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Reception Analysis of African Audiences**

**Xiang, Y.**

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**Ideological Sinicization of China Central Television in Africa**  
**A Reception Analysis of African Audiences**

Yu Xiang

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements of the University of Westminster  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## **ABSTRACT**

China's booming investment in and trade with many African countries since the early 2000s marks the beginning of a new wave of industrial escalation on a global scale and at the same time a revived campaign for a new world information and communication order. The launch of CCTV-Africa in Nairobi, Kenya in January 2012 was a significant milestone in the 'China media going global' project initiated by the Chinese government in 2009.

This research is aimed at conducting a reception analysis of the African audiences of CCTV-Africa from the perspective of critical political and economic media studies. The focus of this research is not limited to the audience reception of the media content produced by CCTV-Africa but also focuses on the wider context of China-Africa political and economic interactions within the global structure of capitalism. The thesis will explore how the Chinese media is paving its way in the African news market and the process of manufacturing ideological consent among its target audience of the elite class through the medium of CCTV-Africa news programmes by analyzing how African students in China perceive the ideology of Sinicism delivered by CCTV-Africa.

Therefore, this thesis has two main aims: first, to provide a definition of ideological Sinicization through a comprehensive illustration of China's political-economic reality as a semi-peripheral country and its political and economic interaction with the peripheral countries in Africa, deploying the revised theoretical frame of structural imperialism developed by Johan Galtung. The second goal is to look into the mechanism of the process by which CCTV-Africa news programmes represent ideological Sinicization. The term Sinicization is deployed in this research to summarize the ideological homogenization of the China-African elite class through the establishment of 'harmony of interests'.

On the one hand, as a semi-peripheral country conditioned by the contemporary global

system of economy, China attempts to boost its economic interaction with peripheral countries from Africa in order to complete its domestic economic transition from semi-periphery to core. On the other hand, countries from Africa see the economic cooperation with China as an alternative opportunity to transfer their peripheral statuses to semi-periphery by developing their labour-intensive industries. Therefore, there exists a consensus amongst transnational elite class underpinned by the “harmony of interest” to pursue economic growth.

Such consensus is reinforced by the news of CCTV in Africa which is the state-controlled international media of Chinese government. Target audiences of CCTV in Africa, as the opinion leaders of their local societies, are more or less influenced by either the reality of China-Africa cooperation or the ideological agenda of CCTV in Africa to support such consensus. And the findings of this research achieved through content analysis and individual interviews show that the majority of the African audiences of CCTV-Africa do agree with the ideological agenda of the news channel to promote the economic development in local societies.

The audience reception research of the thesis is situated within an analysis of the political and economic context, which conditions the agenda and production of the media. The extensive review of the literature of international communication studies, imperialism studies and ideology studies, contributes to establishing a theoretical framework for the empirical research. Together with the data collected from field research, it is intended that this analysis should contribute to the understanding of the development of China-Africa communication and media studies and also to the enrichment of the research topics in this field.

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I was initially encouraged by my supervisor Professor Daya Thussu, who also supervised my thesis for Master’s degree, to develop my research on the English news channel of China Central Television. In the past few years, Professor Thussu has played a very kind and human role in my early academic life. He is not just a research supervisor but also a life mentor, who shares with students his precious wisdom about how to stay positive. Professor Thussu encouraged me to attend and present at international conferences which helped me grow in confidence and also speeded up the development of my doctoral research. When I was seriously ill in early 2017, Professor Thussu was continuously supportive. There is an old saying in China that ‘he who is a teacher for a day is the father for a lifetime.’ I am very honoured that I have such a wonderful first supervisor for my doctoral research and I will always be grateful for his kindness and warmth.

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## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Westminster. The work is fully original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree. The thesis has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

SIGNED:

A handwritten signature in Chinese characters, appearing to be '胡雨' (Hu Yu), written in black ink on a horizontal line.

DATE: 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017

## Chapter 1 - Introduction

China's booming investment in and trade with many African countries since the early 2000s have aroused numerous discussions and controversies regarding the nature of Sino-African interactions. Among many other things, the launch of CCTV-Africa, based in the Kenyan capital Nairobi since January 2012, marked a significant moment when China's state media - China Central Television (CCTV) marched into the continent of Africa following the instruction of 'China media going global' project initiated by the Chinese government since 2009 (see essays in Thussu, De Burgh and Shi, 2018). The global expansion of China's foreign media is mostly regarded as the diplomatic behaviour to promote the soft power of China. This tendency is closely interlinked with the political economic goal of the Chinese government as manifested in the national plan 'Belt and Road Initiative' (also known as 'One Belt, One Road') partly to overcome China's domestic economic dilemmas.

Although China and many African countries are usually regarded as the passive recipients of the Western cultural and media hegemony, the power structure between China and Africa has developed into a far more complex one than the alliance of the 'Third World' against superpowers in the Cold War years. CCTV-Africa is not yet an influential media in African societies. However, it seems that African governments and the elite classes in Africa, motivated by either the direct economic benefits from China or the eagerness to follow the economic development of 'China Model,' are being encouraged to embrace Chinese journalism and its hidden ideology of 'Sinicization.'

The ideology of any society in a particular epoch is dialectically determined by the social, political and economic structure in which it is embedded. As far as modern China is concerned, there is a specific kind of dominant ideology of 'Sinicism'. 'Sinicism', it is suggested here, is shaping China's international interactions with other nations. This thesis aims to explore how the Chinese state media CCTV-Africa delivers the ideology of Sinicism to its African audience through 'Sinicization'. The term 'Sinicization' is deployed

in this research to summarize the ideological homogenization of the China-African elite class through the establishment of a 'harmony of interests'.

The thesis will explore how the Chinese media is paving its way in the African news market and the process of manufacturing ideological consent among its target audience of the elite class through the medium of CCTV-Africa news programmes. The chosen subjects of the empirical fieldwork part of the research are African students who are studying in China, as their demographic characteristics indicate they have the potential for being or becoming the elites of African societies in their respective countries. Their potential roles as future leaders in Africa also mean that they are a 'captive' future audience for CCTV and China's cultural messages. Exploring how the African students in China perceive this ideology of Sinicism delivered by CCTV-Africa is of great importance to understand the mechanism of mass media to build up the connection between social reality and human perception.

The economic realities faced by China propel it to conduct a series of strategies and policies to survive in the global system of capitalism. The economic transformation in the domestic market and the 'going out' policy of Chinese government are the manifestations of such realities. It is inevitable for China to enhance both its hard power and soft power in the global system in order to assert its place as a rising power. Under such circumstances, the incidence of Sinicization can be understood as the one of the consequences of the thorough penetration of global capitalism into the global South. Employing the theoretical framework of structural imperialism developed by Johan Galtung, it will be argued in this thesis that China is in the role of a semi-peripheral country in its political and economic interactions with the peripheral countries in Africa. Accordingly, the elite of China and that of African countries are more likely to align with each other by the 'harmony of interests' of maintaining their dominant status and superior living conditions.

In researching the case of Chinese media in Africa, the researcher does not want to limit

the audience study of CCTV-Africa to the analysis of media content and effects in isolation from the political and economic context which conditions the agenda and production of such content and expression. Thus, instead of putting the weight exclusively on the empirical studies, the researcher also recognises the significance of examining key aspects of theory and concepts to inform the development of the most appropriate theoretical framework. Through the literature reviews in the first part of the thesis, this research sets out to analyse how the process of mass media communication is related to the dissemination of certain dominant ideologies. Therefore, this research aims to conduct a reception analysis of the African audiences of CCTV-Africa from the perspective of critical political and economic media studies.

### **1.1 The Context of this Research**

In the introduction of the book *Global Communications: Toward a Transcultural Political Economy*, published in 2008, Paula Chakravartty and Yuezhi Zhao raised two crucial questions: 'What are the global political economic and cultural implications of China's increasing economic presence in Africa?' and 'Can there be a true "partnership in development" between China and Africa, as China's official discourse champions?' (Chakravartty and Zhao, 2008:2). Almost ten years later, these two questions have become highly significant, especially after Chinese President Xi Jinping announced ten major China-Africa cooperation projects offering \$60 billion to Africa at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Johannesburg in 2015. The deep injection of Chinese capital into African markets marks the beginning of a new wave of industrial escalation on a global scale and at the same time a revived campaign for a new world information and communication order.

The dream of the Egyptian Marxist economist Samir Amin for an emerging new world order replacing the polarizing economic system of global capitalism dominated by Western countries (Amin, 2000) seems to be coming true, due to the increasing global influence of non-Western alliances such as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). However, while people are celebrating the rejuvenation of the ex-colonial



countries, many historical puzzles remain unanswered. In the book *The Star Raft: China's Encounter with Africa*, published in 1988, the British author Philip Snow accurately sensed the forming of a new identity of non-western civilizations (Snow, 1988: xvii). Pointing out the core argument, Snow asked: 'Will Brazil step up its growing economic role in Africa? ... Will China and India eventually manage to settle their incessant border quarrels and discover common aims?' (ibid: xvi). Regional hegemonies, as noted by Arjun Appadurai, along with many other internal frictions, have posed a new challenge to developing countries (Appadurai, 1990). As Daya Thussu observed in his chapter 'The Scramble for Asian Soft Power in Africa', emerging economies such as India and China from the global South are to some extent in competition with each other to win over the discourse in Africa (Thussu, 2016).

China 'officially' started its campaign in 2012 when China Central Television (CCTV-Africa) established its African hub in Nairobi and the new English section of CCTV-Africa. CCTV-Africa<sup>1</sup> is believed to be 'the first international media to dedicate more time to Africa through CCTV Africa programmes such as Africa Live, Talk Africa and Faces of Africa' (Zhang, 2014). Although the reputation of CCTV-Africa has not yet reached the level of the leading Western media such as the BBC or CNN, which have been broadcasting to African publics for decades, the attention this state channel has drawn from both academic and media industries has been considerable. For example, the positive reporting style of CCTV-Africa, which is framed as 'Constructive Journalism' by Zhang Yanqiu (2014), is promoting fierce discussions in the field of journalism studies. Whether such a journalistic approach is the manifestation of genuine constructive journalism or an ideological agenda responding to the pursuit of political and economic policies by the Chinese government, cannot yet be clarified due to insufficient research.

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<sup>1</sup> CCTV-News channel was relaunched as China Global Television Network (CGTN) on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017, and CCTV-Africa is renamed CGTN-Africa. The data and information about CCTV-Africa in this research refers to the English news channel of CCTV with the focus on the continent of Africa that existed before the rebranding of CGTN-Africa.

## **1.2 The Aims and Originality of This Research**

The aim of this research is to cast light on the discussion about the correlation and struggles between mass ideologies and political economic structures from a transnational perspective, using the case study of CCTV-Africa and its African audiences.

The main research questions are as follows:

1. How do the African students studying in China, as the potential elite opinion leaders of their local societies, perceive the (ideological) messages delivered by the news produced by CCTV-Africa?
2. How has the reality of increasing Sino-African political and economic interactions contributed to the way that African students understand the media content of CCTV-Africa?

The hypothesis of this research is that African students studying in China, conditioned by the political and economic structure of Sino-African bilateral interaction and their social class, tend to interpret CCTV-Africa positively and decode most of the ideological messages delivered by the news in a dominant position (applying the theory and terminology of Stuart Hall on encoding and decoding – Hall, 1980)

The contributions of this research to knowledge are both theoretical and empirical. The originality of this research lies in mainly five aspects. The first is the substitution of the concept of 'ideology' for that of 'culture' in the theoretical framework of the 'cultural imperialism' paradigm, which is the main theoretical base of this research. The second is the revision of the 'harmony of interests' model of Johan Galtung's structural theory of imperialism based on 'world systems' and 'sub-imperialism' theories. The third is the concept of 'Sinicization,' which is used here to summarize the ideological agenda of CCTV-Africa underpinned by the political and economic realities faced by China and China-Africa relations. The fourth is the renewal of the 'encoding/decoding' model of Stuart Hall by bringing in the typology of ideological receptions of Christian Fuchs. The fifth is the contribution of this research to the topic of how African students studying in

China perceive the ideological agenda of CCTV-Africa.

### **1.3 The Outline of the Thesis**

This dissertation is mainly categorized within four themes: firstly, the literature review (Chapters 2, 3 and 4): the second is the theoretical framework (Chapters 5 and 6); the third is methodologies and methods (Chapter 7); and the fourth and final theme is the findings of this research and conclusions (Chapters 8 and 9).

Chapter 2 is a general thematic literature review of the studies that are related to China-Africa communication and media studies. In this chapter, the works on China-Africa communication studies are covered in four main aspects: 'Political and Economic Studies', 'History, Foreign Relations and Public Diplomacy Studies', 'Soft Power studies' and 'Journalism Studies'. Chapter 2 draws a general picture of the status quo of China-Africa studies, which reveals the under-studied nature of this topic in the field of audience studies on the Chinese media in Africa from the perspective of a political and economic critique. The political and economic dynamics between China and African countries are illustrated in order to explain how the interactions between China and Africa are conditioned by the global structure of the neoliberalist market economy and to provide a basis for the analysis of structural theory in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3 is a literature review of the audience studies in the field of international communication studies of four major theoretical paradigms: 'Dominant/Modernization Paradigm', 'Dependency/Imperialism Paradigm', 'Globalization Paradigm' and a new emerging paradigm which has not yet been specifically titled. Chapter 3 emphasizes the importance of reviving the critical approach of 'cultural imperialism' in the field of international communications studies, and at the same time points out the necessity to establish a new agenda for audience research of international communication.

Chapter 4 reviews the background of the 'cultural imperialism' paradigm, the concept of 'culture' and 'imperialism' studies. This chapter is aimed at further examining the

historical development of the 'cultural imperialism' paradigm, exploring the problems of the theoretical framework of the paradigm and determining the latest trends in the field of 'imperialism' studies, in order to have an understanding of what kind of revision is needed to revive this paradigm. In the section on 'imperialism' studies, five major theories related to imperialism are reviewed respectively: 'Imperialism of the Second International', 'Dependency Theory', 'Structural Theory of Imperialism', 'World-Systems Theory' and 'New Imperialism'. The chapter argues that Galtung's structural theory of imperialism, which classifies the world into two major components – Core and Periphery – is particularly relevant in relation to the proposition that the dominant hierarchical relation between Core and Periphery, as well as its theoretical extension in relation to the 'semi-periphery', is maintained through the establishment of a 'harmony of interests' between global elites.

Chapter 5 is a contribution to the establishment of the theoretical framework of this research by reviewing the literature on the concept of 'ideology', particularly in the context of Marxist studies. However, this chapter also points out the difference between the concepts of 'culture' and 'ideology' and illustrates the necessity of substituting 'culture' with 'ideology' in this research.

Chapter 6 brings in the key concept of this research – ideological Sinicization. The first section of this chapter provides a solid explanation of the political and economic base and the theoretical foundation of this concept; and the second section illustrates how such a concept is manifested in the tangible case of CCTV-Africa and the reception of its news content by its African audiences. The chapter looks at how China's ideology of Sinicism is being delivered by CCTV-Africa to its African audiences. To understand the substance of the ideology it is important first to understand the political and economic structure of the ideology. Therefore, this chapter depicts a general picture of the political, economic background of Sinicism and Sinicization within the theoretical framework of a semi-imperialism critique, in which China is defined as a semi-peripheral country that is inevitably undergoing sub-imperialist expansion. It also introduces the concrete

manifestation of the ideology of Sinicism in the case of Sino-African political and economic relations and to illustrate how Sinicism, theoretically speaking, can be manufactured as ideological consent between the elite classes in China and those in African countries.

Chapter 7 has two main parts: the first generally reviews the theories of quantitative, qualitative and critical research; and the second section introduces the research design of this thesis. As we can see from the contents, four methods of both qualitative and quantitative variety are deployed in this research – questionnaire, interview, content analysis and discourse analysis. Individual interviewing with semi-structured questions is the major method of this research. Content and discourse analysis are used as the triangulation for the result of interviews.

Chapter 8 is the longest chapter of this thesis, which analyses the results of the data collected from field research. In order to discuss the findings according to the mass communication process of encoding and decoding, the results of triangulation are placed in front of the findings of individual interviews. In the first section, the results of content analysis of the speakers and the news frames of *Global Business (Africa)* and the brief discourse analysis of the content of the special edition of the *Grass Roots* series are set out. The second section presents the results of the interviews.

Chapter 9 summarises the findings in terms of the initial aims of the research and presents the contribution of this research to the field, including theoretical developments and empirical evidence. It also has a discussion of the extended reflections on the research subject of China-Africa communication studies.

## **Chapter 2 - China-Africa Communication and Media Studies**

China-Africa communication and media studies, as part of the wider sociological discipline of China-Africa studies, have only been flourishing for about a decade, when China started to focus strategically on China-African economic cooperation. This 'has been particularly well illustrated by two events: the summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in November 2006 and the annual meeting of the African Development Bank (ADB) in Shanghai in May 2007' (Taylor and Xiao, 2009: 1). Although there is a rapidly increasing number of publications emerging in the field of China-Africa studies (Drummond and Liu, 2014), this field is still in its early stages of research and scholarship. Therefore, it is understandable that its structure is rather one-dimensional and lacks the multi-disciplinary perspectives compared to many other fields of media studies. However, with China's involvement in Africa growing exponentially, along with China's domestic economic transition to fit into the global capitalist economic system, the frame of China-Africa media studies needs to catch up with the speedy development of the complex and multi-dimensional background of the rapidly evolving and expanding China-Africa relations.

This chapter aims to provide firstly a thematic review of China-Africa studies in general and then a focus on media studies. By mapping out this field of studies, it is expected that gaps will be noted to inform further research. Four main theoretical frames have been identified, as indicated in the following sections, which are 'China-Africa Political and Economic Studies', 'China-Africa History, Foreign Policy and Public Diplomacy Studies', 'China-Africa Soft Power Studies' and 'China-Africa Journalism Studies'. However, these four themes do, to some extent, overlap with each other. For example, discussions on the rather contested notions of alternative journalism provided by Chinese state media's production of African content are often involved with the agenda of the Chinese government to promote its soft power (Wasserman, 2013; Yan, 2015; Zhang Y.Q., 2014). And studies about soft power are always closely linked with the existence of the hard power of China-Africa political and economic interactions and vice

versa (An, 2012; Oreglia, undated; Taylor and Xiao, 2009). But, by and large, the four themes listed in this chapter have distinguishable characteristics and key texts which will be set out and discussed separately.

## **2.1 China-Africa Political and Economic Studies**

Despite the fact that multilateral interactions between China and countries in Africa have only been drawing global attention since the late 2000s, their formal diplomatic history can be traced back to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when China, as a member of communist camp in the Cold War, officially became Egypt's international friend in the year of 1956 (Zhang C., 2013: 10). In his book *The East is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination*, Frazier provides a detailed introduction and unfolds illustrations on how China and many African countries forged an ideological and political alliance against Western imperialism through 'travel and the production of literature, newspapers, newsletters, pamphlets, radio, film documentary, and critical pedagogy' (2015: 3). Unfortunately, as the 'near-successful completion of the globalization process' of American neoliberalism 'neatly veiled within modernity's rhetoric of progress, democratization', 'the prospect of the Chinese government as an alternative 'route' to a progressive world formation' has evoked scepticism (Frazier, 2015: 218). However, as China has adjusted its economic strategy since the late 1970s and integrated into the global system, the growth of its economic success has again drawn attention from developing countries in Africa, which seemed unlikely to further advance their social change following the Western pathway. Accordingly, series of studies on China-Africa political and economic interactions are therefore emerging, arguing the realities and prospects from various perspectives (Alden, 2007; Gadzala, 2015; Gonzales and Gonzales, 2014; Strauss, 2009, among others).

Many books on the topic of China in Africa have flooded into the public domain in the past decade and a few of them take the ethnographic angle to depict the complicated truth of increasing Chinese business activities in African countries. One specific example is the book, *China's Second Continent*, published in 2014 by Howard French, which is

described by the *Economist* as a ‘riveting’ piece of work revealing the failed reality of China spreading its ideology in Africa. French interviewed many local African as well as Chinese workers that he met in Africa and expressed his concern for the economic expansion of China in Africa through the words of his interviewees. Such concerns are not just his. Hostile comments towards China are common in a few media platforms – and not just associated with the Western journalism. As shown in the book *China: The New Imperialists & Neo-Colonialists in Africa?* published in 2016, Kwame Insaadoo, a Ghanaian author, asserts the ‘evil’ nature of Chinese civilization towards Africans by quoting a story he read during his study in Missouri State University in the United States: ‘the (Chinese) emperor wrote ... to wipe out the entire black race’ (Insaadoo, 2016: Introduction). Despite such radical voices pushing for a distorted and historical inaccurate discussion of China in Africa, there also exists an increasing number of studies and publications telling the other side of the story.

Ian Taylor, as one of the main academics who has studied the economic engagement of China in Africa, sets out in his articles and books to explain the new role of China as an economically important partner to Africa. In his 2006 book *China and Africa: Engagement and Compromises*, Taylor brought in a historical perspective to unfold the origin of China’s engagement with Africa after the Second World War. Based on historical facts and theoretical analysis, Taylor aims to answer ‘how successful Beijing has been in “bridging the gap” between the ambitions and the realities of Beijing’s foreign policy through involvement in Southern Africa’ and ‘how important Chinese rhetoric regarding ‘anti-hegemonism’ has been as a device to manage the PRC’s external affairs’ (2006: 5). In another book *China’s New Role in Africa*, Taylor proceeds to address the current engagement of China in Africa (2010). In the opinion of Taylor, the role of China in Africa is not fundamentally different from powerful Western countries. Taylor reinforced his opinion in the co-written article ‘A Case of Mistaken Identity: “China Inc.” and its “Imperialism” in Sub-Saharan Africa’ with his colleague Yuhua Xiao. They wrote in the conclusion of that paper: ‘Abandoning the idea of a China Inc. hell-bent on some sort of colonial rampage across Africa would be a start in developing a more realistic



consideration of Sino-African relations' (2009: 723). In his recently published book with his colleague Zhangxi Cheng as the co-author, the myth of China's aid to African countries has been revealed (Taylor and Cheng, 2017).

Another well-known scholar on China-Africa economic studies is Deborah Brautigam - possibly the most widely accepted work by a foreigner on China-Africa political and economic relations in China is her book, *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*, published in 2011. In this book, Brautigam provides a rational, systematic and detailed explanation of the status quo of China in Africa, with abundant materials and evidence she collected during years of interviews and research in Africa. In contrast with some of the scholars who regard China as just another capitalist player on the continent of Africa, Deborah focuses on how China differentiates itself from the Western countries. In her 2015 book *Will Africa Feed China?* by 'sorting fact from fiction' (2015: 10), Brautigam countered a popular rumour in Western media about Chinese peasants settling in Africa and conquering the latter's farmland to feed the Chinese population (2015: 2). The works of Brautigam brings a new trend to China-Africa political economic studies, and more rational illustrations are therefore contributed by scholars and researchers with more open mind and more mixed cultural backgrounds.

The newly published *The Next Factory of the World: How Chinese Investment Is Reshaping Africa* (2017) written by Irene Yuan Sun is another such example. With experience of living in China, the United States and Namibia, Sun is able to notice nuances that are invisible to many others. And in her new book, Sun mixed her personal knowledge about China, Africa and Western societies with the ethnographical observations she conducted on Chinese factories in Africa and created 'a critical frontier with potentially profound impact', as noted in a review by Mukhisa Kituyi, the Secretary-General of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

A few other scholars also see the increasing China-Africa political economic interactions from a different theoretical perspective. Ching Kwan Lee expressed her critical

understanding about the status quo of Chinese state investors in Zambia in her article 'The Spectre of Global China' (2014). As with Taylor, Lee thought that although the interests of Chinese state corporations are not all directly driven by profit, their essential logic to achieve goals are the same. She observed that 'Chinese state capital is thus every bit as adversarial as global private capital when it comes to labour's demands' (2014: 50). Therefore, in her opinion, even though the Chinese companies are behaving similarly to the other international investors in Africa, the local working class is still the most exploited people in the global capitalist system. Adrian Hadland also described China as a 'modern, post-Westphalian capitalist state' (2012: 482), and he disagreed with the opinion of Taylor and Xiao in terms of encouraging the weak African countries to bargain for their own benefits as it 'is an unrealistic set of demands that fails to acknowledge either the imbalance of financial, trade, and power relations between Africa and China' (2012: 482). African scholars such as Sam Moyo argued that the economic expansion of China and many other emerging economies in Africa represents a new round of scramble for Africa (2012). Such concerns and critiques are based on the critical tradition of the dependency theories and imperialism theories mostly championed in what was described during the Cold War period as the Third World countries and critiquing Western exploitation of the global South. However, the non-Western and (ex)socialist status of China adds up the complexity of the China-Africa dynamics.

