrum of Sino-Africa relations:

The Chinese Delegation has come here to seek unity and not to quarrel, to seek common ground and not to create divergences. There exists common ground among the Asian and African countries the basis of which is that the overwhelming Asian and African countries and their peoples have suffered and are still suffering from the calamities of colonialism. All the Asian and African countries gained their independence from colonialist rule whether these countries are led by the communist or nationalists. We should seek to understand each other and respect each other, sympathize with and support one another and the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence may completely serve as a basis for us to establish relations of friendship and cooperation and good neighbourliness (China Daily 2005).

One of hallmarks of China's relations with Africa in this era was the massive 1860km rail road from Dar-es-Salam in Tanzania to Kapri Mposhi in Zambia, known as *Tazara* Railroad, constructed at a cost of US\$500-million to the Chinese government (Taylor 2012). Relations between Africa and China were further consolidated in 1956 when China established a diplomatic relationship with Egypt. Since that epochal entry into Africa, China has enjoyed diplomatic relations with 48 of the 53 countries in Africa (Vines 2007: 213). In 1971, when China sought a seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), it was African countries that gave it the requisite vote needed to gain it (Vines 2007: 213). In 1995, the Chinese President, Jiang Zemin, toured the African continent and presented a "Five Points Proposal" for what he termed a new relationship between China and Africa (Vines 2007: 213).

1.2.1 Bandung to Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)

In 1982, Chinese premier Zhao Ziyang moved to consolidate the outcome of the Bandung Conference with visits to eleven countries in Africa to explore South-South cooperation (Brautigam 2009: 53). "Zhao announced that henceforth four sets of principles – equality and mutual benefit; stress on practical results; diversity in form; and common progress – would guide the new China as it worked out its economic relations with other developing countries" (Brautigam 2009: 53). The outcome of Zhao's visit to Africa gave vent to the idea of South-South cooperation, where "poorer nations might find appropriate, low-cost and sustainable

⁵ Bandung Conference was the first large-scale Asian-African conference which held April 18-24, 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia and was attended by twenty-five countries.

solutions to their problems in other developing countries rather than in the rich north” (Owel & Melville 2005). The high point of the South-South cooperation saw the birth of South Summits, with the first edition in Havana, Cuba, in 2000 and another in Doha, Qatar, in 2005 (Ofodile 2008).

In 2000, China established the Forum on China-Africa cooperation (Focac) to engender trade, aid, cooperation and bilateral relations between it and African countries. Its launch in October 2000 attracted leaders and delegates from forty-four African countries (Brautigam 2009: 77). However, it was at the 2006 edition of the Focac that China proclaimed Africa a mutual partner in its quest for growth and development and went further to declare it “Africa’s Year” (Focac 2006):

China will unswervingly carry forward the tradition of China-Africa friendship, and, proceeding from the fundamental interests of both the Chinese and African peoples, establish and develop a new type of strategic partnership with Africa, featuring political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchange (2006).

In the 2012 edition of the Focac, the fifth in the series, which was held in Beijing, the capital of China, parties agreed to “open up new prospects for the new type of China-Africa strategic partnership” (Focac 2012).

1.3 China’s policies of engagement in Africa

Alden and Large (2011) emphasise that the China-Africa relation is an exception to foreign policy engagements. The position of exceptionalism, overall, seeks to “structure relations such that, though they may remain asymmetrical in economic content, they should remain equal in terms of economic and political standing (mutual respect and equality)” (2011: 22). The China-Africa relation is also engendered by China’s commitment to non-interference in the internal affairs of African countries, which is one of the focal points of its appeal to Africa.

The Chinese know that African elites prefer this approach and this situation stems from the nature of the state in most African nations. Many African elites lack any real form of a consensual aspect to their regimes. Their power is articulated through both the threat and concrete use of violence and the distribution of material advantage to factions in neo-patrimonial regimes (Taylor 2008: 70).

In addition, Chinese aid and investments come with no conditionalities, unlike those of the United States of America (USA) and European nations (Brautigam 2009).

However, China's non-interference policy was put to the test in January of 2012 when Chinese artisans were kidnapped by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement North Rebels in an attempt to compel China to persuade the Sudanese government to end its military offensive in South Kordofan (Taylor 2012). Consequently, China was forced to mediate in the crisis and subsequently appointed an official advisor on Darfur (Taylor 2012).

China's vaunt about its respect for the sovereignty of nations also does not stand up to scrutiny in reference to Taiwan. China does not enter into any form of engagement with any country that maintains diplomatic relations with Taiwan. This is a precondition for accessing China's aid and other economic incentives (Taylor 2008: 69).

In Angola, China has also been accused of ignoring mal-governance and human right abuses in return for accessing natural resources (Taylor 2012). In 2004, Angola was negotiating a new loan with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which demanded that it improves transparency as a condition. The Chinese Export-Import Bank (EXIM) stepped in and offered a low-interest US\$2 billion loan to Angola, tied to a deal to supply 40000 bpd of crude oil to China (Taylor 2008: 80). The West, including the US and members of the European Union and human rights groups, have decried the non-interference policy as a direct challenge to the development of open, democratic governments in Africa (Taylor 2012). They consider China's approach in Africa problematic because it does not criticise the lack of democracy in Africa and neither does it favour projects that promote human rights on the continent. However, China's policy of non-interference in domestic affairs of countries is not specific to Africa. It has its roots in China's years of humiliation⁶ in the nineteenth century, during which it established non-interference as a focal point of its foreign policy (Brautigam 2009: 13).

1.3.1 China as an economic model

In their engagements with Africa, Chinese officials promote China as an economic model of success (Kurlantzick 2007: 56). China's economic progress has been documented by scholars such as Brautigam (2009), Haroz (2011) and Ofon (2006), who argue that China is good for Africa's development. "China has the kind of economic record that democrats and dictators

⁶ China's years of humiliation refers to the hundred years period (between 1839 and 1849) when Western powers and Japan intervened in the internal affairs of China- Brautigam 2009

can both admire, and the Chinese promise that their expanded presence in Africa will be for mutual benefit is credible”(Brautigam 2007).

1.3.2 China as Africa’s trading partner

China now is the largest trading nation on earth, both in export and import, surpassing the USA (Bloomberg 2013). China is also Africa’s largest trading partner, surpassing the USA, France and Britain (Taylor 2012). Two-way trade between Africa and China has grown in leaps and bounds; from US\$10.6 billion in 2000 to US\$166 billion in 2011 (Taylor 2012). There are more than 2000 Chinese investors and businesses in operation in Africa (Taylor 2012). The Chinese in Africa also comprise small-scale traders and businesses, with no form of state sponsorship from their home country. Chinese businesses have also exploited duty-free and tariff-free access to American and European markets through the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the Cotonou agreement, but this has not been accompanied by the transfer of jobs to Africa (Taylor 2012). The Cotonou Agreement is a partnership between the European Union and seventy-nine countries from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) centred on reducing and eradicating poverty and the gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy (European Commission 2013). These development agreements have led to a growing number of Chinese manufacturing companies seeing Africa as a potential site for low-cost production (Taylor 2012).

In 2012, Africa showed an US\$20 billion trade surplus with China but more than three-quarters of the continent’s exports comprised natural resources from five countries: Sudan, Gabon, Angola, Nigeria and South Africa. On the other hand, Chinese exports to Africa are far more diverse – by destination and product. Excluding oil exports, Africa had a trade deficit with China amounting to US\$28 billion in 2011. Taylor (2012) emphasises that “seven to 10 million people enter the labour market each year in Africa but a more prevalent reality in Africa than new jobs is the collapse of small and medium enterprises under pressure from cheap imports” (Taylor 2012). At the Focac V, China announced plans to remove tariffs on 97 % of items from 30 least developed African countries, and pledged to train 30 000 workers and provide 18 000 scholarships, but most of these promises have not been realised (Taylor 2012). For instance, of the eight economic and trade co-operation zones approved by

the Chinese Ministry of Commerce in 2006, only one, in Egypt, was fully operational by 2011 (Taylor 2012).

1.3.3 China in Africa for natural resources

China's rapid economic growth has also increased its need for natural resources to sustain such growth and the Chinese are on a global quest for oil and raw materials (Hanson 2010). In 1999, China launched its "Go Out" strategy to secure access to natural resources and for its domestic companies to compete globally (Taylor 2012). "The basic character of trade flows - Africa exporting raw materials and China exporting manufactured products- replicates Africa's economic relations with other external powers" (Alden & Large 2011: 31). Moyo (2012: 2) argues that China's economic and political strategy is focused on securing resources for its future. To realise this goal, China has turned to Africa, "an oil-producing source whose risks and challenges have often caused it to be overlooked economically" (Hanson 2010). This is exemplified by its trade relations with Africa, in which oil and commodities comprise a huge chunk of exports from Africa (Alden & Large 2011). Former US secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, gave vent to this perspective during her tour of Africa in 2012 when she emphasised that China's interest in Africa is hinged on its desire to profit off Africa's natural resources (Taylor 2012).

The International Energy Agency projects China's net oil imports will jump to 13.1 million barrel-per day (bpd) by 2030 from 3.5 million bpd in 2006 (Hanson 2010). According to (Vines 2007: 214), China's engagement with Africa was deepened in 2003 for two reasons. First, there was an energy crisis which made China come to realise the need to diversify its source of energy. Second, an attempt in 2003 by the China National Offshore Oil Cooperation (CNOOC) to gain control of the American firm, Unocal, with an US\$18.5 billion bid collapsed under pressure from the US Congress. These developments further pushed China to venture into unstable countries and avoid direct competition with Western multinationals. The "Unocal episode also taught China that it would have to be aggressive in competing for natural resources" (Vines 2007: 214). China's appetite for natural resources is so huge that "in just over a decade China has risen from relative insignificance to pole position in underwriting numerous resource-related transactions across the globe" (Moyo 2012: 1). For instance, about 30% of China's crude oil imports now come from Africa: its top suppliers as of January 2007 consist of Angola (14%), Sudan (7%) and Congo-Brazzaville

(4.4%) (Vines 2007: 214) and if oil is removed from the list of Africa's exports to China, it would be in trade deficit with China by US\$28billion (Taylor 2012).

1.3.4 China's aid development model in Africa

There are three institutions that are central to aid in China: the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the China Exim Bank (Brautigam 2009: 107). However, the state Council (China's cabinet, headed by the Chinese Premier and Vice-Premier) still has an oversight role in matters that concern aid (Brautigam 2009). China has several kinds of aid including but not limited to the following: medical teams, training and scholarships, humanitarian aid, youth volunteers, debt relief, budget support, turn-key or "complete plant" projects (infrastructure, factories), aid-in-kind, and technical assistance (Brautigam 2009: 105). In 1964, China deployed its first medical team in Africa at the invitation of the Algerian government. Cumulatively, China is said to have sent over 15 000 doctors to more than 47 African countries and treated approximately 180 million African patients (Thomson 2005).

China has also been proactive on Africa's debt burden and they regularly cancel loans of African countries, loans that were usually granted at zero interest (Brautigam 2007). China also cancels loans to African countries without the long dance of negotiations and questionable conditions required by the World Bank and the IMF (Brautigam 2007). The advantage of Chinese loans is "that they don't find their way into the accounts of dictators as applicable to aid from the West" and such aid has been put to use in Africa to build infrastructure and aid development on the continent (Brautigam 2007). China's aid is built specifically on what African governments want rather than what China thinks is good for Africa (Brautigam 2007). In 2012, China pledged US\$20 billion of loans to Africa over three years for infrastructure, agriculture and manufacturing (Taylor 2012). In 2009, an estimated US1.6 billion of grants, interest-free and concessional loans, and preferential lines of credit were disbursed for largely diplomatic purposes (Taylor 2012).

However, there are concerns that the massive loans given to African countries by China could encourage African countries to accumulate too much debt (Taylor 2012). Chinese total loans to Africa in 2004 were equivalent to three times the total development aid provided by member countries of the Organisation for Economic Corporation and Development (OECD) countries in the same year. China has also overtaken the World Bank in lending to Africa, offering nearly three times as much as the Bank and the IMF (Vines 2007). It has prompted

the IMF to switch to unfunded monitoring programmes and the World Bank to focus less on measures for improving governance and tackling corruption and more on Africa's adverse business operating environment (Vines 2007: 218). However, most of commodity-backed infrastructure loans from Chinese banks to Africa have come under criticism for opacity (Taylor 2012).

China has come under criticism from the West and members of the OECD countries (US, Japan, Australia, and European countries) for using aid to secure its commercial interests and "resource colonialism" - and of encouraging corruption (Taylor 2012). However, Taylor (2012) emphasises that many of the charges levelled against China lack substance and, most often, are politically motivated. Similarly, China's aid model is nothing strange because it is adapting a Japanese model employed by Japanese firms investing in China in the 1970s (Taylor 2012). "The negotiations of loans secured against revenue from natural resources are modelled on the practice of Japanese firms investing in China in the 1970s" (Brautigam 2009: 13). Consequently, aid, like trade and investment, is one of an assortment of tools deployed in the pursuit of China's economic and political objectives (Taylor 2012).

China's form of aid has, however, challenged the traditional notion of aid being implemented exclusively by the OECD countries (Brautigam 2009). Chinese aid differs in two distinct ways: to the Chinese, infrastructure is at the core of their aid, which used to be the central tenet of Western aid in the 1970s and 1980s (Brautigam 2009). Moyo (2009: 16) emphasises that in "the mid-1970s nearly two thirds of aid was for infrastructure - roads, railways, water and sewage, ports, airports, power stations and telecommunications, while the proportion of poverty-oriented lending rose from 5 per cent in the late 1970s to 50 per cent by the early 1980s". Brautigam (2009: 133) contends that China also aligns with the thinking that it is incumbent on aid recipients to apply it to a project of their choice without the interference of donors. She further argues that although the 2005 Paris Declaration on aid by OECD countries endorsed "a new system of mutual accountability based on ownership, alignment, transparency, harmonisation, and results", OECD countries "never respect this clause" (Brautigam 2009: 133). According to the Paris Declaration, aid recipients were supposed to set the agenda and donors would align with it through partnership with local governments rather than setting independent projects, but this is not the case for Western countries, who dictate to African countries to what projects aid should be applied (Brautigam 2009: 133). Another point of disagreement between China and the West concerning aid is that China has

been reluctant to coordinate or ‘harmonise’ its aid with aid from other donors” (Brautigam 2009: 133).

Conversely, the thinking that China does not attach conditionality to its aid to Africa is not entirely true because the condition for accessing aid from China is that recipients must respect the “one China Policy,” which implies it must not maintain any diplomatic relations with Taiwan (Brautigam 2009: 148). However, Brautigam emphasises that China has never imposed economic conditions on aid (Brautigam 2009: 148-149).

1.3.5 China’s development of Special Economic Zones in Africa

China has also followed its aid programme in Africa with the development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) (Alden & Larger 2011; Brautigam & Xiaoyong 2011). In 2006, as part of the implementation of its 11th five-year plan, the Chinese government announced that it would establish up to 50 overseas economic and trade cooperation zones. Such overseas economic zones would make it easier for Chinese companies to engage in local manufacturing in select African countries (Brautigam & Xiaoyong 2011). According to (Brautigam & Xiaoyong 2011: 71) the SEZs were intended to “create economies of scale for overseas investment and, in particular, to assist less experienced small and midsize enterprises to venture overseas “in groups” (Brautigam & Xiaoyong 2011). There is also the belief that by producing overseas and exporting to Europe or North America Chinese companies would be able to avoid trade frictions and barriers imposed on exports from China (Brautigam & Xiaoyong 2011: 71). The zones would also assist China’s efforts to boost its own domestic restructuring and move up the value chain at home (Brautigam & Xiaoyong 2001). China also promotes the SEZs as a platform through which China can replicate its own development in other developing countries; a strategy the government believed would be helpful for recipient countries, while also benefiting China (Brautigam & Xiaoyang 2009: 71).