Though holding a similar theoretical lineage of critical studies on global capitalism, Hairong Yan and Barry Sautman created a new paradigm to think about the presence of China in Africa (Yan and Sautman, 2013). In their latest published book *China in Africa: Discourse and Reality*, Yan and Sautman claimed that the difficult realities of China in Africa are the dilemma of the global economic system of capitalism (2017: 117-145). They pointed out the complexity of China in Africa, which can neither be depicted as a 'win-win' situation nor a nightmare in the eyes of Western media (2017: 118). Therefore, Yan and Sautman suggested to transfer the focus from arguing whether China is doing capitalist expansion to exploring the different approach manifested in the practices of Chinese companies in Africa, because the latter is possibly the alternatives which may

bring the global system a new pathway to future development (2017: 111).

In their previous works, both Yan and Sautman have also highlighted the importance of the African public's perception of China and Chinese companies in Africa (Yan and Sautman, 2009; Yan, 2013). In a Chinese article published online in 2013, Yan used various data sources to argue that the general impression of African locals on China is very positive and she wrote: 'it is of vital importance for China to know how the Africa public think of China in order to acquire accurate understanding about its position in global system' (2013). It is to say, although Yan is deploying critical approach to analyse the role of China in global capitalist system and also in Africa, she and Sautman are putting their focus on seeking for an alternative development pathway.

Very few academic works of China-Africa media studies choose to discuss the topics of China-Africa political and economic interactions or how such relations relate to the media structure or practices of China in Africa. One Master's degree dissertation from London School of Economics and Political Science titled '*A Comparative Analysis of Chinese, Western and African Media Discourse in the Representation of China's Expansion of Economic Engagements in Africa*' deployed discourse analysis to examine the differences of four different media origins, Chinese, British, Tanzanian and South African, in terms of representing the China's economic engagement in Africa (2015). The author of the dissertation reached the conclusion that African countries are not entirely under the domination of Western stereotypes towards China's engagement in Africa, and large sections of African media have shown interest and willingness to encourage the economic cooperation with China (2015: 27-28). However, research on China-Africa media studies from the perspective of political and economic analysis are still in their early stages of development, and therefore room is reserved in this field to be further explored.

## **2.2 China-Africa History, Foreign Policy and Public Diplomacy Studies**

Another major branch of China-Africa studies is the focus on the history and public

diplomacy between China and a few African countries. As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, it is not always easy to draw a clear boundary between different strands of China-Africa studies as they overlap with each other all the time, especially in the field of China-Africa studies on history, foreign policy and public diplomacy. Therefore, this section is aimed to generally introduce the outstanding works of this field, especially those ones involving the dimension of media studies.

One of the most renowned Chinese scholars on China-Africa studies is Anshan Li who is now a professor at the Peking University. His seminal book '*A History of Overseas Chinese in Africa to 1911*' which was originally published in 2000 then translated into English in 2012 is a magnificent reference on the history of Chinese diaspora in the continent of Africa. Li is also the chief editor of a series of '*Annual Review of African Studies in China*' (2012b, 2013, 2014, 2015). Besides his extraordinary contribution to the cultural, anthropological and historical African studies in China, Li also published several articles on the subject of China-Africa relations from the perspective of realist international relations. For example, Li published two Chinese papers in 2006 talking about the change of China-Africa relations and foreign policies in the era when China is rising economically (2006a; 2006b). And in another paper, Li also provided advice on how the Chinese government could promote its public relations initiatives in Africa (2008). He suggested in that article that the Chinese state media should counter a 'demonized' image of China by paying more attention to the manners, content and approach of public diplomacy (2008: 6-14). In the papers published in 2009 and 2016, Li Anshan introduced the panorama on the studies on China-Africa relation in the past 30 years and the tendencies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which are valuable references for all researchers on the discipline of China-Africa studies.

In 1982, another Chinese scholar, Jinyuan Gao, visiting the University of London at the time gave a talk about the history of China-Africa over the past few centuries which was later published in the journal *African Affairs*. Gao generally surveyed the history between China and Africa in the past 2,000 years and he emphasized the positive side of the story

by describing the minor problems of China-Africa relations as 'a negligible spot on a solid white jade' (Gao, 1984: 250). Along with the growth of China-Africa political and economic interactions, studies on the historical dimension of China-Africa relation are growing larger and larger. In a recently published 22-page article, Helen Siu and Mike McGovern traced the history of China-African encounter back to the Tang dynasty and unfolded the whole picture through introducing the milestones during post-colonial, socialist and contemporary stages and telling stories of people from the anthropological perspective (2017). There are also many other works on the history of China-Africa relations or the anthropological stories in both countries (Larkin, 1973; Snow, 1988; Shinn and Eisenman, 2012; George, 2014).

The analysis of China-Africa relations by many other researchers is usually from the perspective of realist international relations (Kofigah, 2014; Michael, 2013). One widely-cited report on China's foreign policy towards Africa is written by Yun Sun in 2014. In that report, Sun conducted systematic analysis on the status quo of China-Africa relations in several aspects such as 'China's interests in Africa', 'Africa in China's Foreign Policy', 'The Making of China's Africa Policy' and 'Challenges in China's Africa policy' (2014: iii). Yun Sun reached a similar conclusion with that of Ching Kwan Lee that 'China's Africa policy lacks a comprehensive, long-term, strategic vision' (2014: 30). Ian Taylor reached to a similar conclusion, in his article 'Governance in Africa and Sino-African Relations: Contradictions or Confluence?' published seven years earlier, that 'China's engagement with Africa is multifaceted and ... full of inconsistencies' (Taylor, 2007: 143).

In the eyes of some researchers, the complexity of China's Africa policy includes both good and bad features, as for example Emma Mawdsley concluded in her paper 'China and Africa: Emerging Challenges to the Geographies of Power': 'For different Africans and African countries, China brings a range of benefits as well as problems, and China will undoubtedly become an ever more important factor in the continent's future' (Mawdsley, 2007: 417). Daniel Large proposed a new approach to studying China-Africa relations in his paper 'Beyond 'Dragon in the Bush': The Study of China-Africa Relations':

'A potentially more rewarding approach to studying China-Africa 'relations might be to pursue this within a wider framework of African-Asian relations' (Large, 2008: 61).

Instead of sticking to the tone of Western mainstream opinions, there is also an increasing number of African scholars who are trying to establish their framework to see China-Africa relations (Adarkwah, undated; Nunoo, 2017, among others). The newly published book, *Africa-China Partnerships and Relations: African Perspectives* is such an example (2017). Kwesi Prah and Vusi Gumede as the editors of the book along with many other native scholars contribute to the non-Western discourse of interpreting China-Africa relations from an African perspective. Similarly, in a book published in 2015, the editor Aleksandra Gadzala and the contributors, including Joshua Eisenman, Ian Taylor, Iginio Gagliardone and Barry Sautman, chose to privilege the voices of the African people: 'African agency in relations with China' and 'Africa's emergent civil society' (2015: preface). Just as Hairong Yan and Barry Sautman emphasized in their book, the importance of the general population either as the working class or the individual agents must be recognized and therefore systematically studied (2017: 111). Adams Bodomo's work 'Africans in China: A Sociocultural Study and Its Implications on Africa-China Relations' has contributed to the studies on the common population of African communities in China (2012). In this book, Bodomo conducted a long period field research based in six major cities in China to depict and picture the panorama of African residents who are living in China for various reasons. As one of the book's reviewers wrote about it: "its theoretical and methodological novelty among the studies about Africa and China places it as an outstanding resource not only for cultural contact studies but also for sociology, linguistics and anthropology" (Rodríguez, 2013: 198).

On the other hand, Chinese perspectives are also in need of being highlighted in the discourse of China-Africa studies. Limited by the weak voice in the global system of expression and the early stages of studies, Chinese studies on China-Africa foreign policies are not as influential as many other studies conducted by Western scholars. Nevertheless, it is by no means to suggest that the Chinese scholars are not contributing

to this discussion. Apart from the few renowned historians introduced above, there are also other scholars dedicated to this field of study (see, for instance, Chen, 2013; Cheng, 2013; Ma and Wang, 2013). For example, Wenping He has been disseminating her opinions and knowledge about China and Africa through various media and official channels, with publications analysing the new multipolar world order, with China and Africa as the emerging powers (He, 2000, 2010). And other scholars also make great efforts to enrich the context of Chinese studies on China-Africa relations (Li Q., 2009; Tang, 2015). Tang Xiaoyang has provided abundant empirical material in his book *China-Africa Economic Diplomacy and Its Implication to the Global Value Chain* to discuss the possibility of developing a 'win-win' strategy for China and Africa based on the economics of market (2014). Both Chinese and African scholars are contributing to the establishment of a non-Western, but at the same time a global discourse, in which the voice of developing countries can be heard.

Such efforts are also noticeable in the field of China-Africa media studies. The exponential growth of China-Africa relations has drawn attention from many scholars of media studies. One special issue published by *African Studies Quarterly* on the topic of 'China-Africa Relations: Political and Economic Engagement and Media Strategies' provides discursive and abundant discussions to the field. Lianxing Li in his paper 'The Image of Africa in China' talked about the background of the formation of the image of Africa in the minds of Chinese and how the booming social media platforms such as WeChat contribute to the new presence of Africa in China (2016: 149-160). In another article of the special issue, Michael Leslie focused on the strategies implemented by Chinese government to save its damaged image in Africa such as accelerated publicity of the enhanced collaborations through Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), promoted educational projects by Chinese university such as Communication University of China (CUC) and expanded media organizations in Africa such as China Central Television (CCTV) (2016: 161-174).

How to rationalize the influence of Chinese media and policies on China-Africa relations

has become one of the hottest topics in recent years, covered with distinction in the recently released book *Mediated China-Africa Relations* by Shubo Li. Such a perspective is also reflected in another new book edited by Kathryn Batchelor and Xiaoling Zhang – *China-Africa Relations: Building Images through Cultural Cooperation, Media Representation, and Communication* (2017). In this book, contributors along with the editors talk about various activities including China’s technical assistance to East Africa (Shi *et al.*, 2017), China’s digital public diplomacy towards Africa (Madrid-Morales, 2017) and Confucius institute in Africa (King, 2017). As the editors claimed in the introduction chapter, what they want to discuss in this book is not the ‘perceived image’ of either China or Africa but the ‘projected image’ which is manufactured by the states and governments in order to ‘change or generate public perception’ (Batchelor and Zhang, 2017: 5). In other words, the research focus is on exploring the agenda of China’s macro strategy to build up influence in African countries. Researches of this kind are often classified in another frame as well, which is China-Africa soft power studies.

### **2.3 China-Africa Soft Power Studies**

Soft power study is a relatively wide range covering various topics from education, commercial products to media exposure. Therefore, there are numerous publications relating to the topic of China’s soft power in Africa (Zhang and He, 2015; Zhang, Wasserman and Mano, 2016; Li and Masiitwa, 2017, among others). However, in this section we will review only the literature in this field which is particularly relevant for this project.

In relation to education, increasing China-Africa educational cooperation is arousing the interest of many scholars. In the book *China’s Aid and Soft Power in Africa: The Case of Education and Training*, Kenneth King explains how educational aid from China to Africa, such as short-term training, scholarships for African students and Confucius Institutes are the manifestations of China’s grander strategy to promote China-Africa ties and its soft power on the continent (2013). Over a decade ago, the growing activities of China-Africa higher education projects were drawing attention. A report published by The



Observatory on Borderless Higher Education in 2006 pointed out that an increasing number of African students were going to China to study and more Chinese universities were opening African languages courses (2006: 1). The report revealed that the funding from Education Minister Forum in China was granted by the central government to 'train African personnel in key sectors including education, science and technology' and to promote multilateral communication (2006: 1).

Data on the website of Peking University about the programme for African students living in China shows that from 2008 to 2012, the number of African students coming to China grew from 8,799 to 27,052 (Peking University, 2015), and about 12,000 of them, nearly 50%, were sponsored by the Chinese government (Allison, 2013). According to an article on the history of China's educational aid to Africa, since 2008 Chinese government has spent more than 500 million RMB on projects sponsoring African students studying in China (Liu, 2015). Such behaviour is regarded as an effort made by Chinese authority to fix China's image in Africa (Allison, 2013). It is believed that such interactions would 'increase mutual understanding and friendship between two peoples and particularly between the younger generations' (Tarrósy, 2015).

In addition to studying in China, there are more and more chances provided by the Chinese government for African students staying in their own countries. The first Confucius Institute in Africa was established in Kenya in 2005 and by 2010 there were 10,000 registered students in many African countries (Sa, 2011: 13-14). With more and more Chinese companies moving to Africa, skilled and educated workers are highly in demand to participate in China-Africa economic cooperation. Therefore, according to Gao, by 2013, 37 Confucius Institutes and 10 Confucius Halls were established to cultivate valuable employees (Gao, 2014: 144-147). Inevitably, there are some negative voices about such cultural strategies:

'Confucius schools are therefore nothing but China's vehicles for global dominance, effected in the cultural sphere through the promotion of the Chinese language,

tastes, education, architecture, music, food, movies, beliefs, banks, dressing, art, history and lifestyle, to be continued until such a time that these would have supplanted existing cultural precepts and raised local agents who would become the defenders of the new imposed order themselves' (*New African Magazine*, 2015).

Falk Hartig has published a series of articles and book discussing how Confucius Institutes (Cis) relate to the macro strategies of China to promote its soft power globally (2010; 2011; 2012; 2015a, 2015b). Based on his study of the Confucius Institute in Germany, Hartig concluded that although Cis cannot sustain the claims 'non-intervention by the government', it is still 'not appropriate to label Cis as propaganda tools when propaganda is understood in the negative common sense' (2010: 11). On the specific case of Cis in Africa, Hartig admitted the value of them in terms of educational aid to Africa, but he also noticed that insufficient academic and cultural communication between China and Africa make the Cis in Africa less effective than expected (2015b: 94-110). The governmental influence of Confucius Institutes in Africa is also evident in their promotion for instance of the 'Belt and Road Initiative,' China's major global infrastructure projects (Nanfeng Chuang, 2017), making such strategy rather controversial in the eyes of many Western critics. However, beyond the Cis there are many other cultural and communication as ties specifically aimed at the African populations, including the mass media to expand and strengthen the Sino-African ties.

China's companies are moving into the local markets of Africa with all kinds of products and goods. Although not all of them are impressive (Chinese goods are known in Africa for cheap prices and poor quality), the image is changing and there are certain brands becoming appealing to the local consumers (Gariba and Ying, 2016). Especially in the technology industry, Chinese companies are doing very well in many African local markets. Iginio Gagliardone said in an interview with CNBC that China was 'definitely the only player' in Ethiopia, with Chinese investment in the country's technology sector totalling \$3 billion as of 2012 (Crabtree, 2017). Chinese smartphones are popular especially among the younger generation of Africans, and Chinese companies such as

ZTE are localizing their products rapidly, attempting to dominate the African markets of digital products (Nandagopal, 2015). Besides, another big Chinese technology company Huawei provides training for local workers and set up research and development centres all over the continent of Africa to make its products localized, and it is believed that it shakes off 'the longstanding negative perceptions of Chinese business in Africa' (Rukato, 2016).

Telecommunication companies such as ZTE and Huawei are not just selling smartphones but also building infrastructure in many African countries. By meeting the demands of the local societies for developing infrastructure, China is building bridges to solidify its relations with African countries and to enhance its soft power (Foster *et al.*, 2009: xv). The most direct influence on the local people's perception of Chinese culture would be the media products made by StarTimes. With '10 million subscribers across 30 countries', StarTimes is 'now one of Africa's most important media companies' (Olander, 2017). This Beijing-based media company has achieved great success by providing pay-TV on a much cheaper price which beats the previous dominator MultiChoice's DStv especially in East Africa (Mohammed, 2015). In 2012 and 2013, the Chinese TV drama 'The Beautiful Age for Daughter-in-Law,' which was broadcast on the channel provided by StarTimes, achieved unprecedented popularity amongst the local African audience (People.com, 2013). It was reckoned as a great example to follow to either explore new markets for Chinese media products and to promote the 'charm offensive' of Chinese modern life.

Besides education and brand influence of products, media exposure is equally important in terms of boosting the soft power of China in Africa. In the report '*China in Africa: A New Approach to Media Development?*' co-written by Iginio Gagliardone, Maria Repnikova and Nicole Stremlau, the entire background of Chinese media and Chinese journalistic professionalism interacting with the African local media structure is depicted and explained (2010). The authors declared their concern for the success of China's initiatives to promote their soft power through investing heavily into their overseas state media and they suggested that more in-depth studies should be conducted in the

receiving countries to draw a clearer picture of such agenda (2010: 17). Due to the exponential growth of China-Africa economic and political interactions, the suggestion proposed by Gagliardone and his colleagues has come true. An increasing number of academic publications on the subject of the image and soft power of China has emerged rapidly during the past few years. In an article written by Xiaoling Zhang in 2013, she analysed several thematic frames that frequently appear in the media discourse of Chinese state media and she reached the conclusion that 'China is trying to build up its challenging power, but no substantial content can be found from the discourse of a state media as an alternative to the West' (2013: 28). However, in the comparative research conducted by Vivien March on CCTV-Africa and BBC World News TV, the differences between Chinese approach and Western or British approach as manifested in their journalistic practices and media content are quite prominent (2015; 2016).

In the paper 'China in Africa: presence, perceptions and prospects' published in 2014, Fei-Ling Wang and Esi Elliot analysed and depicted the image of China in the eyes of African people from eight sub-Saharan African countries, and they found 'a great dichotomy in African perceptions about China's presence' (2014: 1022). On the one hand, China is viewed as the new hope for Africa's future development. On the other, the opportunistic behaviour of Chinese companies in Africa irritates the local people. Wang and Elliot also found that in different African countries, the image of Chinese differs slightly as well (2014: 1024-1029). Additionally, based on their case study in Uganda, the work of Goretta Nassanga and Sabiti Makara analyses how the perceptions of most Africans on China are influenced by the local media (2014). Nassanga and Makara reached a less negative conclusion, at least for the Chinese government, that 'Despite increasing unease about China's 'go global' strategy, China globally enjoys a positive image' which are majorly contributed by two African nations 'Nigeria with 82% and Kenya having 77%' (2014: 10). Lauren Gorfinkel and her colleagues also contributed to the profiling of African audiences and analysing how they perceive the 'new voice' of Chinese media, and found 'a slightly greater interest and awareness by white audiences in Kenya, and a ... lack of awareness or sustained interest by black Kenyans' (2014: 86).

However, to what extent the image of China in the eyes of Africa is influenced by the efforts made by Chinese media in Africa remains a very significant, though not thoroughly answered, question. An increasing number of academic publications of various perspectives are contributing to the discussion of this question. Chinese scholar Yan Chengsheng published an article introducing how structurally speaking the Chinese television is doing in Africa (2015). Yan's main focus was on CCTV, commercial media company StarTimes and China Network Television (CNTV), and he provided detailed information about the media organizations and broadcasting techniques (2015). Research of wider scope is also emerging. As the editors, Xiaoling Zhang, Herman Wasserman and Winston Mano, along with the contribution of all the other authors, provided an interesting collection of opinions and observations in the book *China's Media and Soft Power in Africa: Promotion and Perceptions* (2016). For example, Daya Thussu talked about how the emerging Asian countries are trying to penetrate into the African market of media and communication (Thussu, 2016), Winston Mano picked the topic of local perceptions of China in Zimbabwe (Mano, 2016) and Gary Rawnsley discussed the general theoretical frame of how to define and conduct soft power studies (Rawnsley, 2016).

In a paper written by Yu-Shan Wu from South African Institute of International Affairs, Wu provided a thorough map of the increasing engagement of Chinese media in Africa, signalling the 'outward movement project' of China (2010: 24). Regarding the influence of Chinese media in Africa, Herman Wasserman unveiled a rather unpromising reality for Chinese foreign focused media in the South African case. Wasserman conducted analyses based on the coverage, norms and practices, Chinese media as original source of African media, and found out that Chinese media is neither credible enough to be sources nor localised enough to really root its agenda into the ground in African societies (2015: 11). He then reached the conclusion that 'although Chinese media maybe a potentially useful vehicle to disseminate Chinese perspectives to global audiences, the messages carried by these media cannot be assumed to have a direct effect on local

audiences' (2015: 11).

The dilemmas faced by the soft power studies of China's state media can be concluded in what Sergio Grassi summarized in his report on China's media in Africa:

'So far, China cannot offer any really attractive alternatives to hip-pop music, Hollywood films and European football. Unsurprisingly, this affects the acceptance of Chinese newscasts. A major disadvantage for Chinese foreign media is the negative image of the Chinese domestic media landscape ... China's media offensive in Africa illustrates that there are limits to what soft power can achieve when it is driven solely by actors. According to Joseph Nye, genuine soft power comes from civil society, the private sector and individuals, not from governments: 'the best prop-agenda is no propaganda' (2014: 6).

While too many people are focusing on the impact of the unprecedented economic growth of China to the rest of the world, such as what Joshua Kurlantzick described the economic diplomacy of China as charm offensive (2007), few are admitting the admitting the realistic problems faced by the wish of China to promote an alternative model either for mass media communication and for economic development. Like what Shi Anbi illustrates in his paper, 'Chinese Dream' can replace the global domination of 'American dream', and thus charm offensive of China should be replaced by charm defensive (2015). Therefore, in the field of international media studies, it is far too early (or never appropriate) to deploy the soft power and propaganda theories which are based on the examples of developed countries to the developing country of China and its external media system.

#### **2.4 China-Africa Journalism Studies**

Along with the exponential growth of China's global influence and its increased discourse in Africa, the presence of Chinese media in Africa and its different approach to covering the continent is being increasingly noticed by international news organizations and

scholars of international media. Many Chinese media in Africa, such as *China Daily*, China Radio International, Xinhua News Agency (Xin, 2009) and CCTV, have become the key research subjects in the field China-Africa media studies. The positive tone of these state media on reporting the affairs in Africa has drawn huge attention from global academia. An increasing number of research projects have been and are being conducted to fill the existing void in the field of media studies.

The positive reporting style has been drawing attentions along with the expansion of Chinese media into African market. Igonion Gagliardone brought up the question about the Chinese style of reporting in his article 'China as a Persuader: CCTV Africa's first steps in the African mediasphere' asking whether it is political rhetoric or reality (2015: 32). He accurately predicted that 'Positive reporting may challenge certain established notions of the Western liberal model of journalism in the medium to long term' (2015: 33). No long after Gagliardone's prediction, a new trend in the China-Africa journalism studies arises. The terminology of 'positive reporting style' of Chinese media is replaced by a much more professional term – 'constructive journalism' – a term originated from a particular approach of journalistic practices based on the critique of negative reporting style first appeared in Danish Broadcasting Corporation in 2007.

Chinese scholar Zhang Yanqiu and South Africa-based Kenyan scholar Bob Wekesa first deployed this approach of Chinese journalism in a paper titled 'Live, Talk, Faces: An Analysis of CCTV's Adaption to the African Media Market' (2014), and Zhang developed this conception in her report presented at the international conference of 'China and Africa Media, Communications and Public Diplomacy' (2014). Zhang wrote in that report the constructive journalistic practices of Chinese media in Africa, especially reflected in the discourse of CCTV-Africa, are the symbol of a new wave of New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) (2014: 2-3). She further unfolded her illustration on this innovative conception in the co-written article 'A New Representation of Africa? The Use of Constructive Journalism in the Narration of Ebola by *China Daily* and BBC' published in 2016. Zhang and Matingwina claimed that constructive journalism not only

'contribute to positive change in the lives of media users' but also 'moves further to place the emphasis on possible solutions' (2016: 23-24). They believe that not only the constructive journalistic approach is deployed by Chinese media in Africa but also gradually being adopted by Western media such as BBC (2016: 33), which, they argued is 'the next mega trend' of international journalism (2016: 23). Although such narrative is arousing wide and various discussions on the essence of Chinese journalism, there have not been much theoretically mature and methodologically rigorous work contributing to the topic of constructive journalism of Chinese media in Africa.