1.4 Geopolitics of China-Africa relations

There is a perspective that China’s benevolence to Africa has a political aim to it: to use African countries as a countervailing force to the dominating influence of the US and the EU (Le Pere 2007). “China’s emphasis on South-South co-operation is seen as a key element in its efforts to oppose unilateral global dominance” (Le Pere 2007:99). In 1971, when China sought to affirm its place on the global geopolitical landscape, it depended on African

countries to attain permanent membership of the exclusive league of the United Nations Security Council (Brautigam 2009:67). This is part of reason scholars such as Gaye (2007), Alden & Large (2011) and Obiorah (2006) argue that China is in Africa for its own benefit. “China is not in Africa for philanthropic reasons but another imperial power pursuing its national interest; and it can be an unreliable partner despite its claim to build a true equal partnership with Africa” (Gaye 2007). China’s resources requirements for its population and its bid to consolidate its place in the New-World Order are the driving factors of its engagement with Africa (Alden & Large 2011: 25). But Brautigam contends that African countries can only benefit from China if they position themselves to take advantage of what China is offering, (Brautigam 2007).

1.4.1 Does Africa have a China policy?

In 2006, when China declared 2006 as Africa’s year, it also launched an African Policy Document that guides its engagement with Africa (Focac 2006):

China will unswervingly carry forward the tradition of China-Africa friendship, proceeding from the fundamental interests of both the Chinese and African peoples, establish and develop a new type of strategic partnership with Africa, featuring political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win co-operation and cultural exchange. (Focac 2006)

On the other hand, the African Union does not have a clear cut policy of engagement with China. A search through the AU’s web portal reinforces this perspective. The document that refers to China’s engagement with Africa is on the Chinese-promoted Focac:

The Focac is a strong partnership, which has gestated over a long period of time. It is doing very well and has the potential of bringing various advantages to the two sides. In many areas, the partnership has delivered some concrete outcomes that are beneficial to Africa although Africa needs to utilise the partnership to the fullest in terms of the potential of the available market and the business opportunities (AU 2013).

Africa’s loose approach to its engagement with China has aided China in exploiting individual African countries and leaves Africa with the short end of the stick (Taylor 2012).

1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have broadly engaged with the literature on China in Africa, tracing origins, advantages and pitfalls of the relations and how this impacts Africa. This chapter foregrounds the literature on China-African relations which informs China’s engagement in Nigeria. In

the next chapter, I will explicate China's engagement with Nigeria, drawing on eclectic sources including academic literature, newspaper articles and other secondary sources.

Chapter two: China in Nigeria

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the broad contextual literature on China's engagement with Africa while this chapter is specifically on China-Nigeria relations. Consequent upon the paucity of literature on China-Nigeria relations, this chapter draws on eclectic sources, including some academic literature, but also published newspaper articles, information sourced with the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Nigeria Investment Corporation (NIPC). This chapter is the last instalment of the two-part contextual framework. The chapter is divided into three sections: Nigerian Socio-political; China-Nigeria relations fault lines; and the Nigerian press. The first section discusses the plurality and complexities of the Nigerian society; the second highlights relations between China and Nigeria; the third presents the challenges implicit in China-Nigeria relations and the last section traces an overview of the Nigerian media landscape with emphasis on origin, evolution, challenges and prospects, and conclusion.

Different stakeholders and interest groups in Nigeria view China's engagement with Nigeria through the prisms of "predator or partner" (Le Pere 2007; Obiorah 2006). In other words, the view adopted by actors in the debate on China in Nigeria is consequent upon their positioning to it. While there are some Nigerians who heckle China for its harsh labour practices, the importation of substandard goods that threaten local manufacturers and the importation of Chinese labour to the detriment of local workers (Obiorah, Kew & Tank 2003: 380), others consider China an invaluable economic partner (Brautigam 2009).

2.1 Nigerian socio-political context

Nigeria is a highly complex and a pluralistic society, underpinned by diverse ethnic and religious groupings (Oyovbaire 2001; Akinrinade 2006: 281). "At the exit of the colonial administration in 1960 ethnicity became manifest in the bitter struggle of a fractious Nigerian petty bourgeoisie fighting under ethnic ideologies" (Ake 1985: 11). Oyovbaire emphasises that "sociological, anthropological, cultural and linguistic classifications could assign

between 375 and 1450 minority ethnic nationalities groups” to Nigeria (Oyovbaire 2001: 7). In terms of its geo-political structure, Nigeria hitherto operated a north and south dichotomy until its devolution into smaller units of states in 1963 (Oyovbaire 2001: 7). The creation of more states by successive administrations resulted in “36 complex and pluralistic states, 774 local government areas and the Federal Capital territory” (Oyovbaire 2001: 7). However, in its quest for regional balance, Nigeria was further restructured into a six-zone arrangement: South-South, South East, South West, North-Central, North West and North East (Oyovbaire 2001: 7).

The ethnicity inherent in the social structure of Nigeria is a key factor to accessing political power and sometimes undermines productivity (Akinrinade 2006). It is the norm in the Nigerian public service that employment is based on ethnic representation rather than competence (Akinrinade 2006: 281) and has, therefore, been adjudged a threat to Nigeria’s development. This, however, may not be different from other countries with such ethnic complexities because “many studies have found that public services are systematically worse as a result of ethnic diversity among citizens” (Collier 2009: 58).

Nigeria became a democracy after thirty-seven years of uninterrupted military rule in 1999 (Akinrinade 2010). Though Nigeria has witnessed four successive democratic elections at every level of government, the problem of transparency of leadership and defective electoral processes recur (Osaghae 2010: 461). This is related to the Nigerian political system which has transformed former military leaders into political elites (Osaghae 2010). However, the origin of the leadership crisis in Nigeria is traceable to the aftermath of British colonisation: “The factors that underlie the leadership crisis in Nigeria are to be found in the character of the political elite because they are a creation of the colonial government” (Osaghae 2010: 414). The elites, Osaghae emphasises, “developed as a crony-capitalist and dependent class of global capital and has sustained this character because of its unwillingness to tamper with the structure of the colonial state inherited at independence” (2010: 414). Therefore, political power and access to resources are requisite factors to function as powerful or influential elites in Nigeria (Osaghae 2010: 15).

2.2 Nigeria’s economy

Nigeria operates a mono-economy based on crude oil. It is Africa’s largest supplier of crude oil and is ranked as the twelfth largest supplier in the world (EIA 2013). The Nigerian

economy is dependent on oil for more than 85% of its gross domestic product (GDP) and the country exemplifies the resource-curse metaphor (Obi 2010: 443). Despite state ownership of Nigeria's oil industry, Nigeria suffers from a lack of infrastructural development across the country (Obi 2010). What mocks Nigeria's status as an oil producer is the fact that it exports crude oil but imports refined petroleum products, despite boasting four refineries in the country (Obi 2010: 443).

2.3 Historical ties

Bilateral diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China experienced difficulty at the outset. In 1964, the first Chinese delegation that sought diplomatic relations with Nigeria was rebuffed, and relations further deteriorated when China supported the secessionist Biafra republic against the Nigerian state (Mthembu-Salter 2009). However, Nigeria and China commenced diplomatic relations in 1971 and by 1972, a six-man delegation led by Nigeria's top government representative visited Beijing, where both countries signed an open-ended agreement on economic and technical cooperation and trade (Ogunsanwo 2008: 192). In the aftermath of the open-ended agreement, other high profile Nigerian delegations visited China, culminating in the visit by General Yakubu Gowon in 1974, who was the then head of the military government (Ogunsanwo 2008: 193).

However, it wasn't until 1979 that Nigeria and China recorded their first disagreement at a second conference held in Beijing (Ogunsanwo 2008). Nigeria had opposed China's support for the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) rebels in Angola, which was against Nigeria's support for the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) (Ogunsanwo 2008: 195). However, this was a political disagreement which did not alter trade relations between the countries (Ogunsanwo 2008).

Though China's relations with Nigeria grew at a minimal pace, it witnessed renewed vigour under the administration of the late General Sani Abacha. The era was marked by increased economic engagement between both countries (Ogunsanwo 2008: 200). It was within this period that the Nigerian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1994; China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) won a contract of \$529 billion to refurbish Nigeria's railway system; and former Chinese premier, Li Ping visited in 1997 (Mthembu-Salter 2009 :6). The resort to ally with China by the Abacha administration was a consequence of its dictatorship and the economic sanctions imposed by Western governments

(Ogunsanwo 2008: 200). By contrast, China's foreign policy promotes non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states (Ogunsanwo 2008; Brautigam 2009; Taylor 2007).

2.4. Friendly ties

The Nigerian state and China have also exchanged state visits since 1974 when Gowon, the then Nigerian military head of state, visited China (Ogunsanwo 2008). Since the advent of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, every democratically-elected president has visited China. The most recent was President Goodluck Jonathan, who rounded off a five-day working visit to China in July 2013. In contrast, however, only one Chinese head of state, Hu Jintao, has visited Nigeria, though twice: 2004 and 2006.

2.5. Trade between China and Nigeria: lopsided

Bilateral trade between China and Nigeria accounts for almost one third of the trade between China and West Africa, which is expected to grow bigger according to future projections (Thisday 2013). To engender trade between both countries, the Central Bank of Nigeria⁷ (CBN) has a fraction of its foreign reserve in the Chinese *Remnibi* (RMB), which makes Nigeria the first African country to adopt the *Remnibi* as a foreign exchange currency. Trade between both countries has experienced exponential growth reaching US\$17.7 bn by 2010 – by contrast, in 2002 the value of trade between Nigeria and China was just US\$2 billion (Egbula & Zheng 2011: 6). Levels of Chinese Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in Nigeria are the second-highest in Africa after South Africa (Egbula & Zheng 2011: 6) and by 2010 Nigeria was China's fourth biggest African trading partner and second largest Chinese export destination in Africa (Egbula & Zheng 2011: 6).

However, the trade between the two countries is marked by differences in exports; China exports a diversified range of manufactured goods such as machinery and equipment to Nigeria, while 87% of Nigeria's exports to China are oil and gas products (Egbula & Zheng 2011: 6). Chinese exports account for US\$9.3 bn of the US\$10.6 bn of total trade volume between both countries (Telegraph 2013). This trade imbalance has marked the pattern of

⁷ CBN converts \$500m of reserves into Chinese currency. <http://www.punchng.com/business/money/cbn-converts-500m-of-reserves-into-chinese-currency/>

trade between China and Nigeria since Nigeria signed the economic and technical cooperation with China in 1972 (Ogunsanwo 2008: 194).

2.6 Immigration

There are 17 000 legal Chinese residents in Lagos and Ogun states, to the south-west of Nigeria (Vanguard 2013b), while officially 50 000 Chinese nationals live in Nigeria as a whole (Taylor 2007: 631). However, unofficially there may be more than a million Chinese nationals working either as local business people, artisans, or contractors in Nigeria (Gbadamosi & Oniku 2009: 124). David Parradang⁸, Comptroller General of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), however, emphasises that the bulk of the challenges his agency faces arise from Chinese who came into the country with visiting/tourist or business visa .

On the other hand, while the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) acknowledges that there are many Nigerian residents in China, it cannot put a figure to it, apart from the number of Nigerians serving jail time. There are about 366 Nigerian prisoners registered by the Nigerian Mission in China. “Of this number, 322 are serving jail terms ranging between 10 years and suspended death sentences. The remaining 44 prisoners are serving less than 10 year terms” (Mofa 2013).

2.6.1 Visa regime

Despite claims to friendly relations, the age-long view by critics that China does not keep to its promises (Kurlantzick 2007) recurs in its relations with Nigeria. The Chinese government has not reciprocated the friendly visa regime that Nigeria extends to its officials:

The Nigerian Diplomatic Missions in consonance with Federal Government’s directives issue visas within forty eight hours and accord courtesies to Diplomatic Notes. However, the Chinese Diplomatic Missions in Abuja and Lagos have not only consistently delayed issuance of visas; they have also on a number of occasions limited the number of entries granted to officials (Mofa 2013).

Nigerian businessmen and petty traders are the most affected by the Chinese visa regime because they are required to submit invitation letters from a few designated Chinese companies and most of the time they do not have access to these companies, thus leading to exploitation by the Chinese visa agents (Mofa 2013).

⁸ 17,000 Chinese legally resident in Nigeria – Immigration boss. <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/07/17000-chinese-legally-resident-in-nigeria-immigration-boss/#sthash>.

2.7 China's Infrastructure for Resources model: a Nigerian perspective

In 2006, Nigeria and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the establishment of a strategic partnership, making Nigeria the first African country to sign such a pact with China (Taylor 2007: 631). The partnership formed part of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) drive implemented during the former president Olusegun Obasanjo's administration to encourage Chinese investors to do business in Nigeria. A key outcome of the buoyant relations was the oil-for-infrastructure deal, in which Chinese companies were offered right-of-first refusal for oil processing licenses (Mthembu-Slater 2009; Taylor 2007; Obiorah 2006). The China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), an SEO, was allocated an Oil Processing License in return for investing US\$2 billion to rehabilitate the northern Nigerian city of Kaduna's failing oil refinery (Mthembu-Salter 2009: 2). The deal was, however, terminated when President Umaru Yar'Adua was elected to the presidency of Nigeria in 2007 and marked a setback for the Chinese government's Nigeria policy, requiring significant re-evaluation by China of how best to do business with Nigeria (Mthembu-Salter 2009: 9). Consequently, Chinese oil companies resorted to acquiring oil assets for cash (Mthembu-Salter 2009). In 2009, the Sinopec (SEO) acquired Addax, the fifth-largest oil producer in Nigeria for US\$7.2 billion and another 20% stake in Total's Nigeria offshore oil bloc for US\$2.46 bn, in 2012 (Igbikiowubo 2009).

2.8 Chinese companies in Nigeria

According to a business registration document obtained from the Nigeria Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) in Abuja, there are 208 registered Chinese companies doing business in Nigeria (NIPC 2013). The major Chinese companies in Nigeria are mostly state-owned enterprises. Some of these are Sinopec (oil and gas), CNPC (oil and gas), SEPCO (electricity power construction), CCECC (construction and real estate), CSCEC (construction and real estate), CNOON (offshore oil and gas), Sinoma (cement engineering construction), CGC (construction), Huawei (telecoms) and Zhong Xing Telecommunication (ZTE) (telecoms). In the Nigerian telecoms sector, ZTE and Huawei dominate (Egbula & Zheng 2011: 12).

2.9 China's special economic zones in Nigeria

China's Ministry of Commerce approved seven special economic zones (SEZ) in Africa for special funding, two of which are in Nigeria (Brautigam & Xiaoyang 2009: 73). The

approved SEZs are located in Ogun state and Lagos state, including the Ogun Guangdong Free Trade Zone (OGFTZ) and the Lekki Free Trade Zone (LFTZ) (Brautigam & Xiaoyang 2009: 73). The Lekki Free Trade Zone (LFTZ) is a joint venture between China African Lekki Investment Limited, the Lekki Worldwide Investment Limited (LWI), the Nigeria Export Processing Zones Authority, and the Lagos state government to build Nigeria's Lekki free Trade zone (LKFTZ), the first of its kind embarked upon by the Chinese government abroad (Kurlantzick 2007; Brautigam & Xiaoyang 2009). The LFTZ was initiated in 2003 by China Civil Engineering Construction Corp. (CCECC), which has been operating in Nigeria for more than a decade.

The Ogun-Guangdong Free Trade Zone is located in Igbessa, Ogun state, and its shareholders include Guangdong Xinguang International Group, China-Africa Investment Ltd. Chinese CCNC Group, and the Ogun state government (Brautigam & Xiaoyang 2009).