How China is presented in the media by African media practitioners is another area of research of great importance. Chang Jiang and Ren Hailong's article examined 'how native cultural value influence African journalists' perceptions of China' (2015). Chang and Ren conducted in-depth interviews with local journalists in Uganda and examined a wide range of literature and references, and they concluded four major findings about the image of China in the eyes of local journalists from the collected data: 1. China as sharer, not predator; 2. Authoritarianism and dictatorship; 3. The Chinese who do not blend in; 4. Obedience in journalism practice (Chang and Ren: 2015: 6-10). Obviously, there is no consistent image about China in the discourse of local African journalists. In the article titled 'Framing of the Sino-Africa relationship in diasporic/pan-African News Magazines', the author Tokunbo Ojo examines the representation of China-Africa relations in the coverage of local African news magazines (2015). The frame analysis of the news in two local news magazines shows that the tone of different media is influenced both by its editorial traditions, such as 'Afrocentric journalism practices' or 'pan-Africa orientation', and the demographic features of its readership (2015: 14). Therefore, Ojo drew a similar conclusion with other researchers that concerning the 'multidimensional complexity of China's presence in Africa' (2015: 14).

## **2.5 Conclusion**

In addition to the literature reviewed in the sections above, there are also many other researchers and studies about the China-Africa dynamics discussing various topics



including peace and security (Alden *et al.*, 2018; Benabdallah, 2016; Saferworld, 2011), morality and culture (Chan, 2013), building infrastructure in Africa (Corkin *et al.*, 2008; Foster *et al.*, undated) and non-governmental organizations in Africa (Long and Chen, 2013). The future of China-Africa is destined to grow closer, and accordingly the related academic research is going to develop stronger as well. Nevertheless, there remain a lot of topics in the field of China-Africa studies which continue to be vastly understudied.

As we can see from the reviewed literature above, most media studies are focusing on the aspects of public diplomacy, soft power or journalism, and their theoretical foundations remains rather narrowly defined. Both public diplomacy and soft power studies are mostly based on realist international relationship theories, and journalism studies basically lack consistent or systematic theoretical paradigms. However, as the review in the section 2.1 shows there are rather diverse theoretical perspectives in the field of China-Africa political-economic research. The emerging studies of Yan and Sautman on the discourse of China in Africa are paving a new approach for China-Africa media studies to develop in innovative ways. Furthermore, as we can see in the section 2.3 and 2.4, very few researchers study how the media messages of Chinese media in Africa are received by the local audience. Therefore, for the purpose of advancing theoretical development and to enrich empirical materials, there is sufficient space for this research to contribute to this emerging field.

This research on China-Africa media studies is aimed to focus on the reception study of Chinese media in Africa from the theoretical perspective of critical political and economic studies. In order to establish a solid theoretical foundation for this research, it is necessary to systematically review the theoretical paradigms of international communication studies with a focus on the audience reception which is the main content of the following chapter.

### **Chapter 3 - Audience Studies in International Communication**

The origin of international communication studies as an established discipline of modern scholarship can be traced back to the two World Wars when the emerging new media of radio and then later television 'were demonstrated by their use for international propaganda as well as recognition of their potential for socio-economic development' (Thussu, 2006: 1). Generally speaking, the field of international communication studies 'is conventionally divided into three, and sometimes four, distinct phases' (Sparks, 2007: 3). And in this thesis, the history of international communication studies is divided into three main phases. Despite all the different names which have been given to categorize these phases, the most widely recognizable names of these three historical stages are: 'development/modernization paradigm', 'dependency/imperialism paradigm' and 'globalization paradigm'. It is the fact that these three phases 'do not fit perfectly together' as sometimes they theoretically and chronologically overlap and other times their topics are not very coherent, such as the different emphasis of the development paradigm and imperialism paradigm locally and globally (ibid: 4). But it is still necessary for us to review the linkage and shape of the intellectual history of international communication studies to forge a better understanding.

Instead of portraying a general panorama of the academic flow of these phases, this chapter puts a specific focus on the aspect of audience research of those different paradigms, and on how the theories and practices of audience studies have interacted and evolved following the change of the comprehensive background of international communication studies. It is generally agreed that audience research, along with many other topics of communication studies, is heavily influenced by the dualistic divergence of the media effect studies between the administrative studies in the United States and the reception studies of the Cultural Studies school in Europe (Barker, Mathijs and Turnbull, 2015). This literature review does not discuss that dualism but instead looks at and aims to contribute to audience research based on the 'increased reflexivity' of the dialectical relation between media and audience (Alasuutari, 1999: 9).

### 3.1 Audience Research in the Development/Modernization Paradigm

While the origins of the development/modernization paradigm lie in the two decades after the Second World War, theories of audience studies were developed to analyze the public effect of propaganda scientifically during both world wars (Ott and Mack, 2014; Cheng, M., 2011: 112) and were influenced by the model of the 'hypodermic needle' and 'bullet'. The 'hypodermic' model of the media 'was seen as having the power to 'inject' a repressive ideology directly into the consciousness of the masses' (Morley, 1980: 1). As Katz and Lazarsfeld noted, 'the image of the mass communication process entertained by researchers had been, firstly, one of 'an atomized mass' of millions of readers, listeners, and movie-goers, prepared to receive the message; and secondly ... every Message [was conceived of] as a direct and powerful stimulus to action which would elicit immediate response' (cited in *ibid*: 1). Accordingly, the audience was regarded as passive receivers of media messages. In the first three decades of the 20th century, the theoretical frame of mass media studies was embedded in that of social science such as psychology and sociology. The prevailing psychological theory, back then, was the 'stimulus-response' model (Guo, Q., 2009: 194). This model, 'single message → individual receiver → reaction', assumes that human beings are homogenous individuals who respond similarly to the same stimulus (McQuail, 1996: 338). Many established researchers of communication study, including Harold Lasswell, had been heavily influenced by this tendency. In his famous book *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, Lasswell wrote that '[p]ropaganda is likewise a passive and contributory weapon, whose chief function is to demolish the enemy's will to fight by intensifying depression, disillusionment and disagreement' (Lasswell, 1938: 214). By interpreting propaganda as the weapon, the power of mass communication was exaggerated to a point where the autonomy of audience was mostly neglected. In another of his widely cited articles *The Structure and Function of Communication in Society*, Lasswell brought up the well-known Five Ws communication model – 'who says what in which channel to whom with what effect' – which still pictures mass communication as one-dimensional indoctrination from media to public (Rogers, 2014: 206).

However, '[t]he decisive discarding of the hypodermic needle model resulted serendipitously from a classic study of the 1940 presidential election' (Rogers, 1983: 272). The publication of Lazarsfeld and his colleagues' research – *The People's Choice* – on American people's poll for the election of the president in 1940 further revealed the complexity of mass communication (1944). The limitation of media effect and the multi-layered process of information flow had been discovered through a series of researches (Rogers, 1962). New models were brought up one after another. Lazarsfeld's 'two-step flow of communication' model created the concept of 'opinion leader' who 'pass on what they read and hear to those of their every-day associates for whom they are influential' (Katz, 1957: 61). Later on, American scholar Rogers further replenished the one-dimensional model of mass communication in his book *Diffusion of Innovations* (1962) where he criticized the two-step flow model arguing that 'the flow of communication in a mass audience is far more complicated than two steps' (1983: 274). As shown in Figure 3.1, Rogers brought up a multi-layered communication flow model emphasizing the different individual influences between the different type of audience (ibid: 248-51).

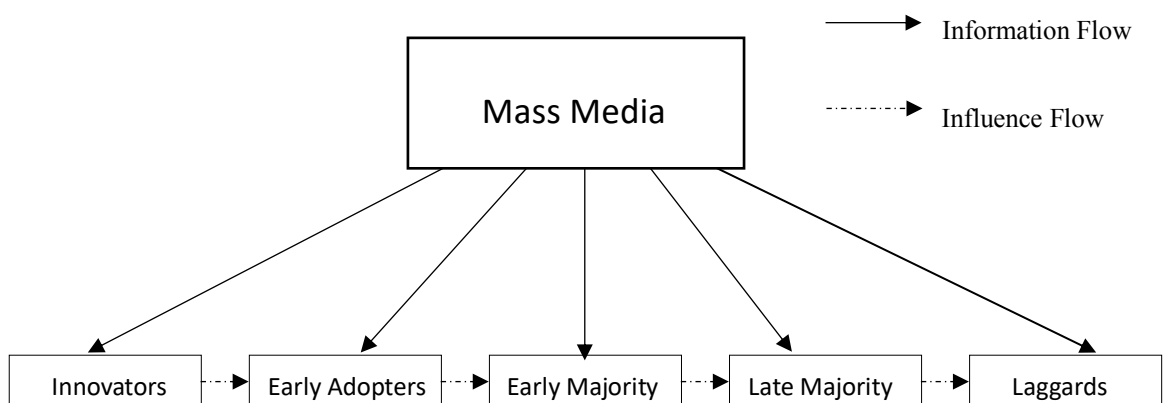


Figure 3.1 Diffusion of Innovations Model (Guo, 2009: 198)

Until the 1960s audience-research studies were mainly conducted by scholars or

professional researchers who were funded by commercial or governmental organizations to find out how to maximize the media effect on the audience. And most of the sociologists who conducted those researches on mass communication were of the Chicago school, and their academic intuitions were always 'administrative' rather than 'critical' (Lazarsfeld, 1941). Although the communication model had constantly been revised and updated, the mainstream theoretical paradigm on media flow remained one-dimensional. The focus of the one-dimensional model was always on 'how media works on audience' while neglecting the grander social background in which the individualities of the audience are embedded (Guo, 2009: 200). In the field of international communication study, the theoretical evolution of audience research had a similar experience.

After the end of the Second World War, the world was dominated in a bipolar structure by the two superpowers – the United States and the Soviet Union. Scientific development in America was like a 'science of coercion' due to the competitive Cold War background (Schiller, 1996: xiii). Driven by the 'antipathy to the state regulation and censorship of the media by its communist opponents and its use for propaganda', Western countries with rich media resources started a 'free flow' movement of global information: 'the 'free flow' doctrine was essentially a part of the liberal, free-market discourse that championed the rights of media proprietors to sell wherever and whatever they wished' (Thussu, 2006: 42). The political and economic purposes behind this movement were to spread Western democracy and to promote development in the underdeveloped countries. In the Middle East, efforts were made by the American government to strengthen and reinforce the expectation of the local public for social changes (Hintz, 2009: 58-60), which were based on the fact that many Westerners firmly believed that '[w]hat America is ... the modernizing Middle East seeks to become' (Lerner, 1958: 79). Mass communication, since then, was seen more than just the exchange of information but the vital tool to deliver modernity to the less Westernized areas of the world. As Schramm put it: 'the task of the mass media of information and the 'new media' of education is to speed and ease the long, slow social transformation required for

economic development, and, in particular, to speed and smooth the task of modernizing human resources behind the national effort' (Schramm, 1964: 27).

It was believed that social development starts from individual change, as Lerner put it: 'only insofar as individual persons can change their places in the world, their position in society, their self-image, does social change occur. Social change in this sense is the sum of mobilities acquired by individual persons' (cited in Sparks, 2007: 24). Based on his extensive studies on the Middle East countries, Lerner found out that individual mobility is closely interlinked with the expansion of urbanization which is decisive to the process of modernization. With sufficient urbanization (10% of the population calculated by Lerner) and popularized literacy as the premises, mass media can then be educational (Lerner, 1964: 63). As one Iranian youngster told Lerner, 'The movies are like a teacher to us, who tells us what to do and what not' (ibid: 54). The advantage of mass media, in terms of spreading modern ideas, is that 'the scale of the audience that mass media could produce meant that they could reach into the minds of vast numbers of people at the same time and for vastly less cost' (Sparks, 2007: 23). Lerner also asserted that social change is correlated not only with media system itself but also with 'changes in other key sector of the social system' (Lerner, 1964: 56). For example, Lerner noticed that literate people are more likely to consume media products and accept modern ideas (ibid: 58).

At the initial stage of international communication studies, the audience from the underdeveloped areas of the world was still put in the position of being a passive recipient that is longing for modern knowledge. The differentiation of the foreign audience was noticed at a very early stage: 'there was a characteristic pattern of the spread of new practices and that the early adopters would tend to come from elite groups' (Sparks, 2007: 26). It was expected that the scientific experts from developed countries could disseminate the modern knowledge through the educational system in underdeveloped countries and at the same time mass media could help to reinforce the influence.

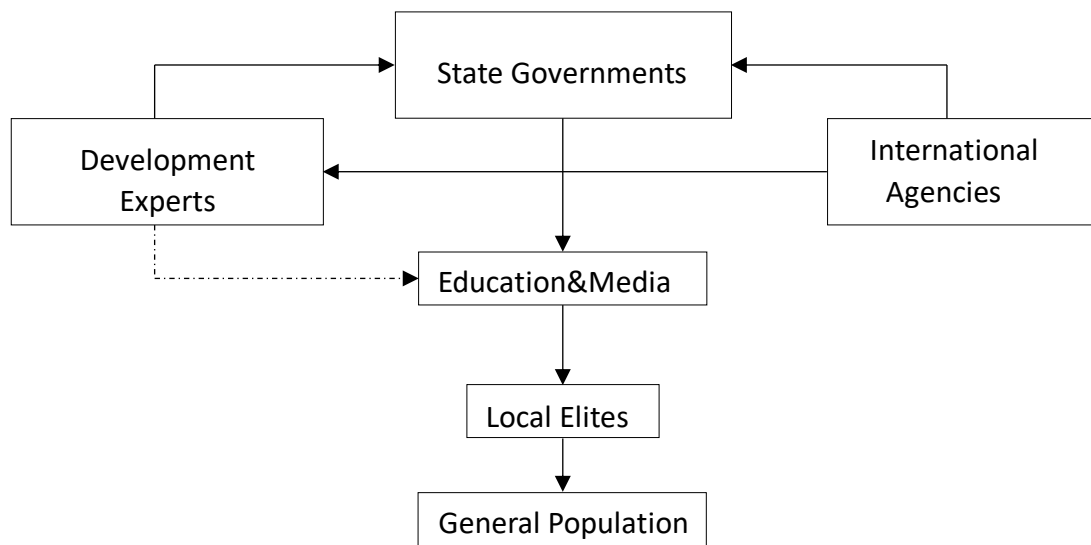


Figure 3.2 The Preliminary Development Communication Model (Sparks, 2007: 27)

As Thussu has noted, ‘this top-down approach to communications, a one-way flow of information from government or international development agencies via the mass media to Southern peasantry at the bottom, was generally seen as a panacea for the development of the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa’ (2006: 44). Many pieces of research on this subject were published and highly valued (notably, Lerner, 1958, 1963; Pye, 1963; Rogers, 1962, 1969; Schramm, 1964). As indicated in Figure 3.2, Sparks summarized the general process of this top-down communication model with six main actors which are ‘state governments,’ ‘international agencies,’ ‘development experts,’ ‘education and media,’ ‘local elites’ and ‘general populations’ (2007: 27). This kind of over-simplified international communication model (from North to South) assumed that (the) audience is of the same ideological framework and ‘accepted existing social relations as a given’ while neglected ‘the context within which it had been developed’ (ibid).

However, it was soon realized that the mutual trust between local elites and the general population was overestimated as in many societies these two groups of people have many conflicts of interest. Through his observation in the field, Schramm noticed that

there was a severe information gap between general public and local governments in many underdeveloped countries (Schramm, 1967:23). And it was the time when the local social structure was included in the whole picture. To deliver tailored messages and information to the intended audience, with the awareness of the social distance between different foreign audience, Rogers said that ‘one must know his audience’ (cited in Sparks, 2007: 33). Therefore, the autonomy of the audience was taken into account when the international communication model was being modified. As indicated in Figure 3.3, the participant of the intended audience was introduced to the model through the mechanism of ‘feedback’ between ‘development experts’ and the foreign audience: ‘the villagers’ needs, wishes, ideas and knowledge should enter into the transaction equally with those of the change agent’ (ibid: 34).

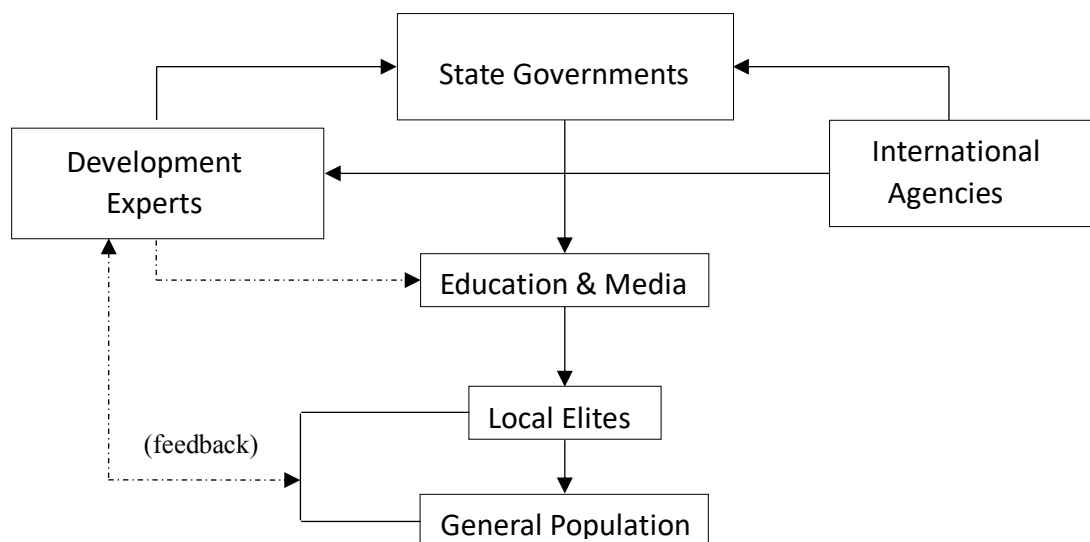


Figure 3.3 The Modified Development Communication Model (Sparks, 2007: 34)

Despite the constant modifications of the communication model and the great efforts made by many global organizations, the development/modernization paradigm of international communication in the 1960s and 1970s turned out to be a failure as ‘the behavioural alterations that were supposed to follow did not take place’ (Sparks, 2007: 39). According to the theoretical framework of the development/modernization paradigm, the nature of foreign audiences in the underdeveloped area was regarded as



the opposite of modern, and to modernize them was to brainwash them regardless of their original ideological framework and the social structure that they were identified with. On one hand, the 'dichotomy of modern versus traditional' is the internal logic flaw of the paradigm, on the other, the emphasis on the individual level of social change made the paradigm incapable of providing a comprehensive analysis based on the macro background of political-economic development (Thussu, 2006: 45).

In the field of global audience research, the mainstream of communication studies in the three decades after the Second World War focused on media effects, and most of the research was administrative rather than critical. In the early stage of communication studies from the 1930s to 1960s, the effect of media was 'credited with considerable power to shape opinion and belief, to change habits of life and to mould behaviour actively more or less according to the will of those who could control the media and their contents' (McQuail, 1996: 328). The role of the audience in this phase was seen as passive and irrelevant. As McQuail (1996: 286) noted:

'... Audience was large and widely dispersed; its members could not know each other; its composition of its size and heterogeneity; it was governed by no rules; it appeared not to act for itself but to be acted on from outside; and just as its own internal relations were impersonal, so were the relations between any source and the mass audience also necessarily impersonal. For reasons of its great scale, the mass media audience cannot 'talk back' to its sources, and the technology of mass media distribution is not usually arranged to make this technically possible. The communicative relationship involved is typically calculative as well as being impersonal. There is also often a large social distance between the mass media audience and a more powerful, expert or prestigious source and thus an asymmetric relationship ... This concept of the mass media is an 'ideal type' rather than a description of any reality ...'

This over-simplified definition of audience occupied the intellectual history of

international communication studies during nearly three decades after the Second World War from the 1940s to the early 1970s. In the paradigm of development/modernization, media audience research was focusing on the social functions of media effects instead of the local audience's interpretation of media content. It was based on an assumption that the developing world is in need of social change towards Western modernization, without questioning the legitimacy of modernization itself. The then administrative media research underpinned the uncritical tone of this paradigm. However, with further political, economic and military expansion of the United States in the 1970s as one of the two polar powers during the time of Cold War, concerns were aroused among scholars from the developed and developing worlds about whether the hegemonic expansion of one particular nation-state would create a homogenized global village. Therefore, a new paradigm of critical theories emerged in the following decade to challenge some of the assumptions of the development/modernization paradigm.

### **3.2 Audience Research in the Dependency/Imperialism Paradigm**

One major theorization of these concerns about global media and the cultural dominance of the United States was contributed by the Canadian scholar Dallas Smythe, who developed a new perspective on understanding the media industry and the essence of the media audience. 'Traditional behavioural research (and its popular handmaiden, market research),' argued Smythe, 'is simply tangential, self-interested, and irrelevant to the complex dialectical processes of contradictions which are working before our eyes' (Smythe, 1981: 22). Instead, basing his theoretical foundation on Marxism, Smythe advocated a critical view on 'the effects of communication agencies regarding the policies by which they are organized and operated' (Smythe, 1960: 564). 'The capitalist system', said Smythe in his influential book *Dependency Road*, 'like other social systems, has its unique agenda which claims the attention of its constituent institutions and population', and 'for virtually all the people, all the time, the agenda which directs their attention is that which comes to them from the mass media segment of the Consciousness Industry' (Smythe, 1981: 7).

Unlike other European or American scholars of critical media studies who were focusing on the abstract mechanism of mass media forging the mind of the public to maintain the dominant structure of the capitalist system, Smythe thought that 'mass media and its artifacts should no longer be regarded merely as ideological apparatus' (Jansen, 1983: 422). In the controversial article 'Communications: Blindspot of Western Marxism', Smythe wrote that 'the Western Marxist analyses have neglected the economic and political significance of mass communication systems' (Smythe, 1977: 1). The analysis of mass communication as the abstract and subjective process whose 'principle product of the mass media' is merely mental and idealist entities are not sufficient, because 'there is a material base of work which people must do under monopoly capitalism' (Smythe, 1981: 23). To fill up this blind spot of lacking an 'objective and realistic theory', Smythe deployed an economic approach to reconsider the role of the media audience. In his opinion, 'the principle product of the commercial mass media in monopoly capitalism' is not media content but rather 'audience power' (ibid: 26). And similar to any labour power, 'audience power is produced, sold, purchased and consumed', so 'it commands a price and is a commodity' (ibid: 26). The commodity of media audience is 'produced by mass media and priced and sold in oligopolistic markets to advertisers for whom they perform services which earn their keep' (ibid: 27-8). And in this way, the consciousness industry 'has become an integral part of the power structure of monopoly capitalism' (Jansen, 1983: 422).

Smythe also noticed that the commodification of audience in the media industry conditioned by the monopoly capitalism is not limited by geographical boundaries. In the introduction of *Dependency Road*, he claimed that Canada is a dependency of the United States which is 'the center of the core of the capitalist system', and communications institutions produce 'the necessary consciousness and ideology to seem to legitimate that dependency' (1982: ix). According to Smythe, 'every commodity is in a sense a teaching machine', which means that 'every commodity suggests priorities for allotment of consumer time and energy' (Jansen, 1983: 422). And because of the

popularity of American media products in Canada, Canadian audiences have been commodified to contribute to the American monopoly capitalism. In the 1980s, '70% of U.S. news in Canadian newspapers is written in the U.S. by Americans'; 'Two U.S. firms control all newsstand distribution of magazines in Canada' and 'nearly all of the \$200,000,000 box offices receipts from motion pictures shown in Canada are controlled by the U.S. film industry' (Jansen, 1982: 421). And also because of Canada's political, economic and military dependency on the United States, the late Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau said in 1968 that 'Canada is no more independent of the United States than is Poland of the Soviet Union' (Smythe, 1981: x).

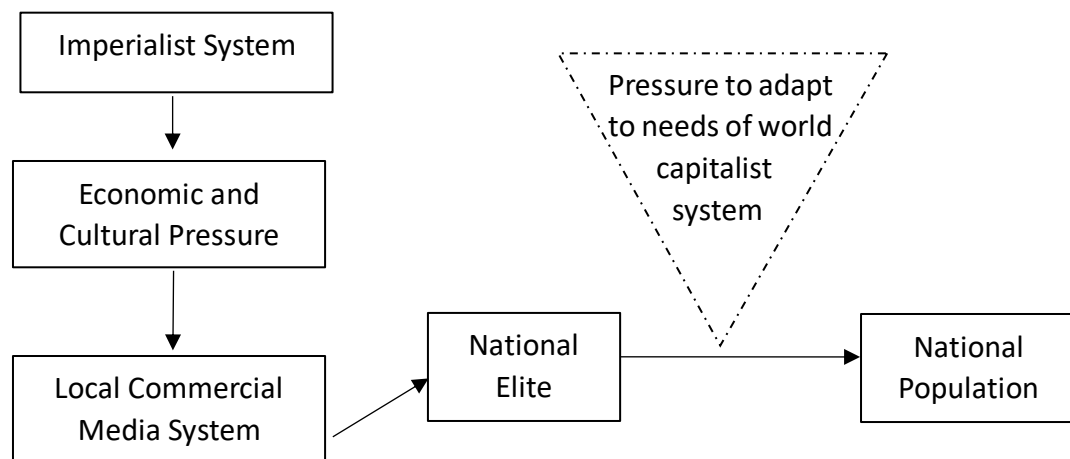


Figure 3.4 Imperialism, Local Elites and Developing Societies (Sparks, 2007: 95)

Such dependency applies to the developing world to much greater degree. In his book *Mass Communication and American Empire*, American scholar Herbert Schiller provided a systematic analysis on how the global 'electronic invasion' by U.S. government and private media is involved with the dynamics of the evolving world economic order'. In Schiller's opinion, the 'electronic invasion', which is of course rested upon its military force, facilitated America to imperialist expansion around the globe: 'what lends sophistication to the still-youthful American imperial structure is its dependence on a marriage of economics and electronics, which substitutes in part, although not entirely,

for the earlier, 'blood and iron' foundations of more primitive conquerors' (Schiller, 1970: 5). Equipped with the satellites and the advanced telecommunication techniques, the US government and its private media largely controlled the international broadcasting system in the 1970s and 1980s. And the international broadcasting of American media programmes facilitated 'the spread of American system, the commercial model of communication, to the international arena' (Schiller, 1970: 93).

Particularly in the developing regions such as Latin America, due to their economic dependency on developed countries and their transnational corporations, developing countries are more likely to be 'attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into' the 'modern world system' to promote 'the values and structures of the dominant centre of the system' (Schiller, 1976: 9). The local telecommunication infrastructures in developing societies 'were designed to favour disproportionately the interests of large companies, both domestic and foreign, and the needs of the ruling elite' (Sussman, 1981: 20-1; Hamelink, 1984: 80). As Figure 3.4 illustrates, media audiences in developing societies are not homogeneous but rather multi-layered. Instead of being 'brainwashed' by the direct effect from the imperialist media system, the public in the developing countries is usually influenced by the combination of the local elites and real-life pressures from the political-economic environment. The local elites are the group of people who are more likely to be attracted to the imperialist media system because 'they possessed the wealth to be amongst the first individual purchasers of television sets, and they were more likely to have the linguistic skills, not to mention literacy levels, that permitted them access to the print media. To them, imperialist media made a seductive proposal' (Sparks, 2007: 93). Moreover, according to Johan Galtung's structural theory of imperialism (discussed further in chapters 4 and 6), as shown in Figure 3.5, the centre class (elite) of the centre countries (developed countries) and the centre class (elite) of the peripheral countries (developing/underdeveloped countries) are connected through a 'harmony of interests' as they are both benefiting from the global capitalism system (Galtung, 1971). And the 'periphery-centre relationships are maintained and reinforced by information flows and through the reproduction of economic activities' (Thussu, 2006:

51). Therefore, similar to the development/modernization paradigm, the local elite class in the developing countries is regarded as a crucial part of the expansion of global capitalism.

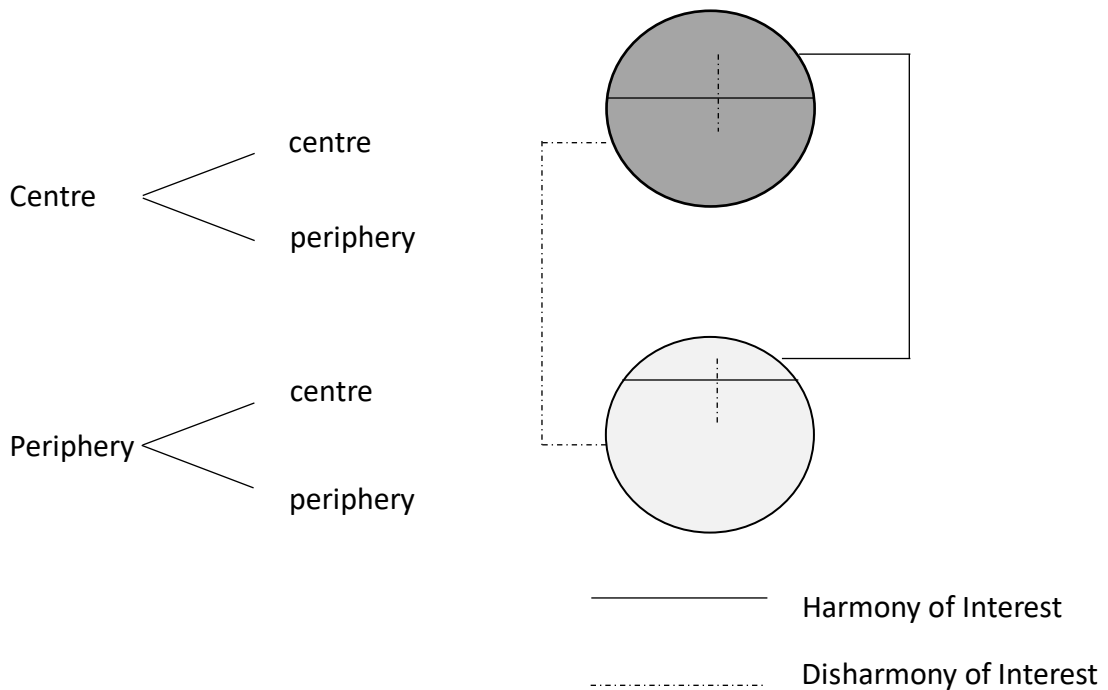


Figure 3.5 The Structural Theory of Imperialism (Galtung, 1971: 84)

Many researchers in the late 1970s and early 1980s used the critical approach of the cultural and media imperialism paradigm, such as Tunstall (1977), Mattelart (1979), Smythe (1980), Guback and Varis (1982), Thussu (2006) and Sparks (2007), among others. Those researchers applied this to a variety of topics, such as 'US cultural and media dominance as Hollywood's relationship with the European movie market (Guback, 1969); US television exports and influences in Latin America (Wells, 1972); the contribution of Disney comics in promoting capitalist values (Dorfman and Mattelart, 1975); the role of the advertising as an ideological instrument (Ewen, 1976; Mattelart, 1991)' and 'the UNESCO-supported research on international flow in television programmes (Nordenstreng and Varis, 1974; Varis, 1985). There was a common assumption made by those researchers that cultural imperialism was an integral ideological element in

mainstream media texts - of 'dazzling skyscrapers, expensive clothes and automobiles, lavish settings, the celebration in the narrative of power and wealth and so on' (Tomlinson, 2002: 46). However, there were not many analyses on how either the elite class or the public of developing countries interpret the media texts produced by the America-dominated international broadcasting system. As one commentator noted: 'There is an assumption that American TV imports do have an impact whenever and wherever they are shown, but actual investigation of this seldom occurs. Much of the evidence that is offered is merely anecdotal or circumstantial' (Lealand, 1984: 36).

In summary, the theory of global media flows in the age of the modernization/development paradigm and dependency/imperialism paradigm was top-down and North-to-South and the research mainly focused on the studies of media effects while ignoring the audience's interpretation of the media content. However, with the evolution of media technology and the growth of media market, the importance of the audience's participation in conditioning the content production of mass media was gradually realized. Although the theoretical development of media effects research has never ceased to advance, there emerged other focuses of media studies such as media use and audience reception in the following paradigm of globalization. (Further discussion of the theoretical frame of cultural and media imperialism paradigm can be found in chapter 4).

### **3.3 Audience Research in the Globalization Paradigm**

In the late 1960s, the field of audience studies witnessed a revival of the theoretical frame of 'uses and gratifications,' which originated in the 1940s, when a group of researchers conducted a series of studies to 'discover motives and selection patterns of audiences for the new mass media' (Ruggiero, 2000: 4). Those studies covered a wide range of topics from the habit of newspaper reading (Waples, Berelson and Bradshaw, 1940; Berelson, 1949) to the usage of radio programmes (Cantril and Allport, 1935; Herzog, 1940, 1944). However, as it did not manage to break through as a theory in the 1950s, this area of audience studies failed to develop (Guo, 2009: 182). In 1969, Denis

McQuail and colleagues' analysis of TV programmes heralded a new age of 'uses and gratifications' research, as their studies uncovered four genres of 'gratification' which are 'diversion', 'personal relation', 'personal identity' and 'surveillance' (McQuail, 1972). The theoretical frame of 'uses and gratifications' explores the subjective needs of the audience to explain the patterns of their media use. 'Media use,' wrote McQuail, 'is most suitably characterized as an interactive process, relating media content, individual needs, perceptions, roles and values and the social context in which a person is situated' (ibid: 144). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, 'uses and gratifications' research was largely functionalist in relation to its essential academic focus. Katz *et al* summarized this kind of research as an approach to be concerned with 'the social and psychological origins of needs, which generates expectations of the mass media or other sources which lead to differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in need gratifications and other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones' (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974: 20). In the middle of 1970s, the 'uses and gratifications' research became more concentrated on 'gratification sought' instead of 'media use' as a whole process (Rayburn, 1996, cited in Ruggiero, 2000: 6). Much research focused on the psychological motives of the audience, whose media use and other behaviours are probably the consequences influenced by their social environment (Greenberg, 1974; Lometti *et al.*, 1977; Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1979; Rosengren, 1974).

In response, some scholars, such as McLeod, Bybee and Durall (1982), later clarified the difference between 'gratifications sought' and 'gratifications received' as 'two different conceptual entities that deserve independent treatment in any future U&G research' (Ruggiero, 2000: 7). Despite the proceeding development of the 'uses and gratifications' paradigm, as administrative research, it is still accused of 'ignoring the everyday social context' (Schrøder, 1999: 40). The same period saw the emergence of a new approach to audience research from the domain of Cultural Studies. In 1974, Stuart Hall published the well-known article *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*, which is regarded as the origin of audience reception studies. This new approach, which was 'historically preceded and later influenced by German reception theory developed in late



1960s literary criticism', 'carried on and readdressed the themes already raised in what was known as the 'uses and gratifications' paradigm' (Alasuutari, 1999: 2).

The focus of media reception research on audience interpretation was seen as 'the build we have been hoping might arise between gratifications studies and cultural studies' (Katz, 1979: 75). As 'part of the wider debate within Marxism' (Gray, 1999: 27), the theoretical foundation of the encoding/decoding model was derived from the epistemology of Capital, which sees the industrial production of broadcasting as 'the 'labour process' in the discursive mode' (Hall, 2006: 164). Further, 'the production structures of television originate the television discourse' which constitutes an open system interacting with 'other discursive formations within the wider socio-cultural and political structure of which they are differentiated parts', and in this dialectical open system, the role of audience can be both the information 'source' and 'receiver' (ibid: 164-5). The premise is that the meaning of the television discourse can 'be transported into practice or consciousness (to acquire social use value or political effectivity)'. The encoded messages delivered by the discourse 'can have an 'effect' (however defined), satisfy a 'need' or to be put to a 'use', but it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded' (ibid: 165-6). The process of meaningful television discourse is shown in Figure 3.6. By integrating 'text and audience studies', 'Hall welcomed the opportunity for Cultural Studies to examine empirically how 'the degrees of 'understanding' and 'misunderstanding' in the communicative exchange – depend on the degrees of symmetry/asymmetry (relations of equivalence) established between the positions of the 'personifications', encoder/producer and decoder/receiver'' (Hall, 1980: 131).

The emergence of the encoding/decoding model, as it is widely believed, 'forms the start point for many accounts of the move into the "active audience"' (Gray, 1999: 26). It 'moves away from a behaviouristic stimulus-response model to an interpretive framework, where all effects depend on an interpretation of media messages' (Alasuutari, 1999: 3). Hall argued that the autonomy of a media audience, as the

individual members of society, is of great significance to ‘how social ideas arise’ (Hall, 1983: 29). Because of their participation in signifying the media and social discourse, the audience is no longer regarded as the passive recipients of media flow but rather an indispensable part of the flow itself. The case of the populist Thatcherism in the 1970s analyzed by Hall was supportive of the theory of ‘active audience’. Hall argued that the ‘swing to the Right’ in the political atmosphere in Britain beginning in the late 1970s was not a reflection of economic crisis but the ‘response’ to crisis, and this political and economic change formed ‘a new balance of forces, the emergence of new elements, the attempt to put together a new ‘historical bloc’ ... a profound restructuring of the state and the ideological discourses which construct the crisis and represent it as it is ‘lived’ as a practical reality ...’ (Hall, 1979: 15).

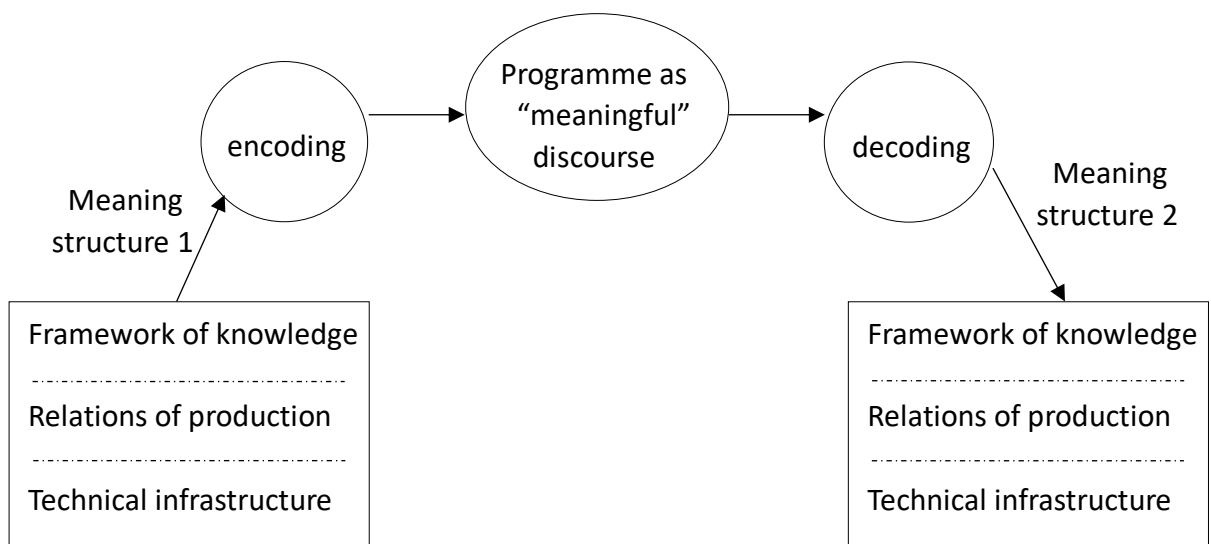


Figure 3.6 The Encoding/Decoding Model (Hall, 2006: 165)

The ideological manifestation of the ‘moving right show’ was the populist Thatcherism, which was embedded in the British popular culture (Browne and Kreiser, 2009: 152-154). Audience or the British public’s acceptance of populist Thatcherism is not based on the dualism of audience as the recipient and media as the ideological dominant, and both

audience and media are embedded in the reality. Therefore, Hall's new model 'shift[s] attention away from an exclusive focus on the ideological and institutional determinants of media texts towards including a role for a possibly active, but hitherto 'disappearing', audience' (Fejes, cited in Livingstone, 2008: 3). Further, the model also 'signals the move from the over-determination of the dominant ideology thesis to the more complex notion suggested by Gramsci's hegemony model' (Gray, 1999: 27).

It was realized by Hall and many other scholars of reception analysis that the audience's interpretation of media content is not an independent process excluded from the outside social structure, and the patterns of audience's interaction with mass media are far more diverse and dynamic. On how the audiences decode the encoded media messages, Hall developed four positions: '1) dominant or hegemonic code: connotative level of the messages are decoded in term of the dominant or preferred meanings; 2) Professional code: what the professional broadcasters employ when transmitting a message which has already been signified in a hegemonic manner; 3) Negotiated code: a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements; 4) Oppositional code: a viewer perfectly understand both the literal and connotative inflection is given to an event but determines to decode the messages in a globally contrary way' (Allassutari, 1999: 4). The oppositional interpretation code gave rise to 'a focus on the resistant audiences, as part of the questioning of such hegemonic theories as the dominant ideology thesis (Abersrombie, *et al.*, 1980), the cultural imperialism thesis (Hallin, 1996) and the political economy approach (Murdock, 1989)' (Livingstone, 2008: 3).

In the 1980s, an increasing number of audience researches were conducted to testify against the existence of media/cultural imperialism in the formation of people's mindsets. The publication of Ien Ang's research on Dutch audience's reception on the American TV soap *Dallas*, which was regarded as the 'byword for cultural imperialism in the 1980s' (Tomlinson, 2002: 45), revealed an astonishing result. Ang's research showed that 'an opposing 'anti-intellectual' ideological discourse of 'populism' may allow the *Dallas* fan to refuse the ideology of mass culture as elitist and paternalist, and to insist

on their right to their pleasure without cultural 'guilt' (Ang, 1985: 113). Although the informal methodology was questioned, Ang's research triggered many media researchers' curiosities to dig into the audience's interpretation of media content. Katz and Liebes also conducted a more formal and carefully designed audience research on *Dallas* (1985). The analysis based on fifty focus group interviews conducted by Katz and Liebes had a similar conclusion to that of Ang's: 'audiences are more active and critical, their responses more complex and reflective, and their cultural values more resistant to manipulation and 'invasion' that many critical media theorists have assumed' (Tomlinson, 2002: 50).

The deconstruction on the cultural/media imperialism paradigm was also facilitated by the political and intellectual shift as 'part of a much broader retreat of leftist ideas and movements during the 1980s' (Sparks, 2007: 126). With the rapid growth of transnational companies facilitated by the global wave of economic neoliberalism, many believed that 'there is emerging a world society in which the state is less and less a significant actor at all levels, the economic, the political, the cultural and so on' (Beck, 2000: 4). And along with the economic globalization, there was also a growing benign belief that 'a new 'global consciousness' was emerging, as well as a physical compression of the world, in which cultures become 'relativized' to each other, not unified or centralized, asserting that globalization involves 'the development of something like a global culture' (Thussu, 2006: 61). And the emergence of the 'narrative transparency' theory, which can be defined as a 'textual apparatus that allows audiences to project their indigenous values, beliefs, and rituals into imported media' (Olson, 1999: 5), further dismantled the discourse of cultural imperialism. It is believed that 'a cross-cultural understanding of the text may take place because the audience interprets a foreign text using their own cultural beliefs and values' (Chitnis *et al.*, 2006: 133).

However, the globalization paradigm was being heavily scrutinized by many critical scholars as the current reality did not reflect the assumptions of the paradigm (Robinson, 2005; Sparks, 2007; Fuchs, 2010a). To systematically analyze the limits of the paradigm,

Sparks provided data, such as the 'market share of global media products' and 'comparison of the scale of major economies', to get to the conclusion that 'the problem with globalization [paradigm] is ... that ... it directs attention to certain phenomena and neglects others' (2007: 149-88). It was argued that the idea of 'globalization' was 'a blatant ideology evoked by ruling groups to justify capitalist globalization policies' (Robinson, 2011: 12). Although many optimists believing in 'a growing collective awareness or consciousness of the world as a shared social space' which implies 'increasing freedom and equality', 'we [still] live in a world of global inequality' (Fuchs, 2010a: 216). Contrary to the wish that the dominant global structure is disappearing, the globalization of capitalism is bringing up a new wave of hegemonic dominance both economically and ideologically. And in this new wave, the emergence of a global ruling class or transnational capitalist class is going to replace the actors of nation-states due to the stateless tendency of the global economy (Robinson and Harris, 2000).

Furthermore, in the digital age, audiences or users of global social media are still being exploited as free labour in relation to producing profitable media content (Fuchs, 2015), which echoes the illustration of audience commodity made by Dallas Smythe in the 1960s. Apart from being exploited in the production relation of the capitalist media system, media audiences, though active indeed, are not thoroughly immune to the ideological influence of mass media. As a series of audience research conducted by the Glasgow Media Group show, there still exists a strong and powerful influence of media. And the narrative transparency theory, which is based on Hall's 'oppositional code' model assuming that audiences can 'create their own meanings', is actually against the theoretical origin of reception studies for that the 'polysemic texts' of media content noticed by Hall does not mean 'pluralist interpretation' but rather the 'preferred ideology' encoded in the programme which can be well 'fit' and be accepted' (Morley, 1980: 159).

Overall, especially after the global financial crisis in 2008, many scholars are starting to revisit and to revise the imperialism paradigm, detecting imperial ideological elements

within the globalization discourses.

### **3.4 A New Paradigm of Critical Audience Research in International Communication**

It is interesting to notice that many academic books or chapters on the subject of reviewing the paradigms of a certain aspect of media studies always end with a chapter or section looking forwards 'a new paradigm' (Alasuutari, 1999; Livingstone, 2003; Sparks, 2007; Hardy, 2014). There have been many discussions on what the new paradigm of audience research is supposed to be (Alasuutari, 1999; Livingstone, 2003), and many on that of international communication studies (Sparks, 2007), but few discussions on which direction the transnational audience research is supposed to advance. This section is going to discuss the latest trends of the transnational audience research of international communication which are key to the formation of the new paradigm of audience studies of international communication.

As reviewed in the above sections, audience research within the globalization paradigm has improved methodologically, with the development of reception studies and digital labour studies. However, it is still facing the dilemma of the dualistic divergence between political-economic media studies and Cultural Studies. There seem to be some unspoken intellectual barriers, such as 'the absurd notion that the study of media entertainment is separate from the study of political communication' (Curran, 2010, cited in Curran, 2014: xix). As introduced in Section 3.2, audience research in political-economic media studies focuses mainly on the role of audience, either as the commodity of media industry being consumed by advertisers (Smythe, 1960) or the labour being exploited by the transnational media conglomerates (Fuchs, 2015). As introduced in Section 3.3, the reception research of Cultural Studies, based on the theoretical foundation of 'encoding/decoding', focuses on the connection between the audience's ideology and linguistic texts of media content (Hall, 1974). Therefore, there appears to be a gap of academic practices between the two approaches, as Fuchs put it:

'There are on the one hand critical discourse analysts who analyze ideology as texts,

without tending to think about the circumstances that ideology is produced by people working in specific contexts under specific conditions (in marketing PR) agencies, consultancies, media organizations, press agencies (etc.). On the other hand, the sociology of cultural labour tends to analyze working conditions of cultural workers without thinking about the ideological effects that many cultural products tend to have under capitalist conditions, how ideology influences work, and the economy in general. It is, therefore, important to theorize the relationship of work on the one hand and culture and ideology on the other hand' (Fuchs, 2015: 54).