2.10 China's aid to Nigeria

One of conflicting areas of China's engagements with Africa is whether Chinese aid is primarily intended to engender development in Africa or to buy access to resources (Le Pere 2007; Taylor 2012). Moyo contends that China's aid is pro-quid-pro:

China, of course, gains access to commodities, but host countries get loans to finance infrastructure developmental programs in their economies, they get to trade (creating incomes for their domestic citizenry), and they get investments that can support much-needed job creation (2012: 85).

China has extended aid to Nigeria in the form of soft loans and grants to aid infrastructural development in the country (Mofa 2013) while, in return, it has access to Nigeria's oil (Mthembu-Salter 2009). Since the advent of commercial shale oil mining in the United States of America, China has bought one third of Nigeria's crude oil, the mainstay of the Nigerian economy (Thisday 2012). As of September 2012, Nigeria was indebted to China to the tune of US\$678.91 million (Alawiye 2013).

2.11 China in Nigeria as problematic

However, there are some stakeholders such as pro-worker organisations, artisan unions, textiles manufacturers, chief executives of state agencies, and some political and economic elites, who view China's engagement with Nigeria as problematic (Obiorah 2006). Their arguments stem from Chinese companies' harsh labour practices, the importation of sub-

standard Chinese products that threaten local manufacturing and the importation of Chinese labour to the detriment of local workers (Obiorah, Kew & Tanko 2003: 280).

2.11.1 Substandard Chinese products

Paul Orhii⁹, director-general of the National Agency for Foods and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFADC) states that China is a problem to Nigeria because it remains the highest exporter of counterfeit drugs to the country. Ify Umenyi, the Director General of Nigeria's Consumer Protection Council, also emphasises that China accounts for most counterfeit electrical products that have been imported to Nigeria (Daily Independent 2013). This is further explained by Ike Nwosu, president of Phones and Allied Products Dealers Association (PAPDA), who emphasises that:

The Chinese don't have any other thing to sell than fake products. The reason they come here and sell these fake products is because they are either duplicating one popular product or another. Any genuine business person that wants to project a brand knows that there are phases or procedures for you to pursue your brand. You can't just bring 10,000 pieces of unknown brands into an economy and expect to sell those products. So, they fake popular brands. The advantage for them here is that people buy anything that goes by these brand names. It is easy for them to come here and sell their fake products. We've caught them many times (Daily Independent 2013).

Taylor (2007) notes that the importation of sub-standard products to Nigeria is harmful to its economy: "Potentially politically explosive is the flooding of Nigeria's markets with cheap Chinese products that has had the effect of undermining Nigerian commercial operations and putting Nigerians out of work" (2007: 633). However, much of this concern has not yet been fed into policy-making at the state level because Nigeria's ruling elite are charmed by the prospects that China's rapid economic growth holds (Taylor 2007: 632).

The Nigerian government has also experienced its own backlash regarding China's sub-standard products. In 2007, the Great Wall Industry Corporation (GWIC), a Chinese company, launched Nigeria's communication satellite, NigComsat, at the Xichang Satellite Launch Center with a lifespan of 15 years (Umejei 2009). According to the terms of agreement entered into between Nigeria and GWIC, NigComsat was to be technically maintained by GWIC until May 13, 2009, when it would be officially handed over to the Nigerian government, but it failed in orbit in November 2008 after running out of power (Ogunsanwo 2008: 201). This incident has necessitated the federal government of Nigeria to

⁹ See <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/05/fake-drugs-come-from-china-nafdac/>

seek a guarantee from the Chinese government before awarding projects of national significance to Chinese companies (Thisday 2012).

The export of cheap Chinese textiles to Nigeria has also adversely affected local textile manufacturers in Nigeria (Eneji et al. 2012: 133), a position recognised by Sanusi Lamido, the Central Bank Governor of Nigeria (CBN), who argued that Nigeria, with a population of 160 million, spends huge resources importing Chinese consumer goods which would benefit the local economy if they were produced locally. “China takes from us primary goods and sells us manufactured ones; this was also the essence of colonialism” (Sanusi 2013). In the 1980s, Nigeria had about 175 textile plants with a total of 250 000 employees, but the import of cheap Chinese textiles left only 26 of them in operation as of October 2007, employing only 24 000 people (Obiorah, Kew & Tanko 2008:280). The Lagos state House of Assembly¹⁰ (LAHA) is probing a petition from the Embroidery Lace Dealers Association of Nigeria (ELDA) that states the Chinese dealers imported inferior qualities of lace material into the country and sold it at low prices. The president of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Kola Jamodu¹¹, said the incursion of the Chinese into small and medium enterprises such as retail trading, textiles and electronics is problematic and urged the federal government to call the Chinese to order. Sanusi emphasises that the Nigerian government must “encourage a shift from consuming Chinese-made goods to making and consuming our own” (Sanusi 2013).

2.11 2 Chinese companies and poor labour practices

In 2002, more than 120 workers locked within a Chinese-owned rubber factory in Ikorodu Lagos were burnt to death (Ahiuma-Young, Akoni & Ehigiator 2002). In 2010, Shelter Watch, a pro-artisan NGO, marched on the head office of Dangote Industries in Lagos to protest loss of jobs by Nigerian artisans to their Chinese counterparts (Nairaland 2013). One of the artisans was quoted as saying that the Chinese “should leave our country for us. How can they be oppressing us in our own country? How can they get jobs before us in our own country? We will not stop” (Nairaland 2013). In 2012, Shelter Watch organised another

¹⁰Lagos Assembly Probes Chinese Merchants on Proliferation of Substandard Lace.
<http://www.punchng.com/news/lagos-assembly-probes-chinese-merchants-on-proliferation-of-substandard-lace/>

¹¹Manufacturers, traders urge FG to checkmate Chinese invasion of market.
<http://dailyindependentnig.com/2013/07/manufacturers-traders-urge-fg-to-checkmate-chinese-invasion-of-market/>

protest march tagged *liberation walk* from Dangote Industries head office to the Chinese Embassy in Lagos, but the protest did not make it to the news (Shelter Watch 2013).

There are, therefore, several stakeholders and interest groups in Nigerian society, such as political elites (including the executives of various state agencies), various sectors of business (including oil and textiles), worker groups and other social actors, who contest the definition of the various aspects of China-Nigerian engagement and interaction. These interest groups attempt to promote in the wider society their definition of China's role in Nigeria. The mass media become one crucial arena where these interest groups contest these definitions.

2.12 The Nigerian media in Context

The Nigerian press evolved from the activities of early Christian missionaries to the south of Nigeria by organisations such as the Church Missionary Society, the Baptist, Methodist and the Catholic Missions between 1842 and 1885 (Oyovbaire 2001: 1). This missionary incursion resulted in the establishment of the first newspaper in Nigeria, *Iwe Irohin*, in Abeokuta, south-west of Nigeria. Consequently, other newspapers were established which reported not only in the local Yoruba dialect but also in English within the same area (Tador 1996; Oyovbaire 2001). Tador (1996) emphasises that the history of the Nigerian Press falls under three broad headings: the early press (1800-1920); the modern press (1929-1960); and the national Press (1960-to date). The early press was founded to undercut British colonialism and achieve independence for Nigeria (Oyovbaire 2001: 2). "Apart from Christian evangelisation, the object and focus of process discourse were, of course, hostility to foreign domination, and, conversely, the interest of the media coincided with the emerging Nigerian national interest" (Oyovbaire 2001: 2). The modern press, founded by leading political elites of the period, including the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo and the late Nnamdi Azikiwe, were to entrench the role of the press as a watch dog in the emerging Nigerian state (Oyovbaire 2001: 3). Though these early nationalists professed to sustain the 'watch dog' role of the media, they also deployed it to achieve partisan goals: it engendered the interests of its owners in the politics of the time and aided them to attain political leadership at various levels of government (Tador 1996). "The Nigerian press's partisanship has origins in its history and that history bears on its fate and performance" (Ibelema 2003: 172).

In addition, the incessant military rule in Nigeria for more than thirty-seven years has had adverse consequences on the media and compromised its objectivity (Oyovbaire 2001). The

media in post-independence Nigeria became “logically partisan in its reportage, agitation and agenda setting that it was easier to associate the role of the press with objective or positive nationalism in the context of the struggle against colonial rule” (Oyovbaire 2001:4).

On the other hand, the professional orientation of Nigerian journalists has also been affected by the “press’s ownership or affiliation with political parties and governments early in history” (Ibelema 2003: 170). The political or business interests of newspaper proprietors influence media bias in Nigeria (Jibo & Okoosi-Simbine 2003: 182; Ette 2000: 70). “Whether in a military rule or in a democratic regime, the media suffers a huge array of poverty and disabilities, the elements of which include the political and business interests of its ownership or proprietorship” (Oyovbaire 2001: 4).

Implicit, therefore, is a dearth of investigative reporting skill despite increased recruitment of graduate journalists (Jibo & Okoosi-Simbine 2003). This has resulted in situations in which allegations of corruption against top government functionaries are treated with levity (Jibo & Okoosi-Simbine 2003: 193). Therefore, highly placed public officials are deliberately shielded from embarrassing questions by the media in return for favours (Jibo & Okoosi-Simbine 2003: 187). In other words, the press in Nigeria are selective in their investigation of allegations of corrupt practices which results in journalism of adulation (Ibelema 2002):

The propaganda orientation of the Press also bears on its ethical standards. As operatives of particular parties and governments, journalists often did what they had to do in order to thrive. The limited formal education of many Nigerian journalists was also a factor in this regard (2002: 170).

The ethnicity that underpins the Nigerian state is also very visible in the Nigerian press and breeds divergent perspectives on the coverage of national issues following the North-South dichotomy (Jibo & Okoosi-Simbine 2003; Adebani 2002). When the Nigerian Press exposes corruption, they are usually divisive in its coverage to the extent that “when a national issue enters the public domain for debate, the Nigerian media often, though not all the time, take a North-versus-South position on it” (Jibo & Okoosi-Simbine 2003: 183). Ethnicity is also manifest in the two major centres of newspaper production in the country: the Lagos-Ibadan axis and Abuja-Kaduna. The Lagos Ibadan represents the south and Abuja-Kaduna the north (Adebani 2002). The newspapers with national reach and audience including *Thisday*, *Punch Vanguard*, *Guardian*, *Daily Independent*, *Business Day*, *Sun*, and *Tribune* are

domiciled in the Lagos-Ibadan axis, while Abuja-Kaduna boasts three national newspapers: *Leadership*, *Daily Trust* and *Pilot*.

Similarly, Nigeria ranks among a few countries that have signed into law the Freedom of Information law (NUJ 2012) and is ranked partly free in the 2012 freedom of the Press Data (Freedom House 2012). Nigeria enjoys a liberalised press sector, with more than a hundred daily newspapers, magazines and weeklies (UNDP 2012). “A large number of the print media outlets ranging from the serious-minded and professionally organised newspapers and magazines to the soft sell and junk magazines surfaced in the newsstands” (Oyovbaire 2001:10). However, circulation figures of newspapers in Nigeria remain stagnant. In a 2009 survey conducted by the Advertising Association of Nigeria, the total figures for newspaper circulation in Nigeria were 300,000, though it is being contested by the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (Advan 2009).

2.12.1 Chinese soft power

In the early 2000s, China launched its soft power diplomacy with a view to rebranding its image (Kurlantzick 2007). The concept of ‘soft power’, which is concerned with appeal rather than force, as an approach to diplomacy was developed by Harvard professor, Joseph Nye. Similarly, the “charm offensive” which China employed to counter how its image is viewed in Africa and the media is a potent vehicle (Kurlantzick 2007). In 2010, its state news agency, the Xinhua news agency, commenced news on mobile phones; in 2011, CCTV established its African broadcast hub in Nairobi and Kenya, and in December 2012 Xinhuanet, an online service of the Xinhua news agency, launched its African edition (Umejei 2013). The Chinese soft power diplomacy is expressed through the StarTimes Cable Television, a joint venture between Star TV Network and Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Nigeria’s public broadcaster (NTA). The StarTimes digital cable television has recorded remarkable growth in Nigeria with more than a 1.6-million subscription base and presence in 16 cities (Umejei 2013). Loko emphasises that the partnership is aimed at helping the NTA transition from analogue to digital broadcasting, in line with the June 2015 International Telecommunication Union (ITU) switch-off date for member countries link (Umejei 2013). StarTimes was recently been judged the best pay digital channel provider in Nigeria for the year 2012 at the Nigeria Broadcaster Merit Award (NBMA) ceremony in January 2013 for its quest to ensure that that “every home in Nigeria has access to digital television” (Ademigbuji 2013).

However, there are debates as to how China's involvement in the media in Africa will impact the bottom-up style of investigative reporting and press freedom in Africa (Umejei & Hall 2013). For example, Anton Harber of Wits University School of Journalism expressed concern that Chinese media investment and ownership "brings a kind of top-down style of Chinese journalism and can inhibit the progress we have made in this continent developing an open bottom-up style of investigative journalism" (Umejei & Hall 2013).

2.12.2 *Thisday* newspapers

The *Thisday* newspaper ¹²is owned by Nduka Obaigbena, a business man and media baron, who also owns the London-based Arise Cable Television. It was first published in 1991 and it is an elite newspaper (Ette 2012). The *Thisday* is Nigeria's first newspaper to embrace full colour printing and also the first to commence satellite printing in three destinations (Sahara reporters 2013). The newspaper has no link to any ethnic groupings or regional interests and reaches a national audience (Ette 2012). The *Thisday* states that it is a "player on the global stage by bringing the world to Nigeria and taking Nigeria to the world" (Thisday 2013). Its lack of obvious ethnic affiliation and bias, and its 'international' orientation make it a good fit for this study.

2.13 Conclusion

In the previous chapter, I outlined the literature on China's engagement with Africa in which China is usually portrayed as either a 'mercantilist predator' or as a 'partner in development' (Le Pere 2007). This chapter highlighted the various facets of China's engagement with Nigeria, with emphasis on the contests, the compromises and the conspiracies. I have also highlighted the socio-political underpinnings of the Nigerian state and put in perspective the Nigerian media. The themes that emerge from both chapters suggest that China's engagement with Africa, by extension Nigeria, is underpinned by aid, investments, trade, infrastructure, exploitation of resources, dumping of sub-standard products, competition, conflicts, immigration and labour issues. In the next chapter, I shall draw on the concept of 'framing theory' as an overarching theoretical and methodological framework for analysing the ways in which these themes and issues are articulated in *Thisday's* representations of China's engagements with Nigeria.

¹² See 1

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.0 Introduction

When ‘framing’ was conceptualised by Goffman (1974: 21) as a theory, he described it as a primary framework or schemata of interpretation that enables an individual to recognise a particular event. The “framework allows its user to locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms” (1974: 21). However, Goffman (1974: 21) used the term ‘framework’ and ‘frame’ interchangeably.

The concept of framing has gained popularity (Benford & Snow 2000; Reese 2001; Koenig 2006) and finds application in a wide area of scholarship, such as sociology (Goffman 1974), economics (Kahneman & Tversky 1979), linguistics (Tannen 1979) and anthropology (Bateson 1972). It has also gained traction in media studies and has been applied in analysing issues such as an anti-abortion rally (Pan & Kosicki 1993), nuclear power (Gamson & Modigliani 1989), a political campaign (Cappella & Johnson 1997), an advertising campaign (Tucker 1998), symbolic contests (Gamson & Stuart 1992), social narrative (Durham 1998), opinion formation (James & Druckman 2007), the White House (Entman 2004), social movements (Snow & Benford 2000) and Newseum (Reese 2001). The pattern of dramatic growth in framing research is attributable to its unorthodox approach which is adaptable to varied areas of research (Weaver 2007: 144; Koenig 2004). This informs why the term “frame” can be applied to many different aspects of a message and to different types of messages (Weaver 2007: 144).