Despite their terminological, methodological even epistemological differences, 'both media political-economy and Cultural Studies have much to contribute to each other' (Curran, 2014: xix). And the merger of these two approaches can be noticed in the development of reception analysis in Cultural Studies. Influenced by anthropological studies, the methodology of reception research in Cultural Studies experienced an 'ethnographical turn' in the 1980s. The 'audience ethnography' paradigm of reception studies concentrates on the usage of media in the audience's daily life but 'one does not try to explain a reception of a programme by probing into an 'interpretive community'' (Fish, 1979, cited in Alasuutari, 1999: 5). The emphasis of this paradigm is more on depicting the 'field' than on the audience's reception of media content. The ethnographic approach mostly focuses on the patterns of audience's consumption of media texts through qualitative contextual description (Silverstone, 1990). However, many scholars argued that audiences should not be excluded from the media discourse, as 'media audiences are shifting constellations, located within varying multiple discourses which are never entirely outside of the media discourse themselves' (Grossberg, 1988: 386). Therefore, the new paradigm of reception studies advocates a return from 'field' to 'media,' from 'media consumption' to 'audience interpretation.' However, different from the uses and gratifications paradigm, the new agenda pays more attention to the sociology of the media system than to the psychology of audience themselves. As Alasuutari summarized, in the new approach of constructive reception

studies:

‘One does not necessarily abandon ethnographic case studies of audiences or analyses of individual programmes, but the main focus is not restricted to finding out about the reception or ‘reading’ of a programme by a particular audience. Rather, the objective is to get a grasp of our contemporary ‘media culture’, particularly as it can be seen in the role of the media in everyday life, both as a topic and as an activity structured by and structuring the discourses within which it is discussed’ (Alasuutari, 1999: 6).

To put the audience back into the bigger picture of contemporary culture is to reconsider the dialectical intercourse between the audience and media discourse conditioned by the social-economic structure. This review once again draws people’s attention on the formation of audience’s ideology which has been neglected in the field of media studies (Downey, Titley, and Toynbee, 2014: 2). In the increasing wave of the globalized media industry, it is clear that the hegemonic power of the media is still very influential. There is evidence

‘... emerging in the Middle East about the important role of media PR in the “Project for the New American Century” now installed at the center of American foreign policy by the “neo-conservatives” in the White House – including the importance of American government-funded propaganda channels such as *al-Hurra* even if, again, its viewers do not always consume and interpret it in the ways that the U.S. government would wish’ (Morley, 2006: 105).

Accordingly, an increasing number of researchers are discussing the role of the transnational social media, such as Twitter and Facebook which originated in the US, in the revolutions in the Middle East (Gerbaudo, 2012; Howard, *et al.*, 2011; Khondker, 2011). And the globalization of transnational media content makes people rethink what the ‘active audience’ actually means. It has been argued that the ideal model of the



global 'public sphere' is unlikely to happen because of the fact that the global media industry is closely interlinked to the global political-economic structure, and it is impossible for the media to operate impartially and fairly when the bigger picture of global reality is still suffering from political-economic hierarchy (Sparks, 2004: 145). No matter how transparent the narratives of media are theoretically supposed to be, or how active the local audiences really are, 'it is still mainly North American programmes that people are busily 'reinterpreting' (Morley, 2006: 105). And even though the new global powers are rising, such as BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (Nordenstreng, and Thusu, 2015), the model of the growth of their hegemonic power has been found surprisingly similar to that of the dominant Western countries in terms of political and economic coercion facilitated by the soft power of transnational media (Bond and Garcia, 2015).

Accordingly, there is a trend in international communication studies to revisit the cultural imperialism paradigm (Fuchs, 2010b; Sparks, 2012; Nordenstreng, 2013). As Morley put it, 'the fact that Schiller may have been wrong about how audiences consume media does not mean that he was wrong about everything else as well' (Morley, 1994, cited in Morley, 2006: 105). However, as many researchers have noticed, the content of the cultural imperialism paradigm is not entirely applicable in some Asian countries (Chadha and Kavoori, 2000). And with the growing dynamic of the global political-economic structure, more studies are expected to be focused on the emerging power of such groupings as BRICS. Theoretically, there are still some doubts about the paradigm which need to be clarified (Sparks, 2007: 214-5). In the next chapter an attempt is made to revisit and re-formulate the cultural imperialism paradigm in the age of globalization.

## **Chapter 4 - The Cultural Imperialism Paradigm**

As one of the most important paradigms in the field of international communication studies, the 'imperialism' paradigm, based on the unequal flows of global media, is still applicable and instructive for the issues confronting contemporary global communication. As far as this thesis is concerned, understanding the nature of the political-economic structure behind the news flows from China to African audiences is essential to answering the main research questions. However, although the theories of the 'imperialism' paradigm are the theoretical foundation of this research, aspects of this paradigm remain problematic. Therefore, before the detailed case study on the question of Sino-African communication, this chapter reviews this paradigm and its problems, from the perspective of its history, theoretical origin and terminology.

### **4.1 Cultural and Media Imperialism Paradigm**

The 1960s saw surges of anti-capitalist action taking many forms, mostly manifested in the global leftist students' revolutionary movements globally, and these had a fundamental link with the wave of global de-colonization (spurred by the 'Bandung Conference' organized by developing countries in Indonesia in 1955 to signal 'Third World solidarity' and as precursor for the Non-Aligned movement) and the revival of the New Leftism in the 1950s 'in response to the Suez and Hungary crisis in 1956 and ... Nuclear Disarmament' (Dworkin, 1997: 45). It is not surprising then that the emergence of the 'imperialism' paradigm in the field of international communication studies originated at this time, based on a Leninist approach that was articulated in his book, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, which summarized and revised the imperialism theories developed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by British economist John Hobson and Austrian Marxist Rudolf Hilferding (Lenin, 1917/1999).

In the following decades, the 'imperialism' paradigm in the field of international communication studies went in and out of favour, according to the political context. After the end of the Cold War, in the late 1980s, the 'imperialism' paradigm was

overtaken by the 'globalization' paradigm, which was optimistic about cultural and democratic progress along with the expansion of global capitalism, such as the new idea of 'Empire' developed by Antonio Negri and Micheal Hardt 'to define the new global form of sovereignty, and what they termed 'the multitude', as a 'living alternative that grows within Empire', a type of transnational network of counter-resistance, having the potential to bring global democratization' (Hardt and Negri, 2000, 2004, cited in Thussu, 2006: 64-5).

In contrast to the initial optimism of the theories of globalization, the evidence is more pessimistic. According to journalistic reports, the statistics in 2014 showed that 'the wealthiest 1% will soon own more than the rest of the world's population' (BBC, 2015). And in the field of international communication, besides the worrying fact that the US is still the dominant global exporter of media products, the emerging indigenous and regional cultural hegemonies, such as Russianization in Eurasia or Sinicization in Eastern Asia, are also rather problematic (Appadurai, 1990; Thussu, 2007).

However, the theories that the 'imperialism' paradigm was based on in the 1960s and 1970s, such as dependency theory or imperialism theory, are now unable to thoroughly reflect the dilemmas being encountered today. Therefore, in order to connect theories with reality, it is important to revisit the 'imperialism' paradigm in this new global arena.

'Cultural Imperialism' and 'Media Imperialism' are two theories which are frequently used as the equivalents of the 'imperialism' paradigm. Both of these two conceptions are based on the new imperialism theories and the dependency theories with a slightly different focus on the research objects. In the book *Communication and Cultural Domination* written by Herbert Schiller (1976: 9) cultural imperialism was widely defined as 'the sum of the processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating center of the system'; while Media Imperialism generally

refers to 'the process by which modern communication media have operated to create, maintain and expand systems of domination and dependency on a world scale' (Fejes, 1981: 281). These two approaches of the 'imperialism' paradigm are theoretically interlinked, and 'it is difficult to see how one could theorize media imperialism without at least some concept of a wider cultural imperialism' (Sparks, 2007: 97), which is to say that the development of the 'Media Imperialism' approach is largely included in that of 'Cultural Imperialism'.

#### **4.1.1 Development of the 'Cultural Imperialism' Paradigm**

The theory of 'Cultural Imperialism' was originally developed by Herbert Schiller, in his book *Mass Communication and American Empire* (1970). In this book, Schiller conducted a thorough analysis based on American media institutions and transnational corporations in Europe, and his conclusion was that the expansion of the American media industry was to serve the imperialist purpose of the US to retain its dominant position in the global information flows. In the 1970s, Dallas Smythe also brought up the idea of a 'commodified audience'. Smythe argued that the real products of the capitalized media industry feeding on advertisements are not media content but the audience. The attention of the media audience is the product that the media industry produced and sold to the advertisers (1977). And in his classic book *Dependency Road: Communications, Capitalism, Consciousness and Canada*, he revealed the dependent relationship between Canada and America and claimed that Canada had become a cultural colony of the US under the impact of transnational corporations (1981). Besides the voices from North America, there were many scholars of political economy media studies in Europe who were also concerned with the imperialist phenomenon in the global media industry. Murdock and Golding accused the privatization of British culture industry of dispelling the public interest (Sussman, 1999: 86-87). British media sociologist Jeremy Tunstall wrote a classic book *The Media are American* using as the theoretical frame the 'imperialism' paradigm (1977). French scholar Mattelart conducted much research into Latin America which contributed to the mapping of the 'Cultural Imperialism' theory in the Third World (Mattelart, 1979, 1994, 2000) while

many other scholars have contributed significantly to the development of this paradigm (Boyd-Barrett, 1977, 2014; Lee, 1980; Smith, 1980).

Generally speaking, the formation of 'imperialism' paradigm, in fact, was the reflection of Western modernity's incapability to bring development and equality to the newly independent world after the Second World War, and the failure was interpreted and asserted in a structural way where developed countries like America deliberately created a dominant global system politically and economically, such as the America-centered international communication networks, in order to keep the underdeveloped world under control. Mass media, in this process, helped to form and to reinforce the dominant structure (Sparks, 2007: 81-103). This paradigm, different from the previous paradigms on the national level, was based on the 'emphasis on global structure, whereby it is precisely the international socio-political system that decisively determines the course of development within the sphere of each nation' (Nordenstreng and Schiller, 1979: 7).

The 'imperialism' paradigm became less prominent after the 1980s as post-modernist approaches tended to gain salience in media and communication studies. The paradigm was widely accused of 'being either over-simplistic or out of date' (Boyd-Barrett, 2014: 8). Scholars of Cultural Studies argued that the paradigm was unable to see through the myth of global cultural inequality because it was itself rooted in the Western-centered discourse (Tomlinson, 1991: 04). Others argued that it largely ignored the audiences (Sinclair, 1999; Straubhaar, 2007, among others).

#### **4.1.2 Decline of the 'Cultural Imperialism' Paradigm**

The decline of the 'imperialism' paradigm was mainly caused by two main reasons. The first is the impact of political reality: the failure of the 'New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)' campaign and the end of the Cold War dramatically weakened the opposing power, namely the Soviet Union and the Third World countries many of which were supported by the Soviet Union, to counter-balance the imperialist

ideology of Americanization (Sparks: 105-25); the second is its weakness on theoretical development: 'yet while at the empirical level there has been much progress dealing with the concerns of media imperialism, such progress has not been matched at the theoretical level' (Mosco and Herman, 1979; Subveri, 1979). The weakness of its theoretical development has at least two origins. One is that the imperialism' paradigm was too concentrated on the international level of media and cultural flow while neglecting the inner structure of individual nations and the role of their national elites (Thussu, 2006: 50; Sparks, 2007: 115). The other reason is the misplaced object of critique. 'The core of imperialism is a grossly coercive exercise of economic political and military power' (Sparks, 2007: 212), and it is the media organizations not the culture itself represented by the media content that has the power, more or less, to shape the mind of the audience. However, the terminology of cultural and media imperialism indicates that there exists a specific type of hegemonic culture which can conquer and homogenize other cultures. And the culture which was being heavily criticized in the decades when 'imperialism' paradigm prevailed was American culture. Ironically, the conception of American culture also seems a pseudo-proposition because, according to Schiller, the diversity of American cultures was also the victim of overwhelming commercialization: 'the failure to challenge commercial culture inside the USA meant that the outside world saw only a single 'American Culture'' (Schiller, 1970: 147).

Therefore, although there have been many efforts made constantly by the scholars who have a firm belief in the 'imperialism' paradigm (Schiller, 1991; Boyd-Barrett, 1998, 2006; McChesney and Schiller, 2003), the paradigm was increasingly marginalized in international communication scholarship. However, in the past decade, the world financial crisis that originated in the US and the rising threat posed by the terrorism are like a startling warning bell reminding people that the harmonious global age of post-capitalism has not yet come. Issues such as the wealth gap, inequality, hegemony and resistance are again on the global political agenda. Thus the 'imperialism' paradigm in various disciplines along with Marxism regained its importance. In the field of international communication studies, there has been a growing call to revisit the

'imperialism' paradigm (Fuchs, 2010a, 2010b; Sparks, 2012; Nordenstreng, 2013; Boyd-Barrett, 2014).

This second wave of 'imperialism' paradigm, so far, has some crucial characteristics that distinguish it from its predecessor: a) more complicated relations between centre and periphery countries and b) the emphasis on the dimension of political economy in the process of international communication. The first tendency is in the manifestation of the new emerging economies in the global era such as the BRICS with member countries of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and such groupings as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Such a situation of multipolar global economic powers, to some extent, recomposes the whole repertoire of the international communication. The other development in the political-economy approach of global media and culture flows is an important theoretical transformation for the whole field of international communication, which is to ground this within the frame of Marxist 'imperialism' theories. As Fuchs put it, 'media and information do play an important role in new imperialism, but they are subsumed under finance capital and the continued importance of fossil fuel, which is a resource that motivates imperialist warfare ... the imperialist character of the media within the new imperialism, but not of the existence of media imperialism' (2010a: 56).

Of course, scholars have different ideas about how to execute their intentions to revise the paradigm. Boyd-Barrett prefers to use the term 'media imperialism' instead of 'cultural imperialism', in order to 'focus on the political economy of the communications industries' (2014: 8). Sparks advocates a focus on the competitive relations and the resulting cultural exchanges between developed nation-states (2012: 291), and Fuchs suggests revisiting Marxism and Leninism to scrutinize the whole theoretical frame of 'imperialism' (2010b: 215). Despite their differences, they all have the common pursuit of reframing the 'imperialism' paradigm, arguing that the paradigm still retains a great deal of analytical and theoretical value. However, there is much work to be done to revise and revive the paradigm in order to make it suitable for contemporary discussions

on international communication. From the terminological point of view, the 'cultural imperialism' paradigm is constituted of at least two vital sub-theories which are 'culture' and 'imperialism'. Before we look into the development and arguments of 'cultural imperialism' paradigm in the field of international communication studies, it is important to have a clear idea about the content of these two vital concepts.

#### **4.2 'Culture'**

In the field of international communication studies, when scholars tried to explain the phenomenon of the proliferating popular cultural or media products of one or a few specific countries, they developed a set of theories about dominance and hegemony based on empirical researches (Boyd-Barrett, 1977; Burton and Franco 1978; Schiller, 1970; Smythe, 1981), which are summarized as the 'Cultural Imperialism Paradigm'. However, although the key notion in the paradigm, not many works has been done within the context of critical political and economic communication studies to provide a systematic and in-depth clarification about how exactly 'culture' is defined and used in this context. The British scholar of cultural studies, John Tomlinson, set out two general definitions of culture in the context of 'cultural imperialism': a) a sense of 'complex whole' of life and b) a sense of 'signifying practices' (2002: 6).

In the first, culture exists as a dimension representing a complex totality of life, 'culture permeated the whole social fabric and its role was so pre-eminent and determining that it might indeed be confused with life itself' (UNESCO, 1982: 8, cited in Tomlinson, 1991: 8-9). In this sense, the fear of cultural homogenization imposed by the 'imperial' nations and their cultural products, resulting in the dominance of one particular lifestyle, arose as one of the critical approaches of 'cultural imperialism' (Hamelink, 1983). This kind of substitution of culture as life, lacking analysis of the underlying mechanisms of the productive relations and social classes in the local context, reduces the critical approach of international communication studies to the realist and administrative international relationship studies (Melissen, 2005; Wang, 2011). Such distorted focus on the power competition between nation-states obscures the real problem of the dominant global



capitalist culture. Furthermore, along with the growth of anthropological studies in the field of media studies in the past few decades, the definition of culture in the field of cultural imperialism studies has become mixed up with that of 'culturalism' which is ontologically different from Marxism. 'Culturalism' refers to the idea that 'individuals are determined by their culture, that these cultures form closed, organic wholes, and that the individual is unable to leave his or her own culture but rather can only realize him or herself within it' (Eriksen and Stjernfelt, 2009). But to Marxist scholars, all human societies can be diagnosed by base and superstructure underpinned by human labour that is universal and cosmopolitan. Therefore, Paula Chakravartty and Yuezhi Zhao have advocated a 'Transcultural Political Economy' approach towards media studies to break such barriers of ontological differences (2008).

In the second definition, the circulation of culture as 'signifying practices' is closely interlinked with the process which generates discourses because of the semiotic interpretation of both from the context of the Cultural Studies about language (Hall, 1997; Fowler, 2003) and the Foucauldian theories about power (Foucault, 1981; Van Dijk, 1995, 2003). Though not many research projects have been carried out under the theoretical frame of the 'cultural imperialism' paradigm, there are a few scholars who have dedicated themselves to developing this unique perspective of linguistic imperialism. One of those is Robert Philipson and his well-known work *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992). In that research, Philipson tried to explain the dominant situation of English in Africa by analyzing the language policies made by the colonial governments and by investigating the real situation of linguistic usage in the daily life of African audiences (ibid). Different from the scholars of the 'cultural imperialism' paradigm who used the term 'culture' in its first sense, scholars like Philipson have demonstrated theories of culture from the linguistic angle. However, the lack of a political-economic perspective on the 'cultural imperialism' paradigm makes the illustration of the phenomenon of dominant culture very vulnerable when it is being criticized for being idealistic about the decisive power of culture alone. The irony is that such criticism is the very opposite to the essence of 'cultural imperialism'.

Raymond Williams developed a systematic theory about 'culture' within the frame of Marxism (Williams, 1977: 11-20), though the term 'culture' is believed to be as 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (Williams, 1983: 87). In the book *The Long Revolution*, Williams set out three definitions of the concept of 'culture': '[a] the 'ideal', in which culture is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values ... [b] the 'documentary', in which culture is the body of intellectual and imaginative work, in which, in a detailed way, human thought and experience are variously recorded ... [c] the 'social' definition of culture, in which culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour (Storey, 1998: 48). The 'social' definition of culture as the representation of a particular way of life implies a theoretical turn of Williams in the early 1960s from 'Reformism' to 'Marxism' (del Valle Alcal, 2010: 67).

The 1960s witnessed the emergence of 'Cultural Studies' fueled by new-leftism in Britain (Steele, 1997, cited in He L., 2010: 59). During the new wave of revisiting Marxism, many new-leftist intellectuals, such as Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson and Richard Hoggart, along with many academic journals, such as *The New Reasoner*, *University and Left Review* and *New Left Review*, contributed to the revision on the base and superstructure model of Marxism, which was later featured as 'Cultural Marxism' (He L., 2010: 59). 'Cultural Marxism' redefined the term 'culture' as something ordinary rather than elitist and claimed its attribute of being a material existence (Dworkin, 1997). In the context of 'Cultural Marxism', the term 'culture' does not represent the idealist metaphysic that is opposed to materialism. 'Culture' was then no longer equal to the superstructure of human mind, it is believed that 'culture', as the complex sum of life itself, is decisive in the process of shaping and forming the state of human societies (Shu, 2012). 'Culture', according to the interpretation by Williams, is rather a dialectic process of social practice harmonizing both the trajectories of idealism and materialism (Peng and Lü, 2011): 'to see the study of culture as the study of relations between elements in a whole way of

life ... to replace the formula of base and superstructure with the more active idea of a field of mutually if also unevenly determining forces' (Williams, 2005: 20).

As we can see from above, the redefinition of 'culture' by Williams and Cultural Studies in the 1960s contributed to the materialist dimension of the critique of cultural imperialism on the political and economic realities of global capitalism. However, with the changes of time and political realities, such essential critical attributes were neglected and the paradigm of cultural imperialism studies endangered by all kinds of misunderstandings, mainly on the contradiction between the idealism of the word 'culture' and the materialism of the term 'imperialism'. The contextual change of the word 'culture' is part of the reason why the theoretical frame of 'cultural imperialism' paradigm becomes problematic. When Williams introduced the concept of 'cultural materialism', the illustration of 'culture' as a material existence was to revise economic reductionism of a Marxism corrupted by Stalinism. However, in the contemporary world which is no longer 'haunted' by Stalinism and the radical movements of the secular Second International, the idealist revision of the superstructure/base model has become more than just modification but rather an inversion of the model. Such inversion brought the tendency of the 'ontology of culture' which endangers the fundamental epistemology of Marxism regarding 'matter as primary and consciousness as secondary'. The theoretical framework of such non-dialectical idealism is rather eclectic and tends to interpret the structure of human society as a sealed and closed system. However, such eclecticism does not help, if not obstruct, the development of critical and constructive perspective on the present capitalist world. On the contrary, it will lead to the illusionary thoughts of 'the end of history' (Fukuyama, 1989, 1992) or 'the end of ideology' (Bell, 1960, 1968). Therefore, before we move to the next chapter of arguing an alternative approach to rationalize this paradigm, the following sections are aimed to provide a systematic review on the dynamics within the theoretical frame of 'imperialism'.

### **4.3 Imperialism Studies**

At the end of the 19th century, the growth of capitalism drove a new phase of

international colonialism, which led to a redefinition of the concept of 'imperialism', primarily by Marxist scholars from a political-economy perspective. Therefore, although the origin of the vocabulary of 'imperialism' can be traced back hundreds of years when the European countries started to expand their territories and colonize other continents, the widely-accepted meaning of 'imperialism' in the contemporary context remains largely Marxist. The development of the 'imperialism' theory was in clear stages. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the revision of the term was driven by the global communist movement, the 'Second International'.

#### **4.3.1 Imperialism of the Second International**

A key political leader in the Second International, Rosa Luxemburg first published her classic book about imperialism – *The Accumulation of Capital* in 1913. In this book, along with another publication *Anti-Critique* (1921), which Luxemburg wrote to reply to her critics, she argued that 'capitalism cannot exist in a pure form, but only in conjunction with non-capitalist systems' and 'competitive pressures drive capitalist firms and capitalist states to trade with these 'outside' economies and ultimately to break them up' (Brewer, 2001: 58-9). And different from other Marxists who talked about 'imperialism' only from the perspective of power, politics and economy, her anthropological sensitivity also made her pay attention to the destructive consequence of 'imperialism' on the diversity of human cultures and civilizations (Le Blanc, 2010: 165). The importance of Luxemburg's revision on 'imperialism' remained undiscovered for a few years after her publication of *Accumulation of Capital*. However, there are critiques on her dualist analysis on the structures of 'capitalism' and 'pre-capitalism', which had an influence on the later scholars of 'Dependency', 'World-Systems' and New Imperialism, although the pre-capitalism was then replaced by underdeveloped capitalism (He, 2014).

Another critical and controversial figure in the Second International, Karl Kautsky also published a work on 'imperialism', one year after Luxemburg. In the article '*Ultra-Imperialism*' (1914) and also in the book '*The National State, the Imperialist State and*

*the Alliance of States'* (1963), Kautsky brought up the controversial idea of 'ultra-imperialism' claiming that 'imperialism' is not the externalization of financial capitalism but industrial capitalism, and 'imperialism' does not have to be a particular stage of capitalism although capitalism has different developmental phases. The conception of 'ultra-imperialism', according to Kautsky, refers to an ultimate stage of harmony and peace when the whole world is fully occupied by capitalism and every country is in alliance with each other. Kautsky was heavily accused, by Lenin and Nikolai Bukharin, for his reformist and dogmatic stance, and his positive tone about 'ultra-imperialism' was regarded as the theoretical excuse for the political expansion of Nazi Germany in Europe. However, Kautsky's economic interpretation of 'imperialism' as a relatively separate idea from 'colonialism' was rather inspirational for the proposition of 'capital imperialism' in the late 20th century (Fu, 2014).

Finally, the most influential work on the revision of 'imperialism', in the age of the Second International, has to be the pamphlet written by Lenin in 1916, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1999). Theoretically speaking, the content of the pamphlet 'is slight and derives from [Rudolf] Hilferding, [Nikolai] Bukharin and [John] Hobson' (Brewer, 2001: 116). However, because of its comprehensive and blended feature, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* can be rather representative for the mainstream views on 'imperialism' of the Second International. Lenin was greatly influenced by the previous theories on imperialism developed by the three theorists mentioned above. As a 'bourgeois reformist' economist, Hobson in his 1902 book *Imperialism: A Study* conducted a systematic analysis on the emergence of the domestic monopolistic phenomenon which leads to the consequence of imperialist expansion (Lenin, 1999: 25). In Hobson's opinion, the concentration and over-accumulation of capital within one capitalist country contribute to the crisis of under-consumption in the domestic market and will inevitably lead to the expansion of the country's capitalist market into the non-capitalist area of the world (Brewer, 1990: 73).

Hilferding, on the other hand, in his 1910 work *Finance Capital*, gave 'a very valuable

theoretical analysis of the ‘latest phase of capitalist development’” (Lenin, 1999: 33). The conception of ‘finance capital’ defined by Hilferding as the ‘banking capital invested in industry and controlling it either directly or indirectly’ (Ernest and Ernest, 1966), plays the crucial role in the process of one capitalist economy’s global expansion as the ‘finance capital’ decides the necessity of exploring the external markets for the domestic industries. In contrast, Bukharin brought up a new perspective from the angle of global level. He emphasized on the international competition between capitalist rivalries and analyzed the mechanism of how the domestic concentration of capital would influence such global competition (Brewer, 1990: 110-34). In summary, Lenin redefined ‘imperialism’ in terms of ‘monopoly capitalism’ (Lenin, 1999: 119): ‘The development of capitalism led to the formation of giant monopolies. The national borders are too narrow for the growth of these industries, and they are compelled to constantly acquire new markets, new sources of raw material, and new outlets for investment outside the ‘home’ nation’ (Jones, 2005).

#### **4.3.2 Dependency Theory**

The Dependency theory emerged in the late 1950s, alongside the process of decolonization in Africa and Asia, arising from the phenomenon of the dependency relationship between developed countries and underdeveloped countries. This theory was set out first by Hans Singer and then Raul Prebisch known as the ‘Prebisch-Singer Thesis’ and increasing attention was paid to it by various intellectual and public figures, especially in the developing world. In 1957, American Marxist economist Paul Baran published *The Political Economy of Growth* (1973), where he analyzed the then global economic situation from the angle of Marxist economics and aroused the interest in reviving the imperialism theories by saying that ‘There is hardly any need to stress that such independence and autonomy [of the underdeveloped countries] are little more than shame as long as the countries in question remain economic appendages of the advanced capitalist countries and as long as their governments depend for survival on the pleasure of their foreign patrons’ (Baran, 1973: 123). Baran’s Marxist point of view on the dominant global economy of America was soon picked up by the scholars from

the 'third world'. And in 1976, the establishment of *Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios* (ILET), 'whose principal research interest was the study of transnational media business', provided a new intellectual energy to the 'Dependency' theory (Thussu, 2007: 46). In summary, 'Dependency' theory has three critical arguments: 'a) the (capitalist) world system is divided into a centre and a periphery; b) the societies of the periphery are 'dependent', while those of the centre are not; c) dependency restricts or distorts development in the periphery in some harmful way' (Brewer, 2001: 196).

Generally speaking, there were three major traditions within the 'Dependency' paradigm. First was the structuralism tradition developed by the institution of Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) established in 1948. Its main scholars were Osvaldo Sunkel and Celso Furtado who focused on the structural inequality between Latin America and the US in terms of the unbalanced development of certain industries and technologies, and they believed that such structures of centre and periphery were inevitable, even indispensable for the development of human society as a whole (Yuan, 1990: 1-11). The second is the Marxist tradition developed by scholars such as Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin and Immanuel Wallerstein (who were also the main contributors to the 'world-systems' theory). Marxist scholars remained critical of the dominant structure of the global economy and radical ones such as Frank believed that the only political solution was the direct revolution against the capitalism because they saw the existence of capitalism as the core cause for all the underdevelopment and as long as capitalism exists the problem of underdevelopment would never be solved (Yan, 2003: 16-7). The third tradition was the stance between Structuralism and Marxism and is termed centrism in this research. Centrist scholars, such as Fernando Cardoso, Octavio Ianni and Florestan Fernandes, observed and interpreted the dependent phenomenon from the perspective of sociology. They disagreed with Marxists on the point that an underdeveloped area such as Latin America was being merely exploited and excluded by the global capitalist system. On the contrary, they believed that capitalism was happening in the underdeveloped area as well and they saw the structural dominance of global economy as something rather dynamic and open than closed and sealed

(Cardoso and Faletto, 1979).

The 'Dependency' theory was once the mainstream paradigm in the global academic world, especially in the Southern regions. But there were also many criticisms of it. In summary,

'Criticisms leveled against the dependency framework include allegations that it is nothing more than political propaganda, is tautological, and poorly conceptualized. Dependency is charged with being poorly defined, based on insufficient evidence, and inconclusive. Dependency theorists have also been charged with ignoring dependency relationships between socialist 'metropolises' and 'satellites'. Furthermore, although dependency is essentially grounded in the Marxist paradigm, noted scholars have criticized dependency for its inconsistency with Marx'. (Farmer, 1999: 25)

Among all those criticisms, there was one that was particularly fatal for the further development of this paradigm, arguing that it lacked a systematic analysis on the intra-structures of the dependency phenomenon (Roxborough, 1979). And it is because of its omission of 'the role of the national elites, especially in the developing world', the 'Dependency' paradigm failed to provide a constructive prescription for the social changes in the Third World (Thussu, 2007: 50).

#### **4.3.3 Structural Theory of Imperialism**

Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung published his highly regarded article about structural imperialism in 1971. In 'A Structural Theory of Imperialism', he conducted a systematic and comprehensive study on the issue of global dominance in almost every aspect, including economics, international relations, communication, science and technology, education and psychology (1971: 87). Galtung raised the idea of the two dimensions of imperialist structures as 'vertical' and 'feudal': 'the 'vertical' interaction principle maintains that relationships are asymmetrical; that the flow of power is from the more



developed state to the less developed state while the benefits of the system flow upwards from the less developed states to the centre states. The 'feudal' interaction principle states that there 'is interaction along the spokes, from the periphery to the centre hub; but not along the rim, from one periphery nation to another'" (ibid: 89). To constructively explain the 'vertical' interaction between centre and periphery, Galtung developed the unique intra-structural perspective by bringing up the conceptions of 'centre of the centre', 'periphery of the centre', 'centre of the periphery' and the 'periphery of the periphery'. Accordingly, he provided an intra-structural definition about 'Imperialism': '(1) there is harmony of interest between the centre in the Centre nation and the centre in the Periphery nation, (2) there is more disharmony of interest within the Periphery nation than within the Centre nations, (3) there is disharmony of interest between the periphery in the Centre nation and the periphery in the Periphery nation' (Galtung, 1971: 83). The first feature of Galtung's 'imperialism' is insightful on revealing the intra-structural connection between centre and periphery countries. And the visual look of this 'harmony of interest' is illustrated in Figure 3.5.

Galtung depicted three phases in the history of imperialism which are termed 'Colonialism', 'Neo-Colonialism' and 'Neo-neo-colonialism'. In the first phase of imperialism – 'colonialism', the form of such imperialism is 'occupation': '[centre of Periphery] physically consists of [centre of Centre] who engage in occupation'; in the second stage of 'Neo-Colonialism', which, Galtung argued, was the stage that the world was experiencing in the 1970s, the form of imperialism is 'organization': '[centre of Centre] interacts with [centre of Periphery] via the medium of international organizations'; finally, Galtung predicted that in the third stage of imperialism – 'Neo-neo-Colonialism', 'communication' will be the form: '[centre of Centre] interacts with [centre of Periphery] via international communication' (ibid: 94). Also, Galtung concluded that there are five types of imperialism which are 'economic', 'political', 'military', 'communication' and 'cultural' (ibid: 91). When illustrating the concept of 'communication imperialism', Galtung was specific on the issue of the agenda-setting function of international news flow: 'the core's definition of news will be reflected in the

news in the peripheral nation ... Information is transferred to the Southern elite in such a way that primary importance is attached to the same issues the developed world sees as important. The identity of interests between the centre of the centre and the centre of the periphery greatly influences the acceptance of an international agenda' (Thussu, 2007: 51).

The influence of the theory of 'structural imperialism' from the critical perspective of political economy, along with the article 'The Structure of Foreign News' co-written by Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboein in 1965, was largely seen in the field of international communication studies in research on the agenda-setting function of international news flow. Therefore, most of the criticisms were on the topic of international news studies. This structural paradigm was accused of being inadequate in terms of its empirical object 'since it is not at all clear what kind of social process in the real world is being uncovered by the analytic use of the news factors' (Hjavar, 2002: 94), and its methodology was questioned as well for lack of sufficient comparative cases of both extra-media and intra-media (Rosengren, 1974: 146). And, finally, it was criticized on the grounds that the theory was based more on hypothesis and assumptions rather than empirical analysis, which led to contradictory hypotheses based on the same empirical data, and such a method was 'unsuited for guiding research that aims at understanding the differences, variations, and historical developments in international news' (Hjavar, 2002: 95). In addition, this paradigm was also unable to depict the whole picture of the dynamic global system, for its dichotomy of centre and periphery obscures the interesting existence of the countries in between which were termed as 'Semi-periphery' in the world-systems theory. However, 'world-systems' theory fills the theoretical gap on the subject of 'Semi-periphery' countries.

#### **4.3.4 World-Systems Theory**

In the same period of time in the 1970s, there was another school of thought named 'World-systems' theory, which is sometimes regarded as the adaptation of 'Dependency' theory. Generally speaking, 'there are three major intellectual building blocks of world-

systems theory: the Annales School, Marxism, and dependency theory' (Martinez Vela, 2001: 2). As one of the key figures, Immanuel Wallerstein contributed greatly to the historical approach of 'world-systems' theory, under the influence of the Annales School mainly by Fernand Braudel (ibid: 3). The - methodological breakthroughs made by Wallerstein are its 'focus on geo-ecological regions as units of analysis ... attention to rural history, and reliance on empirical materials ...' (ibid: 3). The theoretical paradigm was also strongly influenced by the Marxist scholars from 'Dependency' theory tradition, such as Andre Gunder-Frank, Samir Amin and Giovanni Arrighi.

Gunder-Frank developed the idea of a 'metropolis - satellite' structure of the global capitalist system, within which the periphery countries are dependent on the centre ones for economic development, and the phenomenon is called 'the development of underdevelopment', for that the structure-setting of the development in the periphery is to remain the periphery countries in the position of periphery so the centre countries can be centre (Brewer, 2001: 164). Samir Amin further explained the mechanism – the accumulation of capital of the centre countries – behind unequal global development, and he argued that:

'...the pattern of international specialization is determined by absolute cost levels (not by comparative advantage, as Ricardo thought), that cost levels depend on productivity and on wages ... the centre developed capitalism earlier ... got a huge lead in productivity ... [when] wages were held down ... This established a pattern of unequal specialization ... After a certain stage of development, wages started to rise at the centre, while massive unemployment and the persistence of pre-capitalist modes of production held wages down in the periphery' (ibid: 183).

Giovanni Arrighi, known for the classic work on *Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia* (1970), on the primitive accumulation in tropical Africa - provided a supplement to the Marxist approach of 'world-systems' theory in explaining the economy of the underdeveloped

world (ibid: 241-5).

In summary, 'a world-system is what Wallerstein terms a 'world-economy', integrated through the market rather than a political centre, in which two or more regions are interdependent with respect to necessities like food, fuel, and protection, and two or more polities compete for domination without the emergence of one single center forever' (Goldfrank, 2000 cited in Martinez-Vela, 2001: 3). And the advancement of 'World-systems' theory compared to 'Dependency' theory lies in two aspects: a) one is its Marxist economic perspective on the intra-structural relation and the indigenous situation; b) the other is its refining structure of the global system as three tiers of states: 'the core, the semi-periphery and the periphery' (Brewer, 2001: 176). The recognition of the existence of 'semi-periphery' countries casts a light on the dynamic and diverse nature of the development of nation-states for that 'semi-periphery states acts as a buffer zone between core and periphery, and have a mix of the kinds of activities and institutions that exist on them' (Skocpol, 1977, cited in Martinez-Vela, 2001: 4).

#### **4.3.5 New Imperialism**

In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, discussions about 'imperialism' tended to rise once again. Such a tendency was mainly caused by the end of the Cold War. In the following decades, the free market neoliberalism promoted by the super power of the US became predominant. However, in the late 1990s and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the negative consequences of the neoliberalism of economics and politics started to emerge with such disastrous events as the South Eastern Asian economic crisis and extremism in the Middle East. And, accordingly, there were growing calls for revisiting 'imperialism' theories. A new political economy theory about the global flows of money and power was thus created, which is termed 'new imperialism' to distinguish it from, but also refers to the earlier Marxist theory of 'imperialism'.

Although the establishment of the 'new imperialism' theory was to respond to the reality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the embryonic form of 'new imperialism' was initially generated in

the 1950s when the world was still recovering from the horrors of the Second World War. In 1951, German scholar Hannah Arendt published one of her most prestigious books *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1973), in which she illustrated her idea about imperialism as the initial stage of totalitarianism. It is fair to say that Arendt was one of the earliest scholars who rediscovered and revived the value of Luxemburg's work on 'imperialism'. Thus, Arendt held a similar opinion towards 'imperialism' as a global capitalist system which is fed on the existence of non-capitalist systems, and both Arendt and Luxemburg believed that primitive accumulation happens not only at the beginning stage of capitalism but also throughout the whole process of the development of capitalism (Sun, 2007). One insightful point Arendt provided is that she saw Soviet Union and the US as the new empires in the post-war age, and she predicted a new wave of a global scramble for territory and resources (Arendt, 1982: XIV-XV). However, Arendt's illustration of 'imperialism' focused exclusively on nation-states and her concentration was mainly on European countries rather than the new economic powers such as the US. Therefore, her contribution to the Marxist theory of 'imperialism' was merely to revitalize Luxemburg rather than to bring up an innovative economic interpretation of the theory.

In the very beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, the publication of the book *'Empire'* (2000) by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt provoked fierce arguments about the topic of 'imperialism' in the contemporary world. Žižek even regarded this book as an effort made to reclaim the *The Communist Manifesto* in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (2001). In this book, Hardt and Negri describe the process of global capitalism 'as the transition from the nation-state to global Empire ... in which hybrid masses of scattered identities developed'. Within this global capitalist system, the sovereignty of nation-states is declining while the sovereignty in the new form of global Empire has actually increased as: 'Empire establishes no territory center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a decentered and de-territorializing apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers' (Hardt and Negri, 2000: xi-xiii). However, different from many other leftist thinkers 'who are struggling to limit the destructive powers of globalization and to rescue (what there is left to rescue) the

welfare state' (Žižek, 2001), Hardt and Negri hold a rather positive attitude towards the process of globalization: 'the passage to Empire and its processes of globalization offer new possibilities to the forces of liberation' (Hardt and Negri, 2000: xv). And they see the alternatives to global capitalism lie beyond the area of economics: 'we do not consider capital to be the exclusive axis of domination, and, hence, overthrowing capitalist rule is not, in our view, the only mode of revolutionary activity' (Hardt, Negri and Harvey, 2009: 212-3). They believed in the power of resisting and fighting for global citizenship, the restraints on the lowest income and the right to redistribute instruments of production (Žižek, 2001). Therefore, although they claimed themselves as inheriting the very orthodoxy of Marxism, there are criticisms accusing them of abandoning 'Marx's crucial insights' on the decisive role of economics (Hardt, Negri and Harvey, 2009: 211).

On the other hand, another major theorist on 'new imperialism' David Harvey is a firm advocator of the determining role of capital. Different from the above theorists whose illustrations on the mechanism of 'imperialism' or 'Empire' were rather macro and general, Harvey followed the authentic Marxist tradition of focusing on economics as the key answer to questions. His interpretation of neoliberalism as 'accumulation of dispossession' is regarded as the renaissance of the idea of 'primitive accumulation' argued by Luxemburg as the cause for imperialism. But Harvey disagreed with Luxemburg that the economic crisis of capitalism is the result of under-consumption, instead, he sees over-accumulation of capital as not only the cause for the economic crisis of the capitalist system but also the motivation for territorial expansion or what Harvey himself called 'spatial fix' (2001). Generally speaking, Harvey provides a neo-Marxist way of perceiving the contemporary global capitalist system as 'capital imperialism'. His illustration is also based on the Marxist conceptions of the accumulation of surplus value. The accumulation of capital value will, at a certain degree, become a crisis if it fails to find an outlet for the capital to be reproduced, and accordingly the profit rate will decline. That is when the crisis of over-accumulation happens. To overcome the crisis, the capitalist system needs the labour and resources

from 'outside' to stimulate the system and to create continued accumulation of capital, which Harvey called 'accumulation of dispossession' (Harvey, 2003: 141).

In the opinion of Harvey, there are three pathways that should be followed: a) the 'privatization' of public assets can largely incorporate the commons into the capitalist system (Harvey, 2005: 181), b) the import of cheap material resources from the underdeveloped countries can increase the profit rate again by lowering the production costs and enhancing the surplus value (ibid: 150) and c) 'devaluation of existing capital assets and labour power' through regulations and policies can also reboot the accumulating machine of capital. Such solutions contribute to the consequence of 'spatial fix': 'a geographical reconstructing of capitalist activity' (Harvey, 2001: 24). Harvey's illustration is, however, criticized for 'lack of appreciation of the structural nature of the centre-periphery contradiction in historical capitalism' (Mayo, Yeros and Jha, 2012: 188), and Harvey is accused of being West-centrist, especially in his book *The Condition of Postmodernity*, in which he sees the solutions to the global crisis and the conditions to achieve postmodernism issues for the Western societies to adopt while neglecting the influence of the 'outside' systems such as socialist countries in shaping the structure of the West (Yan H., 2015).

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

From the above illustrations about the origins and the historical development of the terms in the 'cultural imperialism' paradigm, certain problems are therefore revealed. Firstly, the critical approach deployed by the 'cultural imperialism' paradigm was influenced by the emergence of 'cultural Marxism' which defines 'culture' as the total process of social life itself. Under the impact of theoretical changes in the field of international communication studies and changes in political realities, the 'cultural imperialism' paradigm gradually developed in two very different directions that meant neither of them inherited the genuine critique of the original paradigm. On the one hand, reinforced by the political and economic dimension of 'imperialism' critique, there is a school of 'cultural imperialism' studies, as reviewed in Chapter 3, that tends to analyze

the global cultural dominance from the perspective of economics. This approach is endangered by the economic reductionism which formalizes everything as a component of production. On the other hand, the 'cultural imperialism' paradigm is also endangered by 'culturalism' studies, which regard each culture as an isolated world and global cultural dominance as the victory of one or few cultures of certain civilizations. Thus, 'cultural imperialism' became a critique based on realist international relations arguing which state is stronger than the other instead of focusing on the real crisis of the global economic system of capitalism, the problem about the modernization of human society.

What needs to be clarified here is that this PhD research is not aimed to draw a line between Cultural Studies and political economy studies in the field of mass communication, but to try to deploy the epistemology of historical dialectic materialism and apply it to the specific topic in the studies of international communication. To achieve that, it is important to clarify the influence of specific historical realities on the generation of certain thoughts and theories. Nevertheless, besides dialecticism, what defines Marxism from its previous philosophical thoughts about subject and object is that Marxism, at least in the context produced by Marx himself, recognizes the reifying or alienating effect of objects towards subjects through labour, which is regarded as the significant supplement to Hegelianism (Yi, 1984: 14). To put it in the briefest way, quoting the original words from Marx, 'it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness' (1859). Thus, to deconstruct the idealist tendency of 'culturalism' and to retain the dialectical materialist characteristics of critical 'imperialism' paradigm in the field of international communication, a different but relevant concept to replace 'culture' is needed to cast a new light on contemporary dilemmas faced by international communication research.



## **Chapter 5 - From 'Cultural' to 'Ideological'**

In Chapter 4, it was argued that the 'cultural imperialism' paradigm of international communication and media studies requires some revision, especially in relation to the concept of 'culture'. This chapter will contribute to this revision by introducing the concept of 'ideology' as a substitute for 'culture' and to revisit the cultural imperialism paradigm from culturalism which is ontologically divergent with the critical approach of an imperialism paradigm. Therefore, in Section 5.1, the difference between culture and ideology in the context of Marxism studies is briefly reviewed. Since the concept of 'ideology' is being used as an alternative, it is necessary to have an overview of the theoretical development of this term. Thus Section 5.2 is a general review of the concept of 'ideology', and Section 5.2.4 introduces the definition of this concept based on the specific context of this research. Section 5.3 concludes the main argument of this chapter of moving from a 'cultural' to an 'ideological' perspective.

### **5.1 'Culture' and 'Ideology'**

In Section 4.2, the definition of 'culture' in the Marxist context of Cultural Studies in Britain was introduced. Therefore, this section aims to point out the difference between the concepts of 'culture' and 'ideology' and how 'ideology' can substitute for 'culture' to provide critical studies of the imperialism paradigm with an alternative approach. According to Griffen, 'The basis of the convergence between the two terms under examination is that they both embrace non-material aspects of human existence relating to the subjective realm of ideas, values, world-views, and cosmologies, the very stuff of human history' (2006: 79). Given these similarities and importance to the discussion of the imperialism paradigm, a differentiation between the two concepts is clearly needed here.

The most notable linking of the meanings of the two words 'culture' and 'ideology' within the Marxist discourse probably first appeared in the context of Gramsci and his coining of the term 'cultural hegemony'. Gramsci 'did not apply "ideology" to the Marxist

struggle since it clearly retained its connotations of false consciousness and manipulation – if the socialist struggle to transcend the capitalist phase of historical development was to be successful’ (Griffin, 2006: 87-8). Although Gramsci did not use the word ‘ideology’ directly to describe what he called ‘organic consent’, his theory on hegemony implies an ‘ideological unity between the bottom and the top, between the ‘simple’ and the ‘intellectual’ (Gramsci, 1971: 328-9). The general definition of ideology developed by Gramsci contributed to the overlap of the meanings of the two words and ambiguity in the meanings of ‘culture’ and ‘ideology’ remains in the works of the later scholars who were directly or indirectly influenced by him. Therefore, either in the camp of general theories or post-Marxist theories, there has not been much effort to systematically clarify the two words. Chapter 4 also discussed how culture was redefined in the wave of Cultural Studies mainly initiated by Raymond Williams in the 1950s and onward. In *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*, Williams (1958, xviii) defined culture as ‘a whole way of life’, ‘a mode to interpret all our common experience’, and, in this new interpretation, to change it. A ‘culture is not only a body of intellectual and imaginative work; it is also and essentially a whole way of life’ (Williams, 1958, 325). In *Keywords*, Williams, according to his copious references to the word ‘culture’, noticed that ‘It is especially interesting that in archaeology and in cultural anthropology the reference to culture, or a culture, is primarily to material production’ (1983: 91).

Stuart Hall provided a semiotic interpretation of culture, referring to a system of meanings produced through the circulation of language: ‘In fact, each of us probably does understand and interpret the world in a unique and individual way. However, we are able to communicate because we share broadly the same conceptual maps and thus make sense of or interpret the world in similar ways’. Indeed, this is what we mean when we say we ‘belong to the same culture’ ... that is why ‘culture’ is sometimes defined in terms of ‘shared meanings or shared conceptual maps’ (Hall, 1997: 4; also see Du Gay *et al.*, 1997). In the words of the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz, the concept of culture ‘denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited concepts expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men

communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life' (1973: 89). While, in *Marxism and Literature*, Raymond Williams summarized three common versions of 'ideology' in the context of Marxism: '(i) a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group; (ii) a system of illusory beliefs – false ideas or false consciousness – which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge; (iii) the general process of the production of meanings and ideas' (1977: 55). The substance of the third is where the convergence of the two terms 'ideology' and 'culture' originates.