In this chapter, I outline the theoretical basis from which to investigate the framing of China’s engagement with Nigeria. The key objective of my research is to identify the frames that dominate the coverage of China’s engagement in Nigeria by *Thisday* newspaper and relate these frames to the various stakeholders and interest groups – frame sponsors – articulating and contesting these framings. To answer my research question, I draw on frame theory, which defines framing as “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman 1993: 52). In other words, the “single greatest power of media frames is

their ability to provide and activate information, influence public opinions” (Tewksbury et al. 2000: 805)

This chapter is divided into four sections, namely: historical origin of frame theory, framing as ideology, sources as frame sponsors and framing as a contest for definition.

3.1. Frame theory

The popularity of frame theory comes with the challenge of providing an acceptable definition for the term upon which the theory is based. While there are many definitions for the term ‘framing’, it is often used interchangeably with other terms such as ‘frame’ or ‘framework’. For the purposes of this study, I refer to Entman’s (1993) definition of the term, which states:

To frame, is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (1993: 52).

Meanwhile, there are two basic genres of definitions of frame: general definitions and definitions that can be operationalised (Marthtes 2009: 350). General definitions describe the term “frame” without clear guidelines for operationalisation while the other definitions specify what frames do (Marthtes 2009: 350). Gitlin’s (1978: 6) definition of frame as “principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens and what matters” is an example of a general definition. Another general definition of frame is “central organising idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events” (Gamson & Modigliani (1987: 143). The definition of frame by Entman (1993) stated above is considered one of the most acceptable measurable definitions of frame. There are other measurable definitions such as Snow & Benford’s (1998: 200) which emphasises that framing has three core functions: diagnose a problem (diagnostic framing); propose solutions and tactics (prognostic framing); and provide guidelines for corrective action. The diagnostic and prognostic framing tasks are engaged in achieving consensus mobilisation and the latter task “provides the motivational impetus for participation” (Snow & Benford 1998: 200). Diagnostic framing is the identification of a problem and attribution of responsibility while prognostic framing suggests corrective action and tactics (Snow & Benford 1998: 200, 201). Frame then suggests a definition, an

explanation, a problem and a definition of an event and results in some conclusions (Van Gorp 2007: 65).

The advantage of operational definitions for a frame is that they can be “translated to frame indicators or cited to ground the reader in framing literature” (Martthes 2009: 350). Therefore, the use of “frame definitions is central to frame validity depending on whether scholars really do measure what they intend to measure” (Martthes 2009: 350).

3.1.2 Function of a frame

There are four levels at which framing occurs: in the culture; in the minds of elites and professional political communications; in the texts of communications; and in the minds of individual citizens (Entman 1993, 2004). Media frames work by emphasising some bits of information about an item that is the theme of communication, thereby giving it prominence (Entman 1993: 53). For this study, Entman’s (1993) function of a frame is adopted:

Frames, then, *define problems* – determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; *diagnose causes* – identify forces creating problems; *make moral judgements* – evaluate causal agents and their effects; and *suggest remedies* – offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects (Entman 1993: 52 emphasis in the original).

Frames also function as tools employed by journalists in constructing news stories and as cognitive tool for audiences to interpret it (Pan & Kosicki 1993: 59). Benford & Snow (2000: 614) argue that “frames work to render events or occurrences meaningful and function to organise experience and guide action”. In other words, the “single greatest power of media frames is their ability to provide and activate information, influence public opinions” (Tewksbury et al. 2000: 805) and give the audience direction on how to conceive of a specific issue or event (Valkenburg, Semetko & De Vreese 1999: 567).

3.1.3 Types of media frames

There are two acceptable approaches to frame identification in framing research; deductive and inductive methods (De Vreese 2005: 53). The inductive approach involves analysing media content with an open view to identify possible frames. This approach is suitable to small samples. A deductive approach involves operationalizing frames prior to analysis of media content to verify the extent to which they occur in the news. This approach is suited to

larger samples (De Vreese 2005: 53). These methods are further explained in chapter four (research method and data analysis techniques).

There are two broad classes of frames: generic and issue-specific frames. Generic frames find application in different topics and cultural contexts while issue-specific frames are applicable to specific topics or events (De Vreese 2005: 54). Semetko & Valkenburg (2000: 551) identified five generic ways in which journalists frame news: emphasising conflict between parties or individuals (conflict); focusing on an individual as an exemplar of the issue being covered and/or by emphasising emotions (human interest frame); attributing responsibility, crediting or blaming certain political institutions or individuals (responsibility frame); interpreting events or issues in the context of morality (morality) and focusing on the economic consequences for the audience (economic consequences frame).

There are other frames that are germane to this study including immigration frames and master frames, both issue-specific frames, which enjoy currency in the literature on framing. The immigration frame is concerned with the perception of immigrants (Vliegenthart & Roggeband 2007). The master frames are 'ethno-nationalist frame', 'liberal-individualist citizenship' and 'harmony with nature' frames (Koenig 2006: 64). The *ethno-nationalist* frame is concerned with the primordial groups based on such criteria as religion, culture or blood relationship (Eder 1995: 4 cited in Koenig 2006: 64); the liberal-individualist citizenship frame promotes individual liberty and equality of all humans vis-a-vis the state (Eder 1995: 4 cited in Koenig 2006: 64); and the harmony with nature frame emphasises the centrality of nature in diverse culture (Gamson 1992: 136).

Conversely, Iyengar (1990) identified thematic and episodic frames as two forms of news frames that affect attribution of responsibility and causal treatment. Altering the format of television reports about political issues when presented to experimental and control groups affects how people attribute responsibility (Iyengar 1996). Episodic news frames simply illustrate issues such as a poor person to portray poverty; a terrorist to portray terrorism and a sex worker for prostitution (Iyengar 1990). On the other hand, thematic news frames describe issues more broadly and theoretically by highlighting context, history and geography (Iyengar 1996). A thematic report on terrorism might include information about trends in terrorism and countries with high susceptibility to terrorist attacks (Iyengar 1996: 60). In attributing responsibility, episodic framing portrays individuals against societal attribution of responsibility (Iyengar 1996).

3.1.4 Critique of frame theory

While framing is fast becoming an attractive research programme, its development into a full-fledged paradigm is hindered by its “scattered conceptualisation” (Entman 1993: 51). The first challenge to the concept of framing is in the meaning of the word, frame, which has two different meanings in the English language: Frame as a picture and frame as a frame of a building, though most researchers refer to the latter sense of frame as an underlying structure (Gamson et al., 1992: 385). This has informed arguments for “more efforts toward cleaning up the framing paradigm, making it more theoretically respectable and coherent” (Reese 2007: 148). On the other hand, framing has become a kind of a bridging model for media research (Reese 2007). Framing’s value is derived from its “provocative model that bridges parts of the field that need to be in touch with each other; quantitative and qualitative, empirical and interpretive, psychological and sociological, and academic and professional” (2007: 148). This, then, is the reason framing has been able to bring together disparate fields that differ in “philosophical assumption” (Reese 2007: 149).

In his response to Entman’s (1993) criticism of framing as a fractured paradigm, D’Angelo (2002) argues that there is no a single paradigm of framing but a diverse application of framing to different paradigms has enriched the field of research. According to D’Angelo (2002) the hardcore of news framing research is revealed in four empirical goals that various studies pursue:

To identify thematic units called frames; to investigate the antecedent of conditions that produce frames ; to examine how news frames activate and interact with an individual’s prior knowledge to affect interpretations, recall of information, decision making, and evaluations, and; to examine how news frames shape social-level processes such as public opinion and policy issues (2002: 874).

Framing research also builds on four assumptions that frames have “four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver and the culture” (Entman 1993: 52). To justify his assertion that framing research is underpinned by four empirical goals, D’Angelo (2002: 876) proposed three paradigms of framing research: cognitive, critical and constructionist paradigms. Scholars, such as Tewksbury, Jones, Peske, Raymong & Vig (2000), Valkenburg, Semetko & De Vreese (1999) – who work within the cognitive paradigm – are interested in detecting thoughts that mirror propositions encoded in frames. Meanwhile, Gitlin (1980), Tuchman (1978), Tucker (1998) and Entman & Rojecki (1993) – who work within the critical paradigm – are concerned with the outcome of news-gathering

routines by which journalists convey information about issues and events from the perspective of values held by political and economic elites (D'Angelo 2002: 876). The constructionist paradigm, where Gamson & Modigliani (1987, 1989) are key scholars, argues that journalists are information processors who create "interpretive packages" of the positions of politically invested sponsors (e.g. sources) (D'Angelo 2002: 876). D'Angelo asserts that a multi-paradigmatic approach to framing enriches a model of news framing research and serves to complement the communication discipline rather than detract from it (D'Angelo 2002: 879).

On the other hand, McCombs & Ghanem (2001) and McCombs (2005) argue that framing is a second level agenda, a position that has been contested by framing scholars such as Scheufele (2004), Pan & Kosicki (2005), and Cappella & Jamieson (1997). They argue that the agenda setting approach is concerned with the frequency of occurrence of an issue in the media and does not concern itself with how the issue is treated in the media (Cappella & Jamieson 1997; Borah 2011). Scheufele (2004: 406) concludes that to think of agenda setting as a concept that subsumes framing is "ill-founded". Framing has also become more popular than either agenda setting or priming within media studies because of its ambiguity or the comprehensive nature of the term (Weaver 2007).

3.2. Framing as ideology

Framing suggests that media content is a manifestation of underlying ideologies because texts always include some ideas and leave out others (Reese 2001: 18). Therefore, frames in the news are underpinned by ideologies and to ignore the ideology that promotes a particular frame is to read texts at face value and to be "misled by manifest content" (Reese 2001: 13). This implies that ideology can no longer be seen as a dependent variable, or a mere reflection of a pre-given reality but a product of conscious effort at creating particular meanings (Hall 1982: 70). Similarly, to take texts at face value would amount to losing sight of the fact that it contains subtexts which may have more invisible meta-messages (Gamson et al.1992: 381). Therefore, "all artefacts are inscribed with ideology, and in ideological criticism, rhetorical artefacts are treated as symptoms or textual evidence of ideology" (Foss 1996: 297). Foss (1996) suggests three approaches to analysing news artefacts as evidence of ideology:

What is the preferred reading of the artefact? What does the artefact ask the audience to believe, understand, feel, or think about? Which groups' or voices' interests are

included or favoured in the dominant ideology represented in the artefact, as well as those that are excluded (1996: 297-298).

It is argued that it is impossible to proceed without values and not even journalists, who claim objectivity as a central tenet of news reporting, do so (Gans 1974). “Values in the news are rarely explicit and must be found between lines – in what actors and activities are reported or ignored and in how they are described.” (Gans 1974: 39). Thus, news texts comprise a structure of organised representative elements that both suggest the promotion of certain ideas and “provide devices to encourage certain kinds of audience processing of texts” (Pan & Kosicki 1993: 55). Moreover, news stories form part of social relations in their construction of reality (Fair 1996) and “any representation of reality involves framing” (Kitzinger 2007: 134). In other words, news stories convey the “properties or characteristics of knowledge organised and processed by institutions that are part of the system of ruling” (Fair 1996: 7 quoted in Durham 1998: 104).

Therefore, if news is made up of values, it implicitly contains ideologies (Gans 1974: 8). Consequently, ideology becomes a major source of “framing in the news and framing, an important mechanism by which ideology is transmitted through the news” (Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad 1998: 134)). Hence, framing represents the “ideological competition to dominate the next fixed meaning within a modernist sense of power and history” (Durham 1998: 105). The most important form of political or ideological influence in the media is the conscious or unconscious news report that favour one particular candidate, party, political position or interest group at the expense of another (Hacket 1984: 233). The news, therefore, encourages particular thought – about events by suggesting some ideas and leaving out others, which influences audiences to reach a perceived conclusion (Tewksbury et al. 2000: 807). Therefore, dominant frames signify a set of social meanings that help to define social relations within a particular social context (Durham 1998: 102). The media operates to promote “apathy, cynicism, and quiescence rather than active citizenship and participation” (Gamson et al. 1992: 39).

Hacket (1984) supports this perspective that:

With the exclusion of accidents or scandals (which are leaked by non-official informers), most press stories are “routine events” which are promoted by political and bureaucratic power-holders: the “event needs” of the news promoters (political or bureaucratic sources) and the news assemblers (journalists) are complementary (1984: 236).

The press is also susceptible to favouritism because of its history of partisanship and lack of subjection to fairness regulations (Hacket 1984: 239). In addition, journalists are pliable to pressure from social groups, elites and government officials who are powerful members of the societies and can influence decisions that may hurt them and their organisations (Gans 1974: 78).

3.3 Sources: frame sponsors

Journalists have a tendency to adopt the frames being articulated and promoted by their sources, which increases with sustained contact (Gamson & Stuart 1992: 57). In other words, journalists do not manufacture news of their own but are “cued in” to new topics by regular and reliable sources (Hall et al. 1978: 57). The media thus represent the primary, and often the only, source of information about many important events which are ‘new’ or ‘unexpected’ (Hall et al. 1978: 56). Therefore, the source of news can be an “important determinant of whether or not it will make the page or get on air” (Machin & Niblock 2006: 28). However, news organisations are more likely to privilege official administrative sources to other contrary accounts from other sources (Machin & Niblock 2006: 76). “The practical pressures of constantly working against the clock and the professional demands of impartiality and objectivity combine to produce a systematically structured over-accessing to the media of those in powerful and privileged institutional positions” (Hall et al. 1978: 58).

However, there is competition between sources to produce dominant frames in news stories (Durham 1998) because “ elites and associated organisations are often in competition with each other for influence, rather than acting as a unified class” (Manning 2001: 29). In other words, “political elites invest substantial resources and much political effort in ‘promoting’ particular information flows, through marketing, advertising and attempt to ‘manage’ the networks of formal and informal contacts with news journalists” (Manning 2001: 107). This is because mainstream political organisations not only compete for votes but struggle for media attention which is necessary to their survival (Manning 2001: 108). Therefore, the management of information has always been a preoccupation of government, which makes it difficult to differentiate public information from propaganda (Manning 2001: 108). Hence, it is germane to account for the origin and character of framing contests conducted both within and outside the news media (Carragee & Roefs 2004: 220). Gamson & Stuart (1992) analysed more than 700 cartoons over a 40-year period in their study of symbolic contests over nuclear war. They concluded that sponsors in symbolic contests measure their success or

failure by how well their preferred meanings and interpretations manifest the media (1992: 63, 56). Consequently, the “words and images that make up the frame can be distinguished from the rest of the news by their capacity to stimulate support of or opposition to the sides in a political conflict” (Entman 2003: 417).

3.4 Frame sponsorship

Frame sponsorship is concerned with how political and economic elites, and social groups sponsor in the media perspectives that promote their interests and/or perspectives on certain issues (Chong & Druckman 2013) and, therefore, adopt strategies to achieve their goals. Frame sponsors are interested in influencing the perception and the frames that journalists employ in reporting an event (Van Gorp 2007: 68) because, when people are repeatedly exposed to a particular frame, they develop a favourable opinion of the frame (Chong & Druckman 2013). “Sponsorship is more than merely advocacy, it involves such tangible activities as speech making, interviews with journalists, advertising, article and pamphlet writing, to promote preferred frames,” (Gamson & Modigliani 1989: 6). Frame sponsors premise their actions on the notion that the frame accessible to an audience will influence their assessment of an issue (Chong & Druckman 2013). In other words, frames promoted by “interest groups or political actors as sound bites are adopted by journalists and incorporated in their coverage of an issue or event” (Scheufele 1999: 116). Frames frequently have sponsors who are interested in promoting their perspectives in the public domain (Gamson & Modigliani 1989: 6). The sponsor of a frame package is often an agent who is promoting the interest of a particular group (Gamson & Modigliani 1989: 7). These agents also have access to resources, which they expend to prepare materials that are easily accessible to journalists because they understand that journalists have time constraints and they create materials that will be suited to reporting the news (Gamson & Modigliani 1989: 7). The financial resources are fundamental to the ability of a particular frame to make it to the news and to considerably dominate it (Carragee & Roefs 2004: 219). Frames succeed in media discourse through a combination of factors such as “cultural resonance, sponsor activities, and a successful fit with media norms and practices” (Gamson & Modigliani 1989: 8). Hence, it is argued that a “framing research that ignores the ways in which frames construct meanings and the interests served by those meanings deprives the concept of its theoretical and substantive significance” (Carragee & Roefs 2004: 219). Hall (1982) defends this position:

That the more one accepts that how people act will depend in part on how the situations in which they act are defined, and the less one can assume either a natural meaning to everything or a universal consensus on what things mean – then, the more important, socially and politically, becomes the process by means of which certain events get recurrently signified in particular ways (1982: 69).

Strategic actors consciously employ assets such as charisma, a delicate balance of intimidation and flattery, and rhetorical and theoretical proficiency to frame issues in ways that promote their interests (Entman 2007: 167). Powerful actors in political, social and economic spheres devote huge resources to promoting their interests precisely by “imposing persistent, politically relevant patterns on mediated communications” (Entman 2007: 164). Some communicators engage in framing strategically, seeking to exert power over outcomes by inducing target audiences to accept interpretations that favour their interests or goals (Entman, Marthes & Pellicano 2003: 176). Therefore, elites are interested in what people think because they want them to behave in particular ways and support and accommodate their activities (Entman 2007: 165). However, to succeed in getting people to think a certain way requires “selecting some things to tell them about and efficiently cueing them on how these elements mesh with their own schema systems” (Entman 2007: 165). Framing makes it possible for political elites and economic elites to structure the “texts that influence or prime the agendas and considerations that people think about” (Entman 2007: 165). Implicitly, the media may be facilitating the distribution of political power to particular groups, causes, or individuals (Entman 2007: 166).

The media often frames issues in ways that favour particular interests “without showing an explicit bias” (Tankard 2001: 96). In addition, omissions and inaccuracies in the media are a conscious effort by powerful, external influences in society to promote perspectives which favour particular groups and institutions (Davis 2007: 39). Therefore, framing suggests how social understanding is structured and these understandings are tied to interests (Reese 2001: 19). Equally, the processes by which certain events are framed are not neutral but influenced by both social and political actors (Hall 1982: 69). For instance, in the case of nuclear power, public officials were found to be the most important sponsors of progress frame while non-governmental organisations campaigning against nuclear power were sponsors of the anti-nuclear frame (Gamson & Modigliani 1989: 6).

3.5. Framing as contest for definition

Public debates involve competition between contending parties to establish the meaning and interpretation of issues (Chong & Druckman 2007:100). Therefore, the process of meaning-making is contested because it is the means through which collective understanding is created (Hall 1982: 70). Therefore, the media become a site on which various social groups, institutions, and ideologies struggle over the definition and construction of social reality (Gurevitch & Levy 1985: 19). Similarly, news stories become a forum for framing contests in which political, social and economic actors compete by promoting their definition of an issue (Carragee & Roefs 2004: 216). Though elites have an edge in the flow of power, no single “elite position” can dominate the framing of an event or issue which often leads to contest among promoters of preferred meanings (Entman, Marthes and Pellicano 2003: 187). The reason is that “politics is typically competitive, fought between parties or ideological factions, and issues that are debated are framed in opposing terms” (Chong & Druckman 2007: 102). When elites contest to shape frames in the news, they aim to influence other elites’ perceptions and to predict public opinion (Entman, Marthes & Pellicano 2003: 186). They therefore wage symbolic contests with metaphors, catch phrases and other symbolic devices that mutually support a particular frame for making sense of events relating to a particular issue (Gamson & Stuart 1992: 59). Thus labels become the target of symbolic contest between promoters of different ways of framing an issue because once a particular definition is established in the public discourse it becomes difficult for those with a different frame to avoid or contest it (Gamson 1992: 9).

3.6 Conclusion

Public debates are often contested between contending interests to establish meaning that promote their perspectives (Chong & Druckman 2007). Therefore, there is no single definition of an issue in the public domain but nuanced views sponsored by various social actors promoting their interests. In this chapter, I laid out the theoretical underpinnings of framing theory and its suitability for the analysis of contestations of framings on China in the public domain. The next chapter provides a methodological application of framing theory.

Chapter four: Research methods and data analysis techniques

4.0 Introduction

The primary method of analysis employed in this study is frame analysis, which enables a researcher to uncover the basic strategies of selection, emphasis and exclusion embedded in “complex and contradictory” media artefacts (Lenz 1991: 12). Frame analysis is used to analyse how an issue is represented in the newspaper, on television or on a website (Kitzinger 2007: 138).

This chapter is divided into five sections: the aims and objectives of the study; some epistemological considerations; sample size and selection; data gathering and analysis methods; and coding procedure and framing devices. In the first section, I provide a brief discussion of the aims and objective of the study, while the second section dwells on the research design, with emphasis on epistemological underpinnings of quantitative-qualitative research paradigms. In the third section, I discuss the sampling procedures implemented in order to address the fourth section, which includes the data gathering techniques applied in the study, namely: document review, content analysis and frame analysis. In conclusion, I discuss the coding techniques for frame analysis employed in this study.

4.1. Aims and objective of study

The key objective of this study is to identify the news frames that dominate the coverage of China’s engagement in Nigeria as presented in *Thisday* newspaper and how such frames relate to the various stakeholders and interest groups – frame sponsors – contesting these framings. To achieve this, the study first familiarises itself with the coverage of China’s engagement by the *Thisday* newspaper, to which frame analysis is applied, drawing on the functions of a frame identified by Entman (1993: 53): define problems, diagnose causes, evaluate actions and recommend treatment. After the identification of the dominant frames in the sample, the study relates these frames to various stakeholders and interests groups contesting the framing of China in Nigeria.

4.2. Epistemological considerations

To develop what counts as knowledge, social scientists established rigorous and ordered methods to inquire into the world of everyday life. While everyday life is about solving

personal challenges, scientists aim to generate valid descriptions of the world through the application of systematic, reliable and valid procedures (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 7).

However, the process of scientific inquiry is not linear; there are different approaches that rely on certain epistemological positions. In scientific inquiry, there are two major research approaches to understanding how knowledge is produced. The first is a quantitative approach, stemming from the traditions of positivism and the second research approach is a qualitative one, based in the interpretivist tradition. Qualitative and quantitative approaches to research are what Kuhn describes as a 'paradigm' (Kuhn 1977: 294): "A paradigm is what the members of a scientific community, and they alone, share" (Kuhn 1977: 294). Therefore, the possession of a common paradigm is what constitutes a scientific community of hitherto separate people who are practitioners of a scientific specialty (Kuhn 1977: 296). Within a particular paradigm "practitioners are bound together by common elements in their education and apprenticeship and are perceived by others as people responsible for the pursuit of a set of shared goals" (Kuhn 1977: 296). Consequently, quantitative and qualitative traditions are based on certain epistemological positions which practitioners of each paradigm share: both traditions signify much more than ways of gathering data but denote divergent assumptions about the nature and purposes of research in the social sciences (Bryman 1988: 3). In the following sub-sections I explain both research paradigms and situate this study within the qualitative tradition.

4.2.1 Quantitative approach (positivism)

Quantitative research methods, based in the positivist tradition of inquiry, involve the use of a "special language which appears to exhibit some similarity to the ways in which scientists talk about how they investigate the natural order – variables, control, measurement, experiment" (Bryman 1988: 12). In quantitative research, the logic and procedures of the natural sciences are taken to provide an epistemological yardstick against which empirical research in the social sciences must be appraised before it can be treated as valid knowledge (Bryman 1988). The adoption of a natural science approach by positivists is informed by the belief that the objects of the social sciences, including human beings, are not an obstacle to the implementation of the scientific method (Bryman 1988). Therefore, positivists assert that interrogating the social and cultural world is no different in principle to investigating the natural world and that the same basic procedures apply to both (Deacon et al. 1999: 3). In other words, positivists see the overall aim of scientific inquiry as developing generalisations

about the relations between social “facts that establish basic connections of cause and effect” (Deacon et al. 1993: 30). To achieve this, however, “existing generalisations have to be continually tested against new evidence to verify whether the hypotheses they generate are supported or disproved” (Deacon et al. 1999: 3). Positivism is informed by the belief that only phenomena which are “observable, in the sense of being amenable to the senses, can vividly be warranted as knowledge” (Bryman 1988: 14). This means that phenomena which cannot be observed either directly through experience and observation or indirectly with the aid of instruments do not produce what are truthful and valid results in positivism (Bryman 1988). In other words, the science of social and cultural life must be based on empirical data produced by direct observation (Babbie & Mouton 1999). Positivists also favour recording relevant ‘facts’ in terms of quantities or numbers that can be processed using statistical techniques (Deacon et al. 1999: 4).

4.2.2 Qualitative research method (Interpretivist)

Qualitative research design is fundamentally concerned with “exploring the ways that people make sense of their social worlds and how they express these understandings through language, sound, imagery, personal style and social rituals” (Deacon et al. 2010: 5). In this tradition, the most fundamental characteristic is its express commitment to viewing events, actions, norms and values “from the perspective of the people who are being studied” (Bryman 1988: 61). This approach in research is known as the ‘emic perspective’ and is particularly suited to the study of those attitudes and behaviours best understood within their natural settings (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 270). Qualitative researchers reject the application of natural science procedures to the objects of inquiry in the social sciences (Barbie & Mouton 2001).

Qualitative researchers also reject the formulation of theories and concepts before commencing field work (Bryman 1988), viewing the “imposition of a pre-ordained theoretical framework as deleterious because it may excessively constrain the researcher and also may exhibit a poor fit with participants’ perspectives” (Bryman 1988: 68). Therefore, “rather than beginning with an existing theory or hypothesis, the qualitative researcher begins with an immersion in the natural setting, describing events as accurately as possible, as they occur or have occurred and slowly but surely building second order constructs” (Barbie & Mouton 2001:273). Consequently, qualitative researchers “tend to favour a research strategy

which is relatively open and unstructured, rather than one which has decided in advance precisely what ought to be investigated and how it should be done”(Bryman 1988: 66).

While quantitative researchers argue that social ‘reality’ is ‘out there’, qualitative researchers reject this notion, insisting that “far from existing apart from social action, the organising structures of social and cultural life are continually reproduced and modified through the myriad activities of everyday life” (Deacon et al. 2010: 6). Qualitative methods are well suited to research that is constructivist (Deacon et al. 2010: 6). Implicit is that qualitative analysis is appropriate to the study of the contested definition of China’s engagement with Nigeria by different stakeholders, interests groups or frame sponsors.

In the qualitative tradition, analytical meaning is always evolving; it is never complete (Deacon et al. 2010: 6). Consequently, qualitative research “inevitably generates a wealth of qualitative materials from interrogating media representations (Deacon et al. 2010: 6-7). This also qualifies qualitative research design as very relevant to this study in order to fully understand the contestation of meaning by various stakeholders and interests groups.

4.3. Sample selection and size

By implication, qualitative research design does not generate data that can be generalised to a greater population. Therefore, I selected the sample of analysis from a population reckoned to be suitable to address my research objectives. In research, the term ‘population’ does not automatically mean people; it can be aggregates of texts, institutions, or anything else being investigated (Deacon et al. 2010: 43). A population of interest is dependent on what the researcher is investigating (Deacon et al. 2010: 43).

In research, sampling techniques can be divided into two broad categories: random sampling (probability sampling) and non-random sampling (or non-probability sampling) (Deacon et al. 2010: 44). The sample for this study was done purposively, which qualifies my sampling technique as non-random. In random sampling “every unit of a population has an equal chance of being selected, while in non-random, it cannot be guaranteed that every unit of population has an equal chance of being selected” (Deacon et al. 2010: 44). The sample was drawn from *Thisday* newspaper over a period of one year, beginning on 1 November 2011 and carrying on until 31 December 2012. This sample period is considered appropriate for the present study because it covers a variety of media content that spans a wide area of China’s engagement with Nigeria.

Thisday newspaper was chosen for this study because a preliminary study of Nigerian newspapers shows it has the highest number of stories on China in Nigeria. *Thisday*, based in Lagos, is an elite newspaper with national circulation and it was first published in 1995 (Ette 2012: 48). The newspaper is published in English, the official language of Nigeria, and is owned by Nduka Obaigbena, a Nigerian businessman (Sahara reporters 2013). It is also the first newspaper in Nigeria to engage full colour printing and the first to commence satellite printing in three destinations (Sahara reporters 2013).

For this study, a total of forty articles on China in Nigeria were selected, comprising thirty-four news stories, three feature stories and three opinion articles by *Thisday* columnists between 1 November 2011 and 31 December 2012. Editorials, news, and features articles will be the units of analysis because frame analysis favours whole articles as the main discourse unit (Marthes 2009: 355).

4. 4. Data gathering and analysis methods

4.4.1 Document review

Documents play a central role in researching contemporary communications (Deacon et al. 2010: 14). The documents that can be examined include, among others, newspapers, annual reports, correspondence, and minutes of meetings (Stake 1995: 68). For this study, I examined newspaper documents. More specifically, I examine print-edition and online stories published by the *Thisday* newspaper from 1 November 2011 to 31 December 2012 relating to China's engagement in Nigeria. These were downloaded using the *Thisday*'s research database. The data was collected using keywords/phrases: 'China in Nigeria' was the search terms used to identify news articles relating to China's engagement in Nigeria. In media studies, documentary sources can be used either to "*supplement* the materials we have collected or as the primary focus of our research" (Deacon et al. 2010: 15 – emphasis in the original). For this research, the documents were the primary source of my research. Data gathering by "studying documents follows the same line of thinking as observing or interviewing" (Stake 1995: 68). There are four main situations in which documents may become the centre of a research:

In historical studies, where direct access to people and situations is no longer possible; where access to people or situations we wish to study is restricted or denied; in secondary analysis, where a project is based on the re-analysis of material previously collected by other researchers; and when we are carrying out textual analysis where

the organisation and meaning of the material itself is the major focus of research (Deacon et al. 2010: 16).

This study is located within the fourth situation because I am applying “textual analysis where the organisation and meaning of the material itself is the major focus of research” (Deacon et al. 2010: 16).

4.4.2 Content Analysis

Content analysis is defined as “a multipurpose research method developed specifically for investigating any problem in which the content of communication serves as the basis of inference” (Holsti 1969: 2). There are two broad methods of content analysis: qualitative and quantitative (Elo & Kyngas 2008). Content analysis may be used in an inductive or deductive way; the approach applied is determined by the purpose of the study (Elo & Kyngas 2008: 109). Qualitative content analysis is concerned with analysing emerging themes and issues in media content while quantitative analysis applies numerical values to certain categories and units (Berelson 1952). This study employs qualitative content analysis because it is interested in analysing themes and issues in media content (Berelson 1952). However, this does not mean that one cannot count sources quoted in the journalism because “even research which relies almost exclusively upon one mode rather than the other, often contains elements of both” (Bryman 1984: 113).

4.4.3 Frame analysis

Frame analysis investigates the “selection and salience of certain aspects of an issue by exploring images, stereotypes, metaphors, actors and messages” (Entman, Matthes & Pellicano 2003: 180). It has become an important method (Entman, Matthes & Pellicano 2003: 180), which can be used to analyse how an issue is represented in the newspaper, television or online (Kitzinger 2007: 138). It also analyses “how an issue is discussed in the news and how the ways of talking about the issue are related to the evolution of the issue in political debates” (Pan & Kosicki 1993: 65). For this reason framing is an appropriate tool for studying the contested definition of China’s engagement in Nigeria.