Both culture and ideology in the manifestation of 'language, ideas, values, beliefs, stories, discourse and so on' should not be interpreted as the 'superstructure independent from an economic base' but rather something material themselves (McGuigan and Moran, 2014, cited in Fuchs, 2015: 12), because they are all created through the material production: 'ruling classes would produce castles, palaces, churches, prisons, workhouses, schools, weapons, a controlled press, etc.' (Williams, 1977: 93). And their materialist essence as the representative of historical specificity makes it undeniable that 'both ideology and culture are able to act as complementary, interconnected historical forces which are, according to specific historical contexts, either negative or positive, either replicable or innovatory, and hence either repressive or emancipatory' (Griffin, 2006: 91). But clearly, there is an absolute difference between these two concepts.

According to Griffin, the difference between culture and ideology is mostly about the positive or negative meanings the words represent:

'Their tendency to pull in different directions is reflected in their etymology. Whereas the relatively recent neologism 'ideology' was born of Destutt de Tracy's liberal project of applying the Enlightenment tradition of analysis to the scientific study and demystification of ideas and systems of thought, 'culture' boasts a much more illustrious etymological heritage which lends it connotations of healthy organic growth and grandiose civilizing achievement. As a result the positive aura

that ideology can acquire when associated with culture as a force for distinctively human realms of achievement can easily give way to a negative one closer to the demystifying thrust of its etymology' (Griffin, 2006: 86-7).

But the real difference that enables the substitution of 'culture' by 'ideology' is their relationship with the economic base. As explained in Section 4.2 and above, the concept of 'culture' in the context of cultural studies and critiques of cultural imperialism in the age of Raymond Williams refers to the totality of life itself – the combination of both superstructure and economic base. That explains why culture has a materialist attribute. Instead, the relationship between ideology and the economic base is not inclusive but has a dialectical co-existence. As illustrated in Figure 5.1, ideology is the concrete manifestation of the superstructure which is conditioning and conditioned by the economic base of the whole social structure; culture, on the other hand, refers to the total process of social life which includes both parts of superstructure and economic base. And the reason to replace the concept of 'culture' with 'ideology' in the field of critical media studies of the imperialism paradigm lies in the difference between these two concepts.

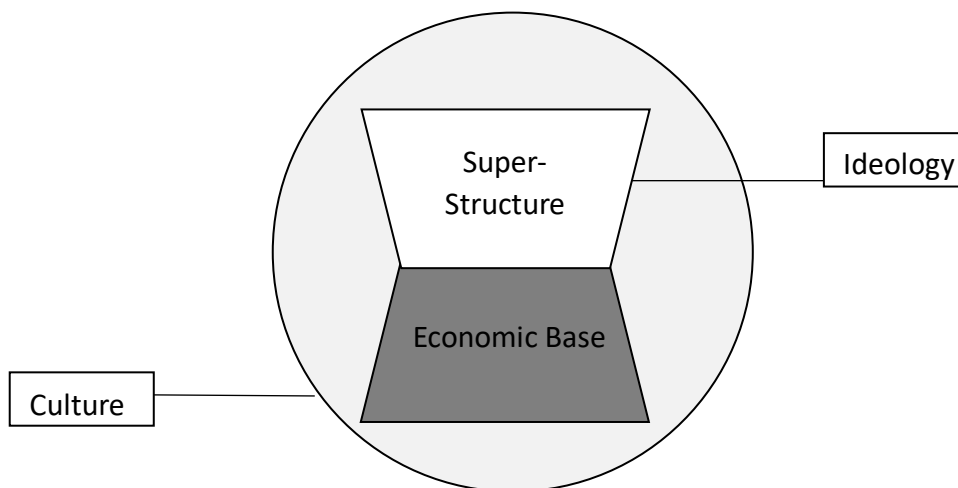


Figure 5.1 The Difference between Culture and Ideology

As we have seen in Section 4.2 in the last chapter, the theoretical critiques of cultural imperialism paradigms are mainly about how to differentiate or rationalize the divergent ontologies that the two concepts 'culture' and 'imperialism' stand for. The former, after a series of changes in the field of critical media studies, is mostly understood from the perspective of 'culturalism', while the latter is generally criticized as the economic reductionism that resulted from the Stalinism of the Soviet Union. In order to go back to the authentic critique of the paradigm and revive the spirit of cultural Marxism, we should pay more attention to the historical context of the concepts we use to inform critical studies of the imperialism paradigm. Therefore, the advantage of the concept 'ideology', compared to the problematic term 'culture', is due to its clear stance of being the manifestation of superstructure. At least in this research, which is focused on the reception of television audiences, the research subject is the human mind. Indeed, the economic base is of vital importance in terms of forging and conditioning the human mind, which is also why the last chapter reviewed the various theories of imperialism studies, but the eternal question is about how the abstract subjectivities of these audiences respond to the environment. Moreover, as the following review of the concept of 'ideology' shows, the term is more likely to remain the critical spirit of the paradigm and resonate with the theoretical framework of imperialism studies. Given the importance to the argument of the concept 'ideology', it is necessary to review how it is defined in the discourse of Marxist political and economic studies.

## **5.2 Marxist Theories of Ideology**

Most studies defining 'ideology' start by introducing Antoine Destutt de Tracey, who in 1796 established the discipline of the 'natural science of ideas', which is supposed to be the origin of the theory of 'ideology' (Baradat, 2010; Eagleton, 1991; Rehmann, 2013; Thompson, 2005; Williams, 1977). His materialist epistemology led Tracey to believe that human ideas arose from stimulation by material objects (Baradat, 2010: 007), thus creating a material basis for ideology. The original context of this natural science was rather critical of idealist metaphysics such as religion (Rehmann, 2013: 16). However, because of political competition, Napoleon later devalued the theory of ideology as a

'shadowy metaphysics' halting revolutionary behaviors (ibid: 19-22). In contrast to the idealism of metaphysics, the term 'ideology' was initially introduced as representing the 'natural science of ideas' which involved many abstract concepts from different disciplines such as psychology and linguistics (Williams, 1977: 57). Nevertheless, since the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the widely accepted view of ideology was of its Marxist definitions and, in those definitions, ideology was generally interpreted as the mechanism of the conscious system of the human mind driven by the political-economic structure of human society.

Generally speaking, there are two theoretical camps within the framework of Marxism: critical and general (Thompson, 1984: 3-4). However, the theories of some scholars cannot be easily categorized into these two camps. The thoughts enunciated in their theories have characteristics from both sides. It may sound unusual to categorize all theorists who have made great contributions to the theoretical development of 'ideology' as Marxist scholars, but it is noticeable that most of their theories have a strong link with Marxism. But all these theories are based on the common ground of criticism on the 'specularity /spectrality' of capitalism (Griffin, 2006: 88).

### **5.2.1 Critical Theories of Ideology**

The original critique of ideology can be found in the context of *The German Ideology* co-written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: 'consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their life-process'. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a 'camera obscura', this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process' (1846: 14, cited in Williams, 1977: 58). The metaphor of 'camera obscura' indicates that to Marx and Engels 'ideology' became a polemical nickname for kinds of thinking which neglected or ignored the material social process' (ibid). In this thinking, 'ideology' is perceived as an illusory belief system distorting and mystifying reality which is made up by the bourgeoisie in order to legitimize their dominance, and is widely regarded as the equivalent to 'false

consciousness' in the critical Marxist context. In general, ideology was regarded by Marx and Engels as 'a projection of an imaginary world of the subjects' with mystified essence in a distorted form of reality' (El Hassen, 1986: 50), which reflects the core principle of the historical dialectical materialist epistemology that Marx hold towards the interaction between subject and object.

This definition was criticized for being economically reductionist, especially in the 1950s when the so-called new left in Western Europe brought a new wave of studying Marxist literature. Raymond Williams was one of the most predominant scholars in that wave and he provided a dialectical and idealist revision of cultural materialism (1977). The theory of 'cultural materialism' developed by Williams was dedicated to correcting the historical determinism and economic reductionism, which were believed to be the tenets of orthodox Marxism under the influence of Stalinism. Therefore, Williams argued that the progress of history is not fixed and culture does not have an inferior existence to material existence, instead, he argued, culture itself is a material existence.

However, the term 'false consciousness' has a rather different and 'converted meaning' in *History and Class Consciousness* (1971) written by the Hungarian Marxist scholar Gyorgy Lukács. The difference was based on Lukács's divergent understanding of 'thought and existence'. 'Thought and existence', wrote Lukács, 'are not identical in the sense that they 'correspond' to each other, or 'reflect' each other, that they 'run parallel' to each other or 'coincide' with each other (all expressions that conceal a rigid duality). Their identity is that they are aspects of one and the same real historical and dialectical process' (ibid: 204). And the 'barrier which converts the class consciousness of the bourgeoisie into 'false' consciousness is objective; it is the class situation itself' (Lukács, 1971: 54). In his redefined concept of 'false consciousnesses', Lukács provided a new and very Hegelian approach to reviewing the generation of ideology within the thinking of the dialectical relation between subjectivity of human beings and objective material social process. But he retained the critical approach that he inherited from the theory of 'commodity fetishism' which Lukács revised and called 'reification'. For Lukács, what he

really criticized about ideology is actually the 'objectified subjective relations'. It is to say that the social relations between subjective humans have been haunted by the productive relations of objective materials, which Lukács termed as 'the phantom objectivity'. And it is the reified process of social relations which leads to the generation of 'false consciousnesses'. Therefore, we can see that the biggest difference between Lukács and Marx on 'ideology' is that 'whereas for early Marx and Engels, ideology is thought to be false to the true situation, for Lukács it is thought true to false situation' (Eagleton, 1991: 104). But there are some disagreements about Lukács's interpretation of ideology as the 'subjective product of the 'will to power' of different classes' (ibid: 100-1). Ideologies, in the opinion of Gareth Jones, are 'objective systems determined by the whole field of social struggle between contending classes'. French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser also questioned the concept of 'reified consciousness' for it 'pre-supposes some 'human essence' which then undergoes estrangement' (ibid).

In contrast to Lukács, Theodor Adorno's critique of ideology was not derived directly from the commodity fetishism but rather from the perspective of 'exchange value'. To Adorno, the inequality between use value and exchange value of a product is the fundamental secret of ideology that 'two commodities with quite different 'use-values' can be equally exchanged, on the principle that both contain the same amount of abstract labour' (ibid: 125). The projection of such inequality on human social relations would be the illusion of false equivalence that everyone is equal in the system. And the illusionary system is structurally functioning to homogenize everyone and the diversity of subjectivities: 'ideology for Adorno is thus a form of 'identity thinking' – a covertly paranoid style of rationality which inexorably transmits the uniqueness and plurality of things into a mere simulacrum of itself, or express them beyond its own borders in a panic-stricken act of exclusion' (ibid: 126). The solution provided by Adorno is what he termed in one of his books – *Negative Dialectics* (1973, 2004). He argued that to undo the ideological homogenization, as the consequence of the rationality brought by modernity, 'demands a 'negative dialect', which strives, perhaps impossibly, to include within thought that which is heterogeneous to it', and for Adorno, 'the highest paradigm of



such negative reason is art' (Eagleton, 1991: 126). Therefore, Adorno's critique on the culture industry indicates that the content of such 'negative dialects' is aimed at crushing the illusion of equivalence created by the capitalist system and to expose the true inequality between subjects and objects, and the concrete method to achieve it is to protect the elite culture which is believed as the nutrition for cultural diversity from being commercialized and reified (Wang, 2012).

Adorno's stance of seeing modern society as a coercive system and his utopian expectation to achieve non-identical plurality have had a great influence on the later Frankfurt School scholars, such as Jurgen Habermas. In the opinion of Habermas, 'ideology ... is a form of communication systematically distorted by power – a discourse which has become a medium of domination, and which serves to legitimate relations of organized force' (Eagleton, 1991: 128). Based on such theories, he brought up the idea of 'public sphere' which is regarded as the counter-balance to the domination of a homogeneous system (Mo, 2006: 144). In the book *The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere* (1991), Habermas systematically illustrated the process of how the domain of the public sphere has been transformed in a dialectical way in modern societies in terms of creating and manufacturing public opinion, though there are critiques on the theory's inadequate 'theoretical framework for understanding the structural transformation of the public sphere in late modern societies' (Susen, 2011: 38).

Generally speaking, the critical theorists of ideology such as Marx, Engels, Lukács and Frankfurt School scholars such as Adorno shared a common view on the dialectic of ideology and non-ideology. As indicated in Figure 5.2, there is an antagonistic relation between ideology as the reversal of consciousness and non-ideology as the resistant potential of consciousness to free the subjectivity of humans haunted by the formalization of capitalism. In the context of Marx and Engels, ideology mainly stands for the distorted consciousness representing the inversion of reality which serves the bourgeois class in a capitalist society (Rehmann, 2007: 211-4), and non-ideology refers to the revolutionary power of the working class to create an alternative belief system

such as socialism and communism. To Lukács, the terminology used to substitute ideology is 'false consciousness' which is the manifestation of the objectified subjectivity, and he regarded the awakening self-consciousness of the working class as the non-ideological resistance to reified consciousness. And although Adorno disagreed with traditional Marxists on the definition of dialectics, in terms of defining the concept of ideology and searching for the outlet to 'identity-thinking', he expressed a dualist opinion on the relation of the ideology of homogenization and non-ideology of diversity in the cultural industry. Therefore, the dualism of ideology and non-ideology is regarded as the characteristic of the critical theory of Marxian ideology studies.

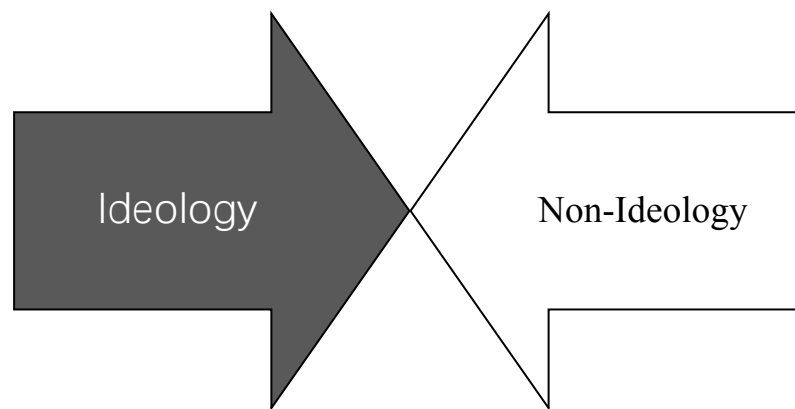


Figure 5.2 Critical Definition of Ideology and Non-Ideology

### 5.2.2 General Theories of Ideology

According to Terry Eagleton, 'the revisionist Marxist Eduard Bernstein was the first to dub Marxism itself an ideology' (Eagleton, 1991: 90), and since then the general Marxist theory of ideology became gradually predominant along with the critical approach. However, the most influential theory among the pioneering and general studies on ideology was developed by Vladimir Lenin: who 'introduced the concept of a 'scientific ideology'; the specificity of which was that it corresponded to 'an objective truth' (Lenin, 1960-70: 136). Lenin concluded 'that social relations are divided into material and ideological [relations]' (ibid: 151), and he defined ideology as the non-economic

superstructure (Lenin, 1990: 397). In his book *What is to be Done?*, Lenin classified two major segments of ideology as 'bourgeois ideology' and 'socialist ideology' (Lenin, 1902: 23), and attributed socialism as 'the ideology of struggle of the proletarian class' (Eagleton, 1991: 90). Lenin's general theory of ideology dissolves the antagonism between 'bourgeois' and 'socialist' ideology for he argued that 'the working class could develop spontaneously only a trade-unionist 'seed form' of class consciousness, which was still subordinate to bourgeois ideology, because this 'is far older in origin than socialist ideology, ... more fully developed, and ... has at its disposal immeasurably more means of dissemination' (Lenin, 1960-70: 386). Philosophically, such generalization of ideology by Lenin also contributed to the dialectical materialist revision on the dualism between subjective consciousness and objective nature, highlighting the decisive role of experience gained from material nature in the process of motivating the spontaneous consciousness of the proletarian class. To Lenin, 'ideology ... [is] identical with the scientific theory of historical materialism' (Eagleton, 1991: 90), and his empiricism-critique on idealism indicates that, to him, there is no such 'existence of something beyond, something transcending the bounds of 'experience' and knowledge' (Lenin, 1909: *In Lieu of An Introduction*). The generalization of Lenin on the study of ideology as a scientific approach to analyze 'the fundamental laws of society and its thought formations' responds to the initiation of de Tracey's invention of 'ideology' as a 'science of ideas' (Eagleton, 1991: 90). And Lenin's dialectical materialism contributed to remedy the sensualist essence of de Tracey's 'ideology' regarding 'sense-perceptions ... [as] the only source for ... ideas' (Rehmann, 2014: 16).

The general definition of ideology developed by the Italian radical Marxist Antonio Gramsci was mainly derived from his theory of 'hegemony' in which ideology was interpreted as 'the complex of superstructure' functioning along with intellectuals to create 'organic consent' (Gramsci, 1992: 12). Similar to Lenin, Gramsci was also against the 'dualistic separation of the 'material' and the 'ideal', and in his translation of the 'Preface' to *Critique of Political Economy* of 1859, Gramsci inserted the term 'ideological terrain' to 'avert the common misunderstanding of mere forms of consciousness from

the outset' (Rehmann, 2014: 118). Gramsci believed that only the 'philosophy of praxis' could fully represent the dialectics of Marxism and to correct the idealist and materialist revision on Marxism (Gramsci, 1990: 76-77). He disagreed with the economic-reductionist interpretation of Marxism and was against the definition of ideology as the distorted consciousness compelled by the reifying material. According to him, 'ideology must be viewed as actively organizing forces which are psychologically 'valid', fashioning the terrain on which men and women act, struggle and acquire consciousness of their social positions' (Eagleton, 1991: 117). Thus, Gramsci's interest was mainly in analyzing 'the internal contradictions of ideology' rather than criticizing the reifying effect of ideology (Rehmann, 2014: 117). It is noticeable that Gramsci's definition of ideology as hegemony is not similar to Lenin's definition of socialist ideology. The main difference lies in Gramsci's rediscovery of 'civil society' in which exists the possibility of creating an 'ideology unity between the bottom and the top, between the 'simple' folk and the 'intellectuals' (Gramsci, 1971: 328-9). While to Lenin, there is no such division of the superstructure, and the decisive elements lies absolutely in the material base through which the proletariat acquired the revolutionary consciousness (Bao, 2012).

Hungarian scholar - Karl Mannheim also contributed to generalizing the concept of ideology. In *Ideology and Utopia* (1954), Mannheim conjectured two types of 'ideology': one particular and one total (49). The particular one refers to a 'more or less conscious disguise of the real nature of a situation' and the total one refers to the collective thoughts of 'an age or of a concrete historico-social group' (ibid: 49-50). And the 'total' definition of ideology, which Mannheim termed as 'Weltanschauung', refers to 'an all-encompassing view of the world adopted by a given group, always reflecting the general ideas and thought-systems of a historical epoch' (Freeden, 2003: 14). Mannheim further advocated that efforts should be made by independent intellectuals to detach themselves from any existent ideologies so that they can dedicate themselves to developing the whole new foreshadowing ideology which 'constitutes a comprehensive view but not a final one' and is 'a 'relative optimum' for our time and our place' (ibid: 19). This approach is questioned by the suspicion on whether or not the ideology or the

development of ideology can be detached from the Marxist notions of class, and Mannheim's approach to develop universal ideology also drew in the debates on 'the end of ideology' in the 1950s (ibid: 18-9).

Influenced by Gramsci's general interpretation on ideology within the context of 'hegemony', Williams saw hegemony as something beyond ideology, that 'hegemony' is in the 'recognition of the wholeness of the [social] process' (ibid: 108-9), while ideology is 'a system of meanings and values' which expresses or projects the interest of 'a particular class' in a class society (ibid: 108). And the reason for 'hegemony' beyond 'ideology' is that a social practice is a 'realized complex of experiences, relationships, and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits', and 'it has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, and challenged by pressures not at all its own' (ibid: 112). But Williams also admitted that when deploying the historical perspective to analyze the dynamic movement within a given epoch, it is necessary to abstract the ensemble of social process as a system 'especially if it is to connect with the future as well as with the past' (ibid: 121). Furthermore, Williams summarized three general and conclusive types of social processes: residual, dominant and emergent cultures. By 'residual culture', he referred to the 'experience, meanings and values' practiced in the 'previous social and cultural institutions or formation' (ibid: 122). The 'dominant culture' stands for the social system which is largely setting out the routine of people's mind-sets and structurally serving the interests of the dominant classes. Finally, 'emergent culture' means the rise or the signal of the rise of 'a new social reality' (del Valle Alcala, 2010:74). These three forms of social systems are by no means separate but rather interlinked and interdependent.

Another great contributor to the concept of ideology is Stuart Hall. He defined ideologies as 'the mental frameworks – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, figure out and render intelligible the way society works'

(Hall, 1986: 25-6). Similar to Raymond Williams, Hall agreed that ideology is not a singular existence. It is not ideology but actually ideologies that 'ideologies do not operate through single ideas; they operate in discursive chains, in clusters, in semantic fields, in discursive formations' (Hall, 1985: 104). Influenced by the 'contradiction and over-determinism' developed by Althusser, Hall was also strongly against the economic-reductionist approach in explaining the formation of ideologies as the 'necessary correspondence' between fixed classes and their members: "'ruling ideas' are the ideas of the 'ruling class' – the class position of the latter providing the coupling and guarantee of correspondence with the former' (Hall, 1986: 28). On the contrary, there is no guarantee for such necessary correspondence – 'necessarily no correspondence' (Hall, 1985: 94). But what really distinguished Hall is that he broadened the content of the phrase 'no guarantee' which added another meaning that 'also implies that there is no necessary non-correspondence ... there is no guarantee that, under all circumstances, ideology and class can never be articulated together in anyway or produce a social force capable for a time of self-conscious 'unity in action' (ibid: 94-5). Therefore, Hall rediscovered an alternative to the structuralist interpretation of ideology within the context of Althusser himself – the concept of 'double articulation' between structure and practice': 'By 'double articulation' I mean that the structure – the given conditions of existence, the structure of determinations in any situation – can also be understood, from another point of view, as simply the result of previous practices' (ibid: 96). Therefore, Hall provided a dialectical perspective on interpretation of the structuration of ideology by admitting its 'real, material effects' while denying the 'misplaced concreteness' of abolishing the mental character (ibid: 100). And to fully explain the origination and development of ideologies, Hall emphasized the subject of 'language' and 'behavior'; that they 'are the media ... of the material registration of ideology, the modality of its functioning' (ibid: 99). Thus, Hall bridged the theory of ideology and discourse-analysis by explaining how ideologies are calculated through the circulation of meanings created by languages (Hall, 1997: 1-12).

Ideology = Collective Consciousness

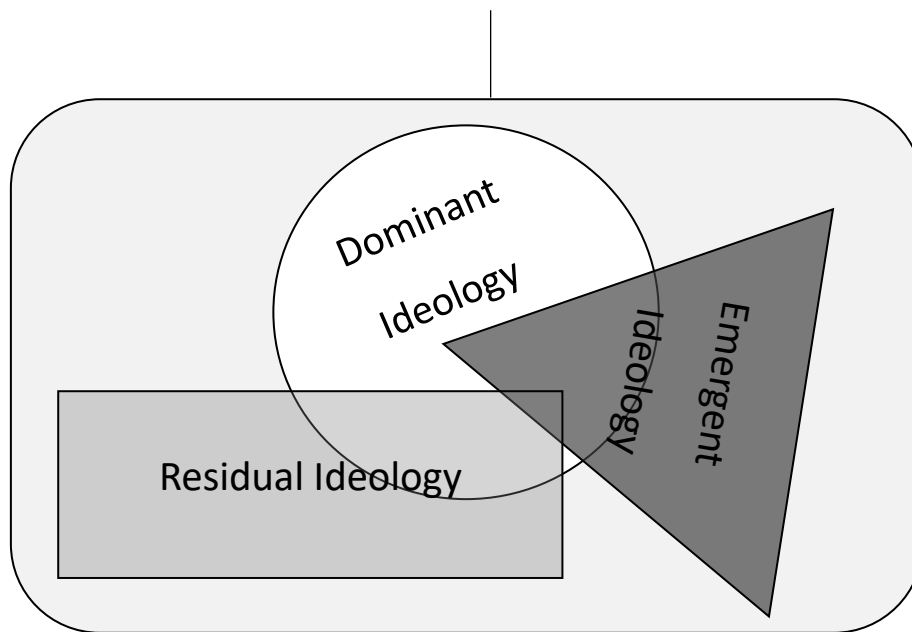


Figure 5.3 General Definition of Ideology and Consciousness

In summary, as indicated in Figure 5.3, theorists of the general camp tend to broaden the content of ideology from distorted/false consciousness caused by the material reality to organic consciousness necessary for mental construction for future development in a given historical stage. In the broader sense of ideology, there are many different but coherent variants co-existing. According to the analogy of Williams about cultures, these variants can be generally divided into three types: residual, dominant and emergent ideologies. For example, to Lenin and Gramsci, the dominant ideology is bourgeois and the emergent one is socialism. More importantly, the generalization of ideology was the effort made by many of the Marxist theorists to revise the dualism of 'ideal' and 'material' in the critical theory of ideology and to convert 'ideology' into a rather dialectical concept in terms of epistemological theories and an eclectic term in terms of practical social activities.