There are two broad approaches to frame analysis: deductive and inductive methods. A deductive approach involves operationalising frames that have been developed prior to the analysis of texts, to verify the extent to which they occur in the news and is suited to large samples. The inductive approach involves analysing media content with an open view to

identify possible frames, an approach well-suited to small samples (De Vreese 2005: 53). This study adopted an inductive approach to identify frames in a relatively small sample of articles in *Thisday* newspaper.

4.4.3.1 Deductive approach

Some deductive studies “theoretically derive frames from the literature and code them in standard content analysis” (Marthes & Kohring 2008: 262). However, the most fundamental limitation of the deductive approach is that “frames are known before hand and they suit the topic currently under investigation” (Marthes & Kohring 2008: 262).

4.4.3.2 Inductive method

In inductive studies, “frames are described in-depth, with detailed quotes, but without quantification” (Matthes 2009: 351). The inductive approach involves an intensive reading of the texts, which is suited to small samples (David et al. 2011: 331). However, such intensive reading of texts can reveal very important frame-relevant elements that might be completely missed in other “automated approaches because they do not occur frequently, even if such elements profoundly influence public discourse about the issue” (David et al. 2011: 331). This study will employ an inductive approach to study the framing of China’s engagement with Nigeria as stated in sub-section 4.4.4

4.5. Coding procedure and framing devices

In a qualitative approach to frame analysis, framing devices are mechanisms for identifying and measuring frames in media content (Tankard 2001). Tankard proposes eleven framing devices: “headlines; subheads; photos; photo captions; leads; sources selection; quote selection; pull quotes; logos; statistics and charts; and concluding statements and paragraphs” (Tankard 2001: 101). “A headline is the most salient cue to activate certain semantically related concepts in readers’ minds; it is thus the most powerful framing device of the syntactical structure” (Pan & Kosicki 1993: 65). In media content, a lead is the next most important framing device because it suggests a particular perspective to view an event (Pan & Kosicki 2001).

In particular, this study examined keywords, sentences, metaphors, catch-phrases, exemplars and depictions (De Vreese 2005: 45; Entman 1993: 52) in headlines, leads, sources selection,

quotes selection and concluding paragraphs to identify the contesting frames in the coverage of China's engagement in Nigeria by *Thisday* newspaper.

This study further codes the frames following the four dimensions of frames identified by Entman (1993):

Frames, then, *define problems* – determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; *diagnose causes* – identify forces creating problems; *make moral judgements* – evaluate causal agents and their effects; and *suggest remedies* – offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects (1993: 52 – emphasis in the original).

In Entman's (1993) definition above, several frame elements constitute a frame: a problem definition, a causal interpretation, a moral evaluation, and a treatment recommendation and if they are understood as variables, each of them can have several categories in a content analysis (Martthes & Koring 2008: 164).

4.6 Source analysis

The study further analyse sources quoted in the 40 sample texts to identify sources of information that were privileged and those that were excluded (Manning 2001:41). This involved analysing origins of such sources of information and relating them to interests – frame sponsors – contesting the framing of China's engagement with Nigeria.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methodological approaches to this study, and their appropriateness to the aims and objectives of this study. The chapter further outlined in detail how the study was conducted with emphasis on: philosophical underpinnings of qualitative-quantitative paradigms in research design; sample selection and size; data gathering and analysis methods; coding procedure; and framing devices. The next chapter presents an in-depth analysis of the findings of this study

Chapter five: Findings and discussion

5.0. Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research procedures employed in this study. This chapter presents the description and interpretation of the findings of the 40 articles from *Thisday* newspaper drawing on the four dimensions of frames identified by Entman: define problems, diagnose causes, evaluate actions and recommend treatment (Entman 1993). Though media frames may not perform these functions all of the time, “the patterns of keywords, stock phrases, sources and themes work to describe, interpret and evaluate reality for the public” (Tucker 1998: 146).

5.1. Description of sample

The sample consists of 40 articles, including numerous genres, such as hard news, feature, commentary and opinion pieces (see primary reference). These articles were selected from *Thisday* newspaper between 1 November 2011 and 31 December 2012. In media discourse, “news and opinion are examined together as part of a complex whole to the construction of public discourse” (Tucker 1998: 146).

5.2 Frame analysis

A frame analysis is used to examine the ways in which *Thisday* newspaper frames China’s engagement with Nigeria; identifies the dominant frames in each of the articles and relates these frames to the sources of information in the journalism. Frame analysis involves examining keywords, sentences, metaphors, catch-phrases, exemplars and depictions in headlines, leads, sources selection, quotes selection and concluding paragraphs in the text (De Vreese 2005: 45; Entman 1993: 52). The frame analysis adopted an inductive approach by analysing each article individually for dominant frames (De Vreese 2005).

Two broad overarching frames emerged in the frame analysis of the text which are identified as mega frames. These two overarching mega frames are called the Partner/Role model and the Predator. The two mega frames are issue-specific frames (De Vreese 2005) reflecting the peculiar nature of China’s engagement with Africa. The two mega frames also mirror the broad characterisation of China in Africa prevalent in the academic literature on the subject.

Articles in the partner/role model category frame China's engagement with Nigeria as mutual and win-win (i.e. as a reciprocal partnership) and constructs as China as an economic success worthy of emulation (i.e. as an economic role model). By contrast, articles in the predator category frame China's engagement with Nigeria as unequal, exploitative and even 'colonial' in nature.

In addition, the two broad mega frames are underpinned by three sub-frames: economic consequences, conflict and attribution of responsibility. These sub-frames are generic because they draw on journalistic conventions in the coverage of China's engagement with Nigeria (De Vreese 2005: 55). The economic consequences sub-frame also comprises thematic points which are investment, infrastructure, trade, aid, friendship, prosperous China and good labour practices. On the other hand, the conflict and attribution of responsibility sub-frames consist of seven thematic points which are immigration, exploitation of resources, scepticism, insecurity, neo-colonialism, competition and 'fake China'. The fourteen thematic points together articulate the four functions of framing identified by Entman (1993) above (Tucker 1998: 147).

The result of the frame analysis shows that the Partner/Role model mega frame is dominant in twenty-seven articles; while the Predator mega frame is dominant in thirteen articles (see Table 1). The conflict sub-frame emphasises conflict between parties or individuals; attribution of responsibility attributes responsibility, credit or blame to certain political institutions or individuals, while economic consequence focuses on the economic consequence for the audience.

The three sub-frames of economic consequences, attribution of responsibility and conflict resonate with Sementko & Valkenburg's (2000) study which identified five generic ways in which journalists frame news: morality, human interest, attribution of responsibility, conflict and economic consequences. However, the morality frame is muted, while the human interest frames is entirely absent in the framing of China's engagement with Nigeria.

| Mega Frames | Sub-frames | Thematic points | Frequency(articles) |
|--------------------|---|--|---------------------|
| Partner/Role model | Economic consequences | investment, infrastructure, trade, aid, friendship and good labour practices, prosperous China | 27 |
| Predator | Conflict Attribution of responsibility | Immigration, exploitation of resources, unaccountable standards, scepticism, insecurity, and competition, neo-colonialism, ‘fake China’. | 13 |

Table 1: A table showing frequency of occurrence of mega frames, sub-frames and thematic points

5.3 Analysis: Partner/Role model mega frame

Grouped under the Partner/Role model category are articles that frame China as a mutual partner to Nigeria. China is also framed as a model of an economic success that Nigeria should emulate for the revival of its economy. The twenty seven articles in this category are positive about China’s engagement with Nigeria (see figure1). For instance, in the news article, *Nigeria in China, Seeks \$3bn for Agric, Rail, Airport Projects* (Aderinokun 2012), Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the Nigerian minister of finance and coordinating minister of the economy buttresses this framing through these extensive quotes in the article:

“We discussed about the projects that would be particularly beneficial to the population. Examples are the Abuja light rail. We need a better mass transit system in Abuja. So we are here looking at that with the minister of FCT and trying to get the Chinese, who are already working on it to give further support to be able to finish it.”

“We are also looking at railway modernisation projects. Again, this has started with the minister of transport so that we can finish setting key lines that on-going Kano-Maiduguri, Lagos-Ibadan, amongst others that need to be modernised. Besides, we are looking at aviation, to be able to construct some new terminals in our major airports, Lagos, Kano, Port Harcourt and Abuja. So these are very concrete and specific projects.”

“The minister of agriculture is also looking at how to support the ambitious programme of rice production that we have in the country and job creation in the

agriculture sector, with particular respect to rice milling and getting rice milling capacity, so that when we produce, we will be able to process.” (Aderinokun 2012)

That the core of the Nigerian economic management team was in China to seek loans for the transformation of the Nigerian economy, points to the fact that China is an important economic partner to Nigeria. This resonates with Brautigam’s (2009) framing of Chinese aid as good for Africa’s development (2009: 133).

5.3.1 Sub-frames

This section presents analyses of the economic consequences sub-frames with its sub-themes.

Economic consequences

Articles in this category have six dominant themes, including investments, infrastructural developments, friendship, aid, good labour practices, trade and prosperous China.

5.3.1.1. Thematic points

1. Trade

The two articles in this category construct China as an important trading partner to Nigeria. In the news article, *China Replaces United States as Nigeria’s Crude Oil Importer* (Alike 2012a), China is depicted as the new buyer of Nigeria’s crude oil and a vital trading partner. Andrew Yakubu, managing director of Nigeria’s petroleum Corporation, was quoted as saying that:

“The decision of the United States is not driven by the fact that they don’t want to buy our oil; they have other issues. The Shale gas has been discovered and it is a major source of energy. But of course, the good news is that there are other parts of the world that are interested. As you know, major demand growth is going to come from China and the east. So, that is a very good replacement of whatever shortfall we have with the United States” (Alike 2012a).

The article constructs China as an important trading partner to Nigeria, considering that the Nigerian economy is dependent on oil, suggesting that China is in Africa for natural resources (Taylor 2012; Moyo 2012; Gaye 2007; Alden & Large 2011).

2. Investment

The ten articles in this category frame China as a major investor in the Nigerian economy that should be courted by Nigerians. In the news article, *China's Investment in Nigeria Hits \$6.1bn* (Abiodun 2011), China is framed as being responsible for the influx of huge investments into the Nigerian economy: “China accounts for roughly 25 % of Nigeria’s Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), equivalent to roughly US\$6.1 bn. In other words, China provides Nigeria with investments that will create jobs in the economy and, in return, gets access to natural resources (Moyo 2012: 85).

3. Infrastructure

The seven articles in this category frame China as a reliable infrastructural developer that is willing to help Nigeria overcome its infrastructural challenge such as roads, railways, and airports. In the news article, *China-Nigeria: Infrastructure Tops Agenda as Trade Hits \$10 bn* (Osagie 2012d), Qui Jian, Deputy Consul-general of China to Nigeria frames China as a reputable developer of infrastructure that is ready to help Nigeria:

“In just ten years China became the number one highway builder in the world, Chinese companies are very good in the building of these infrastructure. And President Jonathan is very committed to providing infrastructure for Nigerians in the areas of education, roads, medical facilities and communications. These are areas of possible cooperation for Nigeria and China in which I can see a good future.” (Osagie 2012)

This quote is typical of the rhetoric employed by Chinese officials to frame China as a reputable partner for infrastructural development in Africa. This is in line with Brautigam’s (2009: 133) argument that Chinese aid is good for Africa’s development.

4. Aid

China has consciously framed its engagement within Africa in terms of providing aid to African countries (Brautigam 2007, 2009) and this is also reflected in its relations with Nigeria. In the news article, *China Hands over Model Rural Schools* (Olatunji 2012), Deng Boqing, China’s ambassador to Nigeria re-affirmed this perspective:

“One of the measures was to provide aid for 126 African rural schools, including the construction of 96 new schools. Among them, four rural primary schools were to be built in Nigeria. Following consultation and deliberations with the Nigerian

Government, the four schools were designated to four locations of FCT, Katsina, Kaduna, and Ogun States.” (Olatunji 2012)

5. Friendship

The two articles in this category construct China as an important ally that should be protected because China is the major destination for Nigeria’s crude oil. In the news article, *Group Seeks Protection of Chinese Nationals* (Thisday 2012d), the Goods Made-in-China Importers Association (GMIA) said the Nigeria government should provide special security for Chinese nationals because China now buys the majority of Nigeria’ crude oil .The report does not have a by-line suggesting it is either a press release or agency copy. The statement is motivated by economic survival because members of the group depend on China to sustain their businesses. This reinforces the economic consequences frame as China’s engagement with Nigeria is seen as being underpinned strictly by economics. The GMIA is in this to curry favour and safe-guard the interest of its members

6. Good labour practices

A recurring representation of Chinese companies in Nigeria is that they operate harsh labour conditions (see Ahiuma-Young, Akoni & Ehigiator 2002). When a Nigerian reporter was part of a group of African journalists sponsored on a tour of China, it presented an opportunity for the Chinese authority to deploy its propaganda machinery to counter this stereotyping of Chinese companies. In the news article, *China Warns Citizens in Nigeria against Maltreating Employees* (Ogunmade 2012c) Lu shaye, Director General of Information in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, acknowledges the harsh conditions under which Nigerian employees work in Chinese companies but was quick to add that “such acts, such attitudes are totally isolated and doesn’t represent China’s attitude”.

7. Prosperous China

Most of opinion and feature articles construct China as prosperous nation whose economic and political model have sustained growth and brought about stability in the Chinese polity. In the opinion article, *Forbidden City (1)*, (Adeniyi 2012), a former senior special assistant to the late President Umaru Yar’Adua, who doubles as a columnist and as chairman of the *Thisday* editorial board, paints this picture of China: “It is obvious the ancient Chinese was a prosperous society, then they became so poor they were far more wretched than us in Africa, and now they are prosperous again. How did China do it?” (Adeniyi 2012). Adeniyi’s

postulation underlies Chinese official rhetoric that China is a developing country like African countries and should be seen as a partner in development (Brautigam 2009: 53). Another opinion article by Deng Boqing, the Chinese ambassador to Nigeria, sustains this view: “Since China adopted the reform and opening up policy in 1978, the Chinese economy has registered an average annual growth rate of nearly 10 per cent, which tripled the world average at the same period” (Boqing 2012).

The majority of feature articles flatter China using rhetoric employed by Chinese officials to promote China as an economic success that Africa should emulate for its economic revival (Kurtlanzick 2007: 56). For instance, in the feature article, *the Allures of China and its Economic Sophistication* (Ogunmade 2012a), Omololu Ogunmade, who was part of the China-sponsored journalists from 23 African countries on an inspection tour of China, was full of praise for China:

Smarting from its recent rise from the sixth largest economy to the second largest economy of the world, China’s sense of aggression towards economic and tourist development has only been rekindled. Thus a visit to five economic zones of the country revealed an immeasurable sense of development. The streets of the zones visited were laid out with silver, sophisticated skyscrapers and enduring infrastructural development (Ogunmade 2012a).

This kind of reportage is adulatory and reflects some of the fault lines of journalism practice in Nigeria (Ibelema 2003: 189).

5.4. Analysis: Predator megafame

Articles in this category are negative about China’s engagement with Nigeria. The articles frame China-Nigeria relations as unequal and exploitative, with China as a global power dumping sub-standard products on Nigeria.

5.4.1 Sub-frame

This section presents analyses of the conflict and attribution of responsibility sub-frames. The conflict sub-frame comprises six thematic points including immigration, exploitation of resources, scepticism, insecurity, neo-colonialism and competition, while attribution of responsibility has ‘fake China’.

Conflict

The articles in the conflict sub-frame consist of dominant themes such as immigration, exploitation of resources, unaccountable standards, scepticism, insecurity, neo-colonialism and unfair competition in jobs and industry.

5.4.1.1 Thematic points

1. Immigration

The two articles in this category depict individual Chinese as desperate people seeking to undercut legitimate processes to exploit Nigeria's resources. In the news article, *Nigeria Deports 25 Chinese* (Akogun 2011), Rose Uzoma, the Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), told a delegation of lawmakers from Nigeria's upper legislature chamber, "You have heard so much about the Chinese staying illegally in Nigeria, we do remove Chinese regularly. If we discover them we remove them, last week we removed 25 Chinese, we deport those who commit crimes".

In another news article, *Immigration to Repatriate 45 Chinese* (Shuaibu 2012), Emmanuel Ifeadi, Comptroller of the NIS in Kano, said 45 Chinese were being deported for 'economic scavenging' in the city:

"For Chinese to come to our country and be selling textiles in our market we will not allow it and we will continue checking them, arresting them and deport them back to their country. The Chinese select basic areas in the country, but basically their activities are worse in three major areas of Kano, Lagos and Ibadan. So, we will fish them out and repatriate them" (Shuaibu 2012).

Implicit in this statement is that the Chinese are preying on Nigeria, which the NIS boss argues is not in the interest of ordinary Nigerians. The statement is credited to two Nigerian government functionaries, which emphasises the fact that there are framing contests *within* the Nigerian government over China. It is possible that the negative framing of Chinese immigrants could be a retaliatory measure by the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which complained China has not reciprocated its friendly visa regime (Mofa 2013).

2. Exploitation of resources

The two articles in this category depict individual Chinese as stealing Nigerian resources. This engagement happens at the micro-level of China-Nigeria relations. In the 40 articles,

there are three news stories that portray individual Chinese in this light. The other two articles occur under the immigration thematic point. In the news article, *Contraband: NESREA Charges Chinese Woman to Court* (Megbolu 2012), Bola Odugbesan, Legal adviser to the National Environmental Standards and Regulatory Agency, stated:

“We are here because on March 1, 2012, a Chinese national was caught with these items of ivory concealed in a teddy bear, very heavy and precious. These products were made from an elephant tusk. So, you can imagine the number of animals that were killed before those products were made. How many elephants do we have in Nigeria? How many monkeys do we have in Nigeria? So, we have to protect these animals because conservation is key to protective environment.” (Megbolu 2012)

The NESREA is complaining that Nigeria does not have enough natural resources for its citizenry and that the Chinese are exploiting it illegally.

3. Scepticism

The only article in this category frames China as exploitative and unreliable. In the news article, *Controversy Trails Death of Two Workers in Chinese Firm* (Ezeobi 2012), Mathew Imhonbho, despite autopsy result that confirmed his brother died of asphyxia, was convinced there was a conspiracy surrounding his brother’s death because to him, “The corpse did not look like someone that drowned because he bled from the ears, mouth and nose. Something just looks fishy two full grown men drowning at the same time in a pool that is not deep”.

This statement is a reflection of the widespread scepticism with which ordinary Nigerians view China’s engagement with Nigeria but often do not form part of policy formulation because the ruling and economic elites profit from the relations (Taylor 2007: 632).

The scepticism is also evident among political elites. In the news article *Power Projects: FG Seeks Guarantee from China* (Okafor 2012c), Darius Ishaku, Minister of State for Power, asked that the Chinese government attest to the capacity of two Chinese firms handling power projects in Nigeria. The minister was quoted as saying, “The guarantee became important as a result of the importance the government places on the two dams in shoring up power supply”. If the Nigerian government cannot trust Chinese companies to handle jobs that are vital, it points to lack of trust and pretences in their engagements. However, the Nigerian government adopted this approach because of a previous experience in which a communication satellite launched by the Great Wall Industry Corporation of China (GWIC) failed in orbit. In 2007, the GWIC launched Nigeria’s communication satellite, NigComsat, at the Xichang Satellite

Launch Centre with a lifespan of 15 years but it failed in orbit in November 2008, after running out of power (Ogunsanwo 2008: 201; Umejei 2009).

4. Insecurity

The only article in this category constructs Chinese nationals as victims of the insecurity in Nigeria. Activities of the Islamic terror group, Boko Haram (meaning in Arabic, western education is sin), has led to insecurity to the north of Nigeria and the Chinese are not exempted if they venture into such areas in search of resources. In the news article, *Gunmen Kill Chinese, 13 Others in Maiduguri as Explosions Hit Potiskum* (Olugbode 2012), two Chinese nationals were killed by the terrorist group in Maiduguri, the hotbed of Boko Haram activities.

5. Competition

The two articles in this category construct China as responsible for unfair competition with Nigerian elites for economic opportunity. In the news article, *Chinese Deal to Build Four Terminals in Nigeria Criticised* (Eze 2012c), Miebaka Adoki, chief executive officer of Abuja Gateway Consortium, criticises the Nigerian government for handing over jobs to modernise four international airports to Chinese investors when it already had an earlier concession agreement with it:

“A critical analysis would show that building these airports on the basis so stated have implications for an existing concession agreement between Abuja Gateway Consortium and the Federal Government as well as implications for Nigeria’s security, economy, sovereignty, employment environment and every other facet of life. It is dubious that an agreement of this magnitude can be reached without due process.” (Eze 2012c)

The statement suggests that some Nigerian economic elites are not happy that China is outbidding them on government contracts. In addition, it suggests that, with the increase in business activities between China and Nigeria, there is a possibility that Nigerian economic elites may resist Chinese dominance of infrastructural projects in Nigeria.

6. Neo-colonialism

The only article in this category constructs China as a neo-colonial power seeking to annex Nigeria for its own economic gain. In the news article, *CNPP Faults FG's \$1.1bn Chinese Loan* (Ezeigbo 2012), the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP) said China is consciously goading Nigeria into Chinese neo-colonialism.

“In sum, with unprecedented oil revenue, Nigeria has no genuine cause to return to foreign debt trap; as a careful study of Chinese neo-colonialism in Africa shows that like all known imperialism in history; it is exploitative, anti-people, anti-democratic and ruthless.” (Ezeigbo)

The CNPP position strikes a chord with Lamido Sanusi's that “China takes from us primary goods and sells us manufactured ones; this was also the essence of colonialism” (Sanusi 2013). It also speaks to the concern expressed by multilateral organisations such as IMF and the World Bank that the massive loans by China to African countries could encourage the accumulation of too much debt and strangulate economic growth (Taylor 2012).

5.4.2 Attribution of responsibility.

The attribution of responsibility sub-frame comprises one thematic point: ‘fake China’. The articles in this category construct China as responsible for dumping counterfeit products on Nigeria and sabotaging its local manufacturing industry.

1. Fake China

The three articles in this category construct China as economically sabotaging Nigeria by dumping substandard products on the country. In the article, *Nigeria, China Proposed Trade Harmonisation Agreement Fails* (Osagie 2012c), Joseph Odumodu, director-general of Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON), was quoted as saying that:

“80 per cent of the fake products that come into Nigeria were coming from Asia with China being the major culprits. The issue of substandard products from China has come a long way and would no longer be swept under the carpet because such dumping of substandard products on Nigeria has resulted in loss of life, economic hardship, and environmental degradation.” (Osagie 2012c)

This statement is an indictment on China and reinforces the allegation that China is using Africa as a dumping market for its sub-standard products (see Sanusi 2013; Gaye 2007; Ogunsanwo 2008; Punch 2013; Obiorah 2006).

5.5 Words and phrases

This section analyses particular words and phrases used to frame China's engagement with Nigeria in the media content obtained from *Thisday*. This is part of the framing methodology, which analyses keywords, phrases, metaphors and use of quotations among others. Most of the lexical constructions in this section were used by frame sponsors, rather than the *Thisday* journalists, in framing China's engagement with Nigeria.

5.5.1 Predator mega frames

In this category, the lexical constructions of China's engagement with Nigeria are negative and frame China as deceptive and exploitative. In this category, China is predominantly constructed as a global power exploiting Nigeria's economic weakness for its selfish interests. This framing is evident in phrases as "we do remove Chinese regularly" (Akogun 2011), "we will fish them out" (Shuaibu 2012) and "economic scavenging" (Shuaibu 2012) by highly-placed Nigerian officials in framing Chinese nationals.

First "to remove regularly" nationals of a particular country suggest "forcing someone to leave a job or to dismiss someone from a job" (Webster dictionary 2013). The second phrase "we will fish them out" suggests the Chinese are fugitives who must be flushed out, caught and repatriated to their country. "Economic scavenging" has negative connotation of searching for something among discarded material, which means individual Chinese are competing with Nigerians at the micro-level for economic opportunities and resources. These phrases construct individual Chinese as a problem which do not represent the relations between China and Nigeria as mutual but hostile and skewed (see Obiorah, Kew & Tanko 2008; Obiorah 2006; Sanusi 2013).

The sentence, "80 % of the fake products that come into Nigeria were coming from Asia, with China as major culprit" by Joseph Odumodu, the director-general of Standards Organisation of Nigeria (Akinsuyi 2012) reinforces the perspective that China is dumping sub-standard products on Nigeria. It also speaks to the perspective that China, a global power, is emasculating Nigerian manufacturers by dumping cheap and sub-standard products on the country (Obiorah, Kew & Tanko 2008; Obiorah 2006; Sanusi 2013).

The usage of such phrases as, "something just looks fishy" by Matthew Imhonbho (Ezeobi 2012), an ordinary Nigerian, to construct China is reflective of the scepticism with which

ordinary Nigerians view China. Though, the voices of ordinary Nigerians are excluded from most of the texts, this phrase speaks to their views on China. Also, the phrase that Nigeria may be heading “towards an unconscionable debt squad and Chinese imperialism” by Osita Okechukwu, chairman of the Conference of Nigerian political parties (Ezeigbo 2012), speaks to the charge that China’s engagement with Africa is neo-colonialism disguised as partnership (see Gaye 2007; Sanusi 2013). Other words such as “anti-democratic, exploitative, anti-people” used to describe China’s engagement with Nigeria by the CNPP leader (Ezeigbo 2012) construct China as a global power that does not respect a democratic ethos and whose economic interest supplants all others interests (see Gaye 2007)

5.5.2 Partner/Role model

In this category, the lexical construction of China’s engagement with Nigeria is very positive. China is framed as a viable partner, a model of economic success and a trustworthy ally. Nigerian political and economic elites use hyperbole and economic jargon to justify why China is good for Nigeria’s economic and infrastructural development.

This language is prevalent in phrases such as “state of the art airport” (Eze 2012a), “Nigeria will provide enabling environment to Chinese investors” (Eze 2012a) and “Nigeria regards China as a strategic partner”. The phrase “state of the art airport” employed by Stella Oduah, Minister of Aviation, to qualify the airport to be built by Chinese investors suggests China has the capacity to build the best possible airport, one that will transform Nigeria’s aviation sector. The statement by Nigeria’s Minister of Aviation, Stella Oduah, that “Nigeria will provide an enabling environment to Chinese investors” suggests the Nigerian government attaches importance to its partnership with China; it is as if Nigeria is actively enabling collaboration with China and celebrating that China is willing to help its quest for economic development and infrastructural transformation. This is further supported by the statement credited to Olusegun Aganga, the Minister of Trade and Investment, that “Nigeria regards China as a strategic partner” (Osagie 2011e). Implicit in this statement is that Nigeria considers China a very high-valued partner. Nigeria sees it as a favour to be at the top of China’s list of partners on the African continent.

Some other sentences that frame the engagement in a positive light are: “exponential growth of the Chinese economy”; “China was able to lift 400 million of her people out of poverty within a decade with agriculture” (Aderinokun 2012); “world business relationships are

symbiotic by nature”; “We will move as fast as the Nigerian government wants us to move” (Eze 2012); “China is good at building infrastructure” (Osagie 2012d); “China an alternative market” (Alike 2012a); and “we hope to provide the best service to Nigeria and improve her economy” (Ugeh 2012).

For instance, the sentence “China was able to lift 400 million of her people out of poverty within a decade with agriculture” is often quoted by Chinese officials to frame China as a model of economic success (see Kurlantzick 2007). In this case, it was echoed by a Nigerian elite who is reinforcing the need for Nigeria to emulate China. The sentence, “China is good at building infrastructure” speaks to the framing of China as an infrastructural developer, willing to help Africa (Nigeria) overcome its infrastructural challenges (see Brautigam 2009). The sentence, “we hope to provide the best service to Nigeria and improve her economy” by Ji Weimin, president of CGCOC, presupposes the oft-quoted Chinese rhetoric that China is in Africa to help develop its economy (see Brautigam 2009). This rhetoric also informs the south-south cooperation which frames China’s engagement with Africa as that between developing nations (see Owel & Melville 2005).

Other sentences which construct China as partner include “China is an alternative market” which speaks to China’s emergence as the new market for Nigeria’s oil following the discovery of shale oil by the United States of America (USA). It constructs China as an important partner because the Nigerian economy depends totally on oil for its sustenance.

Also, the sentence that “China can best mobilize the recourse of the society, utilize the wisdoms and help maintain a harmonious society” by Deng Boqing, China’s ambassador to Nigeria (Boqing 2012), encompasses three key areas of Chinese official rhetoric: China’s economic model has brought about huge economic growth; China’s political model is suitable to its development and China respects the sovereignty of any country and does not interfere in their internal affairs.

The lexical construction of China in this category is interspersed with the language of bureaucracy and significant evidence of public relations, demonstrated by predominance of elite quotes in the journalism. On the whole, lexical expressions that frame China as a model of economic success and partner are dominant, which is explicable considering that the Partner/Role model mega frame is predominant in 27 articles.

5.6 Frame sponsors: source analysis

Journalists do not manufacture news of their own but are “cued in” to new topics by regular and reliable sources (Hall et al. 1978: 57) which are “central to the practice of journalism” (Harcup 2004: 59). Durham (1998) in a study of the *New York Times*’ coverage of the crashed TWA flight 800 shows that there is always competition between various interest groups to produce dominant frames in news stories. In this section, the study analyses the various sources of information competing to frame China’s engagement in Nigeria.

5.6.1 Partner/Role model: frame sponsorship

In this category, thirty-three sources were quoted in the articles that frame China’s engagement with Nigeria as positive and mutually beneficial (see Table 2). The sources comprise twenty Nigerian government officials; seventeen of them are members of the federal executive council with allegiance to the ruling Peoples’ Democratic party (PDP), while the remaining are government officials with no identifiable political affiliations; eight Chinese government officials; four Chinese state enterprise organisations; and one social organisation (see Table 2). In percentage, Nigerian government officials comprise 60.6% of the sources quoted; Chinese government officials 24.24%; Chinese SEOs 12.12%; and social organisation 3.03% of sources quoted in this category (see Table 3). If the two Chinese sub-categories are added together, Chinese sources comprise 36.36% of sources quoted in this category, suggesting that both Nigerian and Chinese officials are promoting the framing of their engagements as mutual and win-win. Despite attempts by both Nigerian and Chinese elite to frame the relations as mutual, it is evident from the analysis of sources quoted in the articles to frame China’s engagement with Nigeria that the opinions of ordinary Nigerians, social movements, civil society and human rights organisations are excluded. In other words, this suggests that China-Nigeria relations are to the benefit of the elites.

5.6.2 Predator: frame sponsorship

In this category, eighteen sources were quoted that portray China’s engagement with Nigeria as exploitative and dubious (see Table 2). The sources comprise twelve Nigerian government officials who are mainly members of the ruling PDP; two Chinese government officials and one ‘ordinary’ Nigerian, one Chinese state enterprises organisation (SEO) official, and two representatives of social organisations. In percentage, Nigerian government officials comprise 66.7%; the Chinese government officials 11.1%; the Chinese SEO 5.5%; the

ordinary Nigerian 5.5%, the Nigerian business representative 5.55% and the social organisations representative 5.5% of sources quoted in this category (see Table 3). In contrast with the 60.6% Nigerian government official sources framing China as a mutual partner, it is interesting to note that an even higher percentage of government officials (66.7%) sponsor China’s engagement with Nigeria as unequal and exploitative (see Table 4). This is clearly illustrated in the graph (see Figure 1) suggesting that there is contestation by various ruling and economic elite to sponsor their view on China in the public domain. However, what is evident from the analysis is also that the contestation emanates from the top, suggesting elite contestation.

| Mega Frames | Sub-frames | Nigerian Government sources | Nigerian Business sources | Chinese government sources | Chinese SEOs | Social Organisations | Ordinary Nigerians |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Partner/Role model | Economic consequences (investment, infrastructure, trade, aid, friendship and good labour practices, prosperous China) | 20 | 0 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Predator | Conflict(Immigration, exploitation of resources, scepticism, insecurity, clash of interest, and competition, neo-colonialism) Attribution of responsibility (Fake China) | 12 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

Table 2: A table showing sources quoted in each articles per category.

| Mega frames | Sub-frames | Nigerian government sources% | Nigerian Business sources | Chinese government sources% | Chinese SEOs% | Ordinary Nigerians% | Social Organisations% |
|--------------------|---|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Partner/Role model | Economic consequences (investment, infrastructure, trade, aid, friendship and good labour practices, prosperous China) | 60.60 | 0 | 24.24 | 12.12 | 0 | 3.03 |
| Predator | Conflict(Immigration, exploitation of resources, scepticism, insecurity, clash of interest, and competition, neo-colonialism) Attribution of responsibility (Fake China) | 66.67 | 5.55 | 11.11 | 5.55 | 5.55 | 5.55 |

Table 3: Percentage of individual sources per mega frame

Percentage= Individual sources/total no. of sources per mega frame multiplied by 100

| Sources | Percentage of total sources (51 sources)% |
|--|---|
| Nigerian government sources (partner/role model) | 39.21 |
| Chinese government sources (partner/role model) | 15.68 |
| Chinese SEOs sources (partner/role model) | 7.84 |
| Social organisations (partner/role model) | 1.96 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Nigeria government sources (predator) | 23.52 |
| Chinese government sources (predator) | 3.92 |
| Chinese SEOs (predator) | 1.96 |
| Nigerian Businesses (predator) | 1.96 |
| Ordinary Nigerians (predator) | 1.96 |
| Social organisations (Predator) | 1.96 |
| | |

Percentage=individual sources/overall sources multiplied by 100

Table 4: Percentage of individual sources in the entire 40 articles

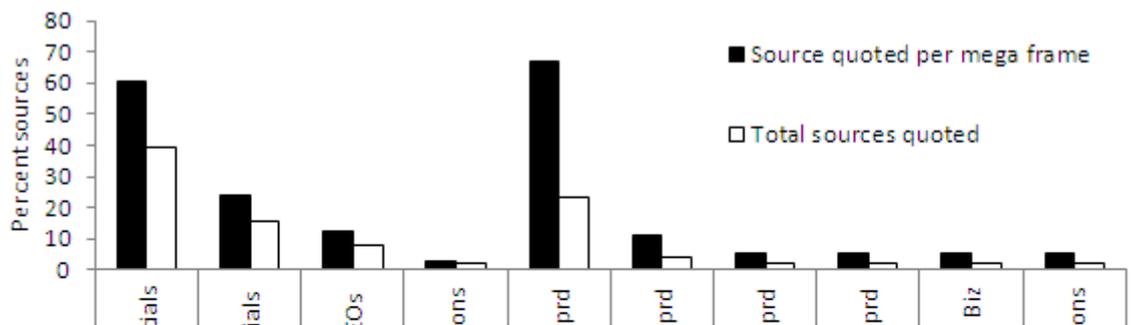


Figure 1: A graph showing per cent of sources for the two mega frames and the entire sample

NGR officials: Nigerian government official sources in the partner/role model mega frame

CHS officials: Chinese government officials

CHS SEOs: Chinese state enterprises organisations

Soc Organisations: Social Organisations

NGR Sources prd: Nigerian government official sources in predator mega frame

CHS prd: Chinese government official sources

SEOs prd: Chinese state enterprises organisations sources

ORD nig prd: Ordinary Nigerian sources

NGR Biz: Nigerian Business: Sources

5.7 Discussion

There is dominance of the Partner/Role mega framing in the text suggesting that China's engagement with Nigeria is mutual and win-win. This frame also proposes that the Chinese model is viable for economic and political successes and, hence, Nigeria should adopt it. The dominance of the Partner/Role model framing is a consequence of the activities of frame sponsors promoting their views on China in the media. This is in line with Gamson & Modigliani's (1989: 6) argument that frames have sponsors who are interested in promoting

their perspectives in the public domain. Carragee & Roefs (2004: 219). However, they emphasise that resources are fundamental to the ability of a particular frame to make it to the news and to considerably dominate it. Evidence in the analysis also suggests that the dominance of partner/role model framing is attributable to the economic power of the elite to push through their framing of China's engagement with Nigeria in the media. This is achieved by "promoting' particular information flows, through marketing, advertising and attempt to 'manage' the networks of formal and informal contacts with news journalists" (Manning 2001: 107).

The source analysis suggests there is a consensus on the part of a majority of Chinese and Nigerian elites to promote the framing of China's engagement with Nigeria as mutual and win-win. Therefore, China's engagement with Nigeria is suggestive of a kind of relationship that serves elites' interest (see Table 3). In other words, the exclusion of ordinary voices from the framing of China's engagement with Nigeria is suggestive of an elite consensus. Consequently, this accounts for the absence of morality and human interest frames (Human interest frame focuses on an individual as an exemplar of the issue being covered and/or by emphasising emotions) in the framing of China's engagement with Nigeria because the elites who have the financial resources to state their views in the media are thus privileged in the media (see Gamson & Modigliani 1989).

Consequently, the lack of representation of issues such as democracy, human rights and civic engagements suggests China's engagement with Nigeria is strictly economic, which justifies the argument that China is in Africa for its own economic benefit (see Gaye 2007; Alden & Large 2011). It also serves China's interests to downplay politics and human rights as China is a communist society in which such issues do not enjoy prominence (Gaye 2007). In other words, China's engagement with Nigeria is underpinned by economics which is to the interest of both Nigerian and Chinese elites.

The source analysis confirms there is clearly a contestation among frame sponsors articulating and promoting their views on China's engagement with Nigeria in the media (see figure 1). However, this contestation is among the ruling and economic elites, suggesting an elite contestation. The only social organisation that criticised China's engagement with Nigeria as 'neo-colonialism' is also a political grouping of the ruling elite. This reinforces the perspective that the scepticism against China does not only emanate from ordinary people but some Nigerian elites also think China's engagement with Nigeria is lopsided: China takes

raw materials from Nigeria and exports finished sub-standard goods to Nigeria which hurts the Nigerian economy (see Ogunsanwo 2008; Egbula & Zheng 2011).

The exclusion of ordinary voices in the framing of China's engagement with Nigeria is also attributable to journalists' professional "demand of impartiality and objectivity which combine to produce a systematically structured over-accessing to the media of those in powerful and privileged institutional positions" (see Hall et al. 1978: 58; Machin & Niblock 2006: 76). However, this is also attributable to adulatory journalism (see Ibelema 2002) on the part of *Thisday* journalists who clearly did not resist framings of China articulated and promoted by frame sponsors. This is so because the independent press is not strong in Nigeria and there isn't a strong countervailing tradition within these newsrooms to push back the views being promoted by frame sponsors (see Ibelema 2002).

Similarly, the significant representation of Chinese sources articulating and promoting positive framing of China is a cause for concern. The Chinese are known to favour a top-down approach to journalism that impedes free press and stymies editorial independence (see Umejei & Hall 2013). This is further confirmed by developments at *Bloomberg News* which sacked some of its reporters because of pressure from China to produce favourable news reports or quit its market (FT 2013). If *Bloomberg News*, which represents a strong model for press freedom and editorial independence, could buckle under pressure from China, Nigerian media organisations are vulnerable to Chinese influence. Therefore, it is relevant to note that the significant evidence of Chinese sources could have accounted for the dominance of partner/role framing of its engagement with Nigeria.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented both findings and discussion of this study. This chapter reached two key conclusions: that China is framed primarily as a partner rather than as a predator to Nigeria which contradicts the academic literature on China in Africa that China is either partner or predator; and that the study emphasised that there is contestation among the ruling and economic elites to frame China's engagement with Nigeria in perspectives that serve their interests. On the other hand, the study also emphasises that the exclusion of ordinary voices is a reflection of the fault lines of journalism in Nigeria and the lack of an independent press in *Thisday* newsroom.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presents the key findings of this study, which showed that the privileging of elite sources by *Thisday* newspaper resulted in the primary framing of China as an economic partner and a model of economic success in its engagement with Nigeria. However, the results also indicated that China's engagement with Nigeria is contested by various elite Nigerian and Chinese sources – frame sponsors – articulating and promoting their views on China's engagement in the media.

The key objective of this study was to identify the frames that dominate the coverage of China's engagement with Nigeria by *Thisday* newspaper and relate these frames to the various frame sponsors articulating and contesting these framings.

6.2 Concluding remarks

The study identified two overarching mega frames – Partner/Role model and Predator – a finding that reflects and reinforces the academic literature on China's engagement with Africa (Le Pere 2007). The Partner/Role model mega frame is dominant in the 40 texts and constructs China as an economic partner and role model of economic success, while the Predator mega frame constructs China as a predator exploiting Nigeria's resources. The two mega frames also comprise three sub-frames, which are economic consequences, attribution of responsibility and conflict. The economic consequences sub-frame comprises thematic points such as investment, infrastructure, trade, aid, friendship and good labour practices. On the other hand, the conflict sub-frame comprises immigration, exploitation of resources, scepticism, insecurity, clash of interest, and competition while attribution of responsibility comprises 'fake' China'.

The study reached two key conclusions. First, China's engagement with Nigeria is dominantly framed as a mutually beneficial economic partnership. The dominance of the framing of China's engagement with Nigeria as mutual and win-win is, at least in part, a consequence of the activities of frame sponsors articulating and promoting a positive view of China in the media. These frame sponsors are both the Chinese and Nigerian ruling and

economic elite who possess the economic capacity to promote their views on China in the media. In such terms, China's engagement with Nigeria is decoded as some form of consensus between the Nigerian and Chinese elites who profit from it. This resonates with the significant evidence of public relations discourse in the text: a heavy emphasis on figures and facts to prove that the engagements are beneficial to Nigeria, the preponderance of elite sources and significant evidence of press releases and agency copy in the texts. In addition, evidence of the limited mediation of the activities of frame sponsors articulating and promoting a positive view on China and the lack of independent research by *Thisday* journalists was fundamental to the dominance of the mutual and win-win framing.

Second, China's engagement with Nigeria is contested which is reflected in the presence of the Predator mega frame. However, this contestation originated almost exclusively from the same ruling and economic elites of both countries that sponsored the Partner/Role model mega-frame. These elites view China's engagement with Nigeria with suspicion. This scepticism stems from their contention that China is exploiting Nigeria, by dumping sub-standard products and taking away natural resources and exporting finished goods to the country, an approach that is synonymous with colonialism.

Civic organisations, trade unions and human rights organisation are potential frame sponsors, but their exclusion in the coverage of China's engagement is marked. This points to the idea that there is 'systemic bias' against the inclusion of these frame sponsors in *Thisday* coverage, notably the lack of resources available to them. Additionally, there is an implied and tacit collusion between the economic and political elites of both countries in their sponsorship of the dominant partner/role model frame. Notably the exclusion of democratic politics and human rights from the 'partnership' is pronounced and is actively endorsed by both Chinese and African elites. It may be seen to be in the interests of elites in undemocratic China and the compromised democracies of Africa to collude in this. This is a particular framing of the relationship between China and Africa/Nigeria as *economic* partnership, one that is stripped of political, moral and human rights content and context. In other words, China's lack of interest in democracy and human rights coalesce with the interests of most Nigerian elites, whose objective is to profit from these economic engagements without tampering with the geo-political, civic and human rights contexts within which they occur. This informs why African and Nigerian elites favour partnerships with China because China excludes human rights and internal affairs of African countries from its terms of engagement.

The elites who sponsor the framing of China in Nigeria can be seen to be safe-guarding their economic interests, even at the expense of the political, economic and human rights of ordinary Nigerians.

Meanwhile, the near absence of independent journalism at the *Thisday* newsroom remains a critical factor in the preponderance of elite sources in the text. If *Thisday* journalists had more closely subscribed to normative journalistic ideals of balance, fairness and objectivity, there may have been more eclectic sources and views on China. In particular, human interest stories detailing the multiple potential impact of China in Nigeria on ‘ordinary people’ are completely absent from *Thisday* coverage. This fault line in *Thisday* journalism can, at least in part, be attributed to the fact that the independent press in Nigeria is not strong and there isn’t a strong countervailing tradition within these newsrooms to ‘push back’ the views being promoted by powerful frame sponsors (see Ibelema 2002).

6.2.1 Partner/role model mega frame

In this category, there is overwhelming evidence of alignment between Chinese and Nigerian elites to frame China’s engagement with Nigeria as a viable and reciprocal economic partnership. The dominance of the partner/role model mega frame is in part a consequence of activities of frame sponsors articulating and promoting their framing of China in the media. It is the elites who have the resources that can pull through their views on China in the media (see Gamson & Modigliani 1989: 7). The sourcing analysis also indicates inadequate sourcing routines on the part of *Thisday* journalists’ results in the exclusion of ordinary Nigerians and their framing of issues that are relevant to them. This is attributable to poor journalism on the part of *Thisday* journalists who did not mediate framings of China articulated and promoted by multiple potential frame sponsors. This is also indicative of the adulatory journalism being practiced in Nigeria (Ibelema 2002) because “the media in post-independence Nigeria became logically partisan in its reportage, agitation and agenda setting” (Oyovwaire 2001: 4)

6.2.2 Predator mega frame

In this category, it is interesting to note that the source analysis indicates that the Nigerian ruling elites comprise 66.67% of the sponsors articulating and promoting the framing of China’s engagement with Nigeria as unequal and exploitative (see Table 4). This is clearly illustrated in the graph (see fig 1) suggesting that there is contestation by various ruling and

economic elites to sponsor their views on China in the public domain. However, what is evident from the analysis is also that the contestation emanates from the top, suggesting elite contestation. However, it is also interesting to note that other critical voices, such as human rights organisations, civic organisations and workers groups, are excluded in this category.

6.3 Conclusion

This study has shown, first, that the most prominent frame in the coverage of China's engagement with Nigeria by *Thisday* newspaper is the Partner/Role model frame which is underpinned by the privileging of economics over politics, human rights and human interest. The engagement is predominantly framed as a mutual and win-win partnership rather than an exploitative partnership. Second, the study has also shown that the framing of China is contested by various elite interests articulating and promoting their views on China in the media. The contestation suggests there are Nigerians elites who think that China's engagement with Nigeria is neo-colonial, anti-people, anti-democratic and exploitative.

Both these elite framings dominate because *Thisday* newspaper, a supposedly 'quality' national newspaper in Nigeria, is deficient in mediating the activities of frame sponsors articulating and promoting their views on China in the media. In other words, *Thisday* journalism lacks the countervailing force to resist elite frame sponsors who are promoting positive views on China in the media, while excluding ordinary peoples' voices.

Appendix: Thisday newspaper articles on China in Nigeria

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