### 5.2.3 Post-Marxist Theories of Ideology

Though, theoretically speaking, Althusser is not one of those post-modern Marxists, his theoretical development on the aspect of ideology has a direct influence on the later

post-modernist theorists, especially in relation to ideology. Althusser's theory on ideology was mostly explained in his work *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* published in 1970. In that work, Althusser elaborated his point of view on ideology from the perspective of reproduction of labour-power. Influenced by Gramsci's theory of 'hegemony', Althusser also emphasized the role of the institutions of nation-states, such as schools and churches. But instead of merely regarding them as organic instruments, he discovered the function: to reproduce the 'submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and ... the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology ... for the agents of exploitation and repression, [and to] provide for the domination of the ruling class' (Althusser, 1971: 5). But instead of sticking to the traditional Marxist analytical method of political economy by which ideology is usually studied as the juncture between subjectivity of ideal and objectivity of material, Althusser brought in a new disciplinary angle of psychology derived from the theories of imagination developed by Spinoza and Lacan (Rehmann, 2014: 160) which explained 'ideological as an unconscious, 'lived' relationship and to illustrate the dynamic and active character of ideological subjugation' (ibid: 149). Therefore, ideology for Althusser is not a question about the truth or falsehood of how the reality is represented to and by human minds (Eagleton, 1991: 18). To understand ideology as the unconscious 'lived reality', in the sense which Althusser established, is to understand ideology as the representation of the whole social structure which is the foundation of all human consciousness. The entirety of such definition makes ideology more than just instrumental, because it 'in general [is] defined through the function of constituting concrete individuals as subjects' (ibid: 155). The structuralism of Althusser on ideology confirms a non-historical existence of human unconsciousness through which the human subjectivity is 'interpolated' to be formed (ibid: 156). The 'interpolation' of subjectivity leads to the consequence of the anti-human tendency of Althusser which fundamentally denies the autonomy of human beings as active players in their own history. The paradox in the context of Althusser's work is quite obvious. Indeed, Althusser's theory on ideology is derived from Marxist analysis of economic structure of production based on the epistemology of historical materialism by which ideology is defined as the representation of a given societal



structure at a given historical stage. However, Althusser's further interpretation of ideology as the representation of an unhistorical structure raises the contradiction 'between the historically specific concept of ideological state-apparatuses and an un-historically conceived 'ideology in general', and also leads to the 'disintegration of Althusser School' (Rehmann, 2014: 149).

In spite of the inclination on his part to generalize 'ideology' as 'an underlying omnipresent Lacanian (from the work of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan) concept of 'eternal' subjection' (ibid: 233), Althusser's theories on ideology still echoed in the works of his contemporaries. French theorist Michel Foucault, who is regarded as one of the pioneers of post-Marxism, was one of them. Foucault also held a similar 'ahistorical' point of view towards 'ideology', but he further 'equated it with his notion of discursive practice' through which human 'knowledge' is formed (ibid: 197). Foucault further focused on developing the theory of 'fictionalism' defined by him as a 'negative ontology of knowledge' from a neo-Nietzschean perspective, in which 'the ideological is dissolved into a negative ontology of 'everything is fake' (ibid: 199-200). In doing so, it seems that Foucault had combined the two theoretical traditions of studies on ideology by critically defining ideology as a distorted delusion of reality while admitting it as the representation of a constant structure of human rationality. However, like his interpretation on the universal existence of 'power', by claiming that everything is ideological, is actually deconstructing the existence of 'ideology', which makes the related arguments theoretically and methodologically impossible to continue.

Another post-Marxist sociologist Pierre Bourdieu had also been influenced by Althusser's 'aristocratic thinking' on ideology in a critical way (ibid: 221). Bourdieu advocated a dialectical way of understanding the process of ideological subjection 'as the result of continuous interaction between field and habitus' (ibid: 235) instead of reducing the 'subjects to the mere effects of social structures and ideological apparatuses' (ibid: 221). In his 1984 book *Distinction*, he criticized the 'ideology of charisma' which 'regards taste in legitimate culture as a gift of nature', and believed that

'all cultural practices ... and preferences in literature, painting or music, are closely linked to educational level ... and secondarily to social origin' (Bourdieu, 1984: 1). Bourdieu's exploration on the social origin of classes and states went directly back to the theory of 'the social division between mental and manual labour' expressed in *German Ideology* by Marx and Engels (Rehmann, 2014: 224). Bourdieu created the concept of 'field' to describe the intellectual or religious domain functioning ideologically as the educational system which he believed is crucial to the emergence of classes and states. According to him, the individual subjectivity created by the educational system in the manifestation of certain social statuses will grow into certain 'habitus' that undergirds its structural positions. On the one hand, Bourdieu asserted that the 'classified' individuals who appropriate themselves through distinctive 'vocation' are unaware of such classification and both the obedience and resistance of classified individuals towards the system are products of the systems (Bourdieu, 1984: 482). On the other hand, he believed in the positive influence of 'actions' for that he 'characterized habitus as a structuring structure' and a 'dynamic process creation by the subjects themselves', thus it is possible for individual people to change their social positions (Rehmann, 2014: 237). Bourdieu's work contributed to the regression of Western Marxism to the dialectical epistemology that was neglected by some of his contemporary Marxist theorists

Slavoj Žižek, as one of the very active contemporary Marxist scholars, established his academic foundation in his 1989 book *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (2008). In that book, he was following the post-Marxist studies on ideology invented by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in the 1970s with the publications of *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (Laclau, 1977) and *Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci* (Mouffe, 1979). Žižek himself expounded, or more exactly summarized, Laclau and Mouffe's theories on ideology deploying a Lacanian concept of future. Žižek illustrated that ideological fantasy as a support of reality 'is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality; in its basic dimension, it is a fantasy-construction which serves as a support for our 'reality' itself: an 'illusion' which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real, impossible kernel' (Žižek, 2008: 45). Such

ideological fantasy is 'to stitch up the inconsistency of our own ideological system' (Žižek, 2008: 49).

To Žižek, ideology that is based on the 'discordance between what people are effectively doing and what they think they are doing' is not a 'false consciousness' but rather the reality itself (ibid: 27). He revisited the Marxian formula of 'they do not know it, but they are doing it', and revised it as 'they know that, in their activity, they are following an illusion but still, they are doing it' (ibid: 27-30). He explained such revision by declaring that in the post-ideological knowledge system, people become much more cynical and critical of the ideological truth such as 'freedom or democracy', but the 'cynical distance is just one way ... to blind ourselves to the structuring power of ideological fantasy' because people 'embodied in the 'social relations between things', and although the subjects of people no longer believe, 'but the things themselves believe for them' (ibid: 30-1). Following the Lacanian tradition of psychoanalysis, Žižek also agrees on the unconscious dimension of ideology which is supported and represented by the symbolic or symptom order (Zhang, 2007: 15).

Žižek explained the hidden mechanism of the production of ideologies from the perspectives of both economics (from Marxism) and psychology (from Lacan and Freud), and he developed a unique illustration on the relation between surplus-value and surplus-enjoyment. According to Žižek, the production of ideology is closely interlinked with fetishism: 'in Marxism a fetish conceals the positive network of social relations, whereas in Freud a fetish conceals the lack around which the symbolic network is articulated' (Žižek, 2008: 50). Fetishism of capitalism is based on the pursue of looking for an indefinite surplus value, and the objectified productive relations between members of the society and the according social structure, create a certain type of mental surplus enjoyment named by Žižek as 'ideological jouissance' which is essentially the 'renunciation' of meaning:

'Let us take the case of Fascism – the Fascist ideology is based upon a purely formal

imperative: Obey, because you must! In other words, renounce enjoyment, sacrifice yourself and do not ask about the meaning of it – the value of the sacrifice lies in its very meaninglessness; true sacrifice is for its own end; you must find positive fulfillment in the sacrifice itself, not in its instrumental value: it is this renunciation, this giving up of enjoyment itself, which produces a certain surplus-enjoyment' (Žižek, 2008: 89).

All in all, the main theoretical characteristic of the post-Marxist theories on ideology is basically manifested by their psychological approach to analyze the intercourse between subjects and objects and to explain the generation and function of ideology from the angle of sub-consciousness or unconsciousness. The prevailing Lacanian psychological analysis of ideology as the unconsciousness of the human ideal realm broadens, or to some extent, deconstructs the traditional Marxist studies on ideology as either the reified consciousness in the critical theories or a 'belief system' in the general theories. As indicated in Figure 5.4, in post-Marxism, 'the concept of ideology would not have anything to do with the idea of a distorted or inverted reality ... the question of ideology points towards the hidden foundations of discourse and the supposed rationality on which such discourses are based, which do not mask a foundational reality but a position of the enunciating subject who hides the material conditions of enunciation' (Sloterdijk, 2003, cited in Garcia and Aguilar Sanchez, 2008). In this sense, ideology 'is less a system of acts per se (i.e. getting people to do things) than a system of ontological fantasy' (Skott-Myhre, 2015: 61).

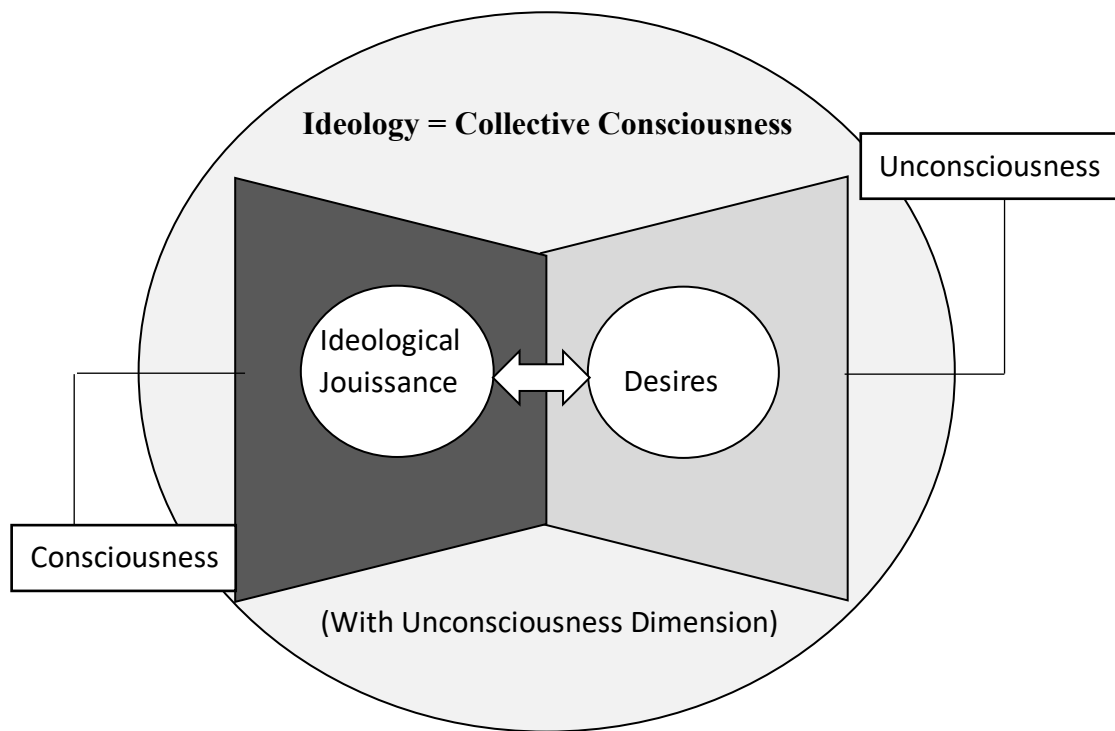


Figure 5.4 Post-Modernist Definition of Ideology and Consciousness

#### 5.2.4 Defining Ideology

The above introduction about the different theoretical camps within Marxism on the studies of ideology is only a very small portion of the numerous arguments on this subject. The dazzlingly abundant derivations of Marxist theories on ideology makes it an extremely difficult mission to draw a syncretic definition on it for 'how one categorizes reality depends on one's purposes, the questions one asks about it, and often prior dispositions and commitments to particular explanations of it' (Hamilton, 1987:38, cited in Griffin, 2006: 79). Therefore, it seems more important to clarify a few essential questions about ideology to help construct the deployment of the concept in this research which is based on its empirical studies, instead of focusing on the taxonomy of ideology to fit into the frame of general, critical or post-Marxist theories.

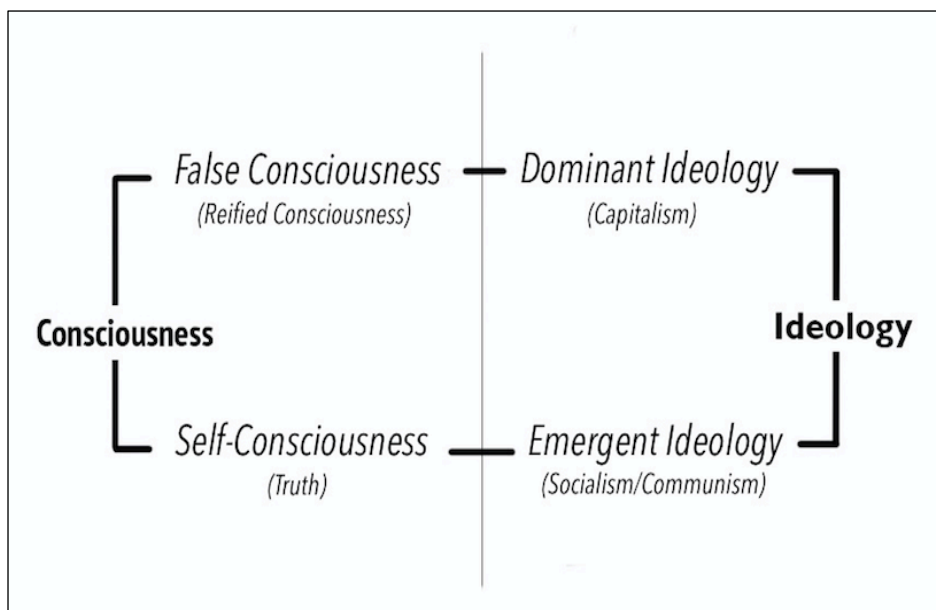
The first question to be answered is whether ideology is the equivalent or the component of consciousness. Or, whether it is the embodiment of unconsciousness.

Unconsciousness is the very hallmark that classifies post-Marxist theories on ideology from those traditional ones. According to Žižek, 'what is crucial to ideology is not that it is an illusion that masks the real state of things, but that it consists of an (unconscious) fantasy that structures our own social reality' (Žižek, 1992: 76). Indeed, Žižek defined unconsciousness as 'the form of thought whose ontological status is not that of thought', and 'that is to say, the form of thought external to the thought itself – in short, some 'other scene' external to the thought whereby the form of the thought is already articulated in advance' (ibid, 13). Such ontology of ideology as the 'unconscious illusion' which structures people's real and effective relationship to reality within the post-Marxist term exaggerated the importance of 'ideal, consciousness and spirit', and the negative stance of such ontology on the dialectical relation between subject and object leads to the denial of the autonomy of subject and 'the deconstruction of the final achievement of communism' (Shen, 2011: 50-2).

Furthermore, the post-Marxist ontological interpretation of ideology as the unconsciousness of the human mind posed the danger of dispelling the content of ideology, as one of the main founders of post-Marxism Ernesto Laclau in his 2006 article '*Ideology and Post-Marxism*' claimed that there are mainly two notions of ideology within the Marxist term that ideology as 'false consciousness' and 'a necessary level of social formation', but 'both [of these notions] ... should be rejected' as the first notion is ruined by essentialism and the second 'is too much linked to the notion of a naturalistic infrastructure being reflected in distorted ideas in the mind of people' (Laclau, 2006: 114). The remaining value of using this vocabulary 'ideological' no longer lies on its substance to represent the social and productive relations of a given epoch, but, according to Laclau, lies on its figurative meanings as metaphors of 'as if' for that 'any 'closure' [of ideology] is necessarily tropological' (ibid). However, as far as this research is concerned, the definition of ideology by no means refers to any kind of ontology which ignores the deeper question about the dialectical intercourse between the ideal state of the human mind and the economic structure of human societies.

Now that we have repudiated the interpretation of ideology as the unconsciousness of the human mind, as far as this research is concerned, the second question would be about the relation between ideology and consciousness.

As indicated in Figure 5.5, within the camp of the general theories on ideology, the content of ideology is basically equal to that of consciousness. And only the content of the term 'dominant ideology' shares a similar meaning with that of the term 'ideology' of the critical camp as the false or reified, and materialized consciousness. The general approach remains as an increasingly popular stance in Marxist studies on ideology nowadays especially due to its closely interlinking with the appearance of post-Marxist studies emphasizing on discourse and language. From what has been introduced above, it is decidedly relevant for us to consider that the generalization of the concept 'ideology' has contributed to a shift of focus from the criticism on the structural defaults of capitalist societies to the pursuit of finding alternative and constructing resistance to dominant social systems. Theorists and social activists following the general theories on ideology, such as Lenin and Gramsci, broadened the content of ideology to emancipate the proletariats to form resistant campaigns. However, by assimilating the content of ideology to that of consciousness itself, the general definition of 'ideology' contributes to the deconstruction of the critical attribute of the concept.



### Figure 5.5 Relation of Consciousness and Ideology in General Definition

In contrast, as indicated in Figure 5.6, within the camp of Marxist critical theories on ideology, ideology has always been defined as the opposite to the non-ideological part of the human mind. Ideology, as the reversed reality in the context of Marx and Engels, was frequently used as the equivalence to the 'false consciousness' which firstly appeared in Lukács's book *History and Class Consciousness* (1971). However, the falseness that Lukács talked about was rather different from what Marx described with reference to the consciousness of 'camera obscura'. For Lukács, the falseness of ideology is defined by the falseness or the concreteness of reality:

'For only when his relation is established does the consciousness of their existence that men have at any given time emerge in all its essential characteristics. It appears, on the one hand, as something which is subjectively justified in the social and historical situation, as something which can and should be understood, i.e. as 'right'. At the same time, objectively, it by-passes the essence of the education of society and fails to pinpoint it and express it adequately. That is to say, objectively, it appears as a 'false consciousness'. On the other hand, we may see the same consciousness as something which fails subjectively to reach its self-appointed goals, while furthering and realizing the objective aims of society of which it is ignorant and which it did not choose' (Lukács, 1971: 50).

Stuart Hall also explained in detail about the relation between the distortion of reality and the falseness of ideology in his article '*The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees*': 'the 'falseness' ... arises, not from the fact that the market is an illusion, a trick, a sleight of hand, but only in the sense that it is an inadequate explanation of a process' (Hall, 1986: 36). Therefore, the criticism of ideology is actually about the concreteness of specific historical societies which inadequately explains the social reality. As Terry Eagleton wrote, 'ideology is the product of the concrete social relations



into which men enter at a particular time and place; it is the way those class-relations are experienced, legitimized and perpetuated. Moreover, men are not free to choose their social relations; they are constrained into them by material necessity – by the nature and stage of development of their mode of economic production’ (Eagleton, 2006: 3). And that is also why Lukács was so concerned with the importance of acquiring the consciousness of totality, or ‘self-consciousness’, because only by such actions, can members of whole societies realize the inadequacy of reified social relations caused by capitalism.

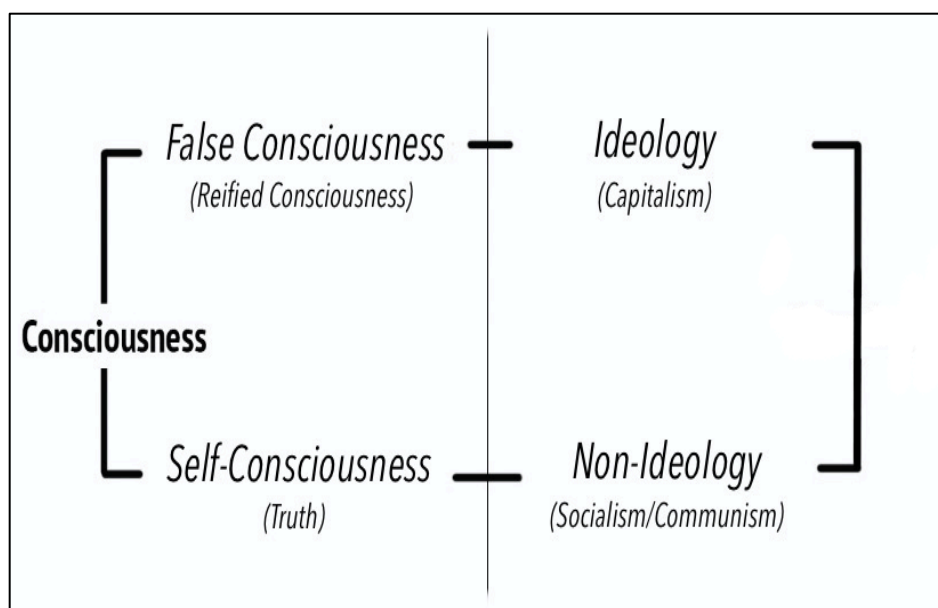


Figure 5.6 Relation of Consciousness and Ideology in Critical Definition

As far as this research is concerned, the term ideology should remain critical in order to focus on the structural defaults of capitalist societies – the phenomena of reification of human consciousness caused by historical concreteness. It needs to be further spelt out here about the essence of reification in order to have ‘a clear insight into the ideological problems of capitalism and its downfall’ (Lukács, 1971: 84). The phenomenon of reification originated from the appearance of the commodity-structure of an economy within which ‘the relationship of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between

the products of their labour' (Marx, 1887: 47-8). The development of the productive relation of labour 'as a continuous trend towards greater rationalization' progressively eliminates 'the qualitative, human and individual attributes of the worker' (Lukács, 1971: 88). Gradually, the 'relations between people who takes on the character of a thing and thus acquire a 'phantom objectivity', an autonomy that seems strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relations between people' (ibid: 83). And only when such reified relations between people is understood as 'the universal category of society as a whole', it 'become[s] crucial for the subjugation of men's consciousness to the forms in which this reification finds expression and for their attempts to comprehend the process or to rebel against its disastrous effects and liberate themselves from servitude to the 'second nature' so created' (ibid: 86).

Therefore, we can conclude that ideology should be defined as people's consciousness formed by the concreteness of the given economic structure which is necessarily produced by the ensemble of productive relations of a specific human society. Such consciousness, limited by the social reality of capitalism, obscures the fundamental mechanism of the society as a totality and blinds people to the alternatives to the dominant structure. However, it by no means says that ideologies are determined by economic modes. 'The economic provides the repertoire of categories which will be used, in thought', but it cannot 'provide the contents of the particular thoughts of particular social classes or groups at any specific time' (Hall, 1986: 43). Ideologies should not be over simplified as the homogenous content of certain fixed historical economic stages, such as slavery, feudalism, capitalism and socialism or communism, such as Marx deduced in his earlier years. Like the German philosopher Leibniz wrote in his letter to the mathematician and physicist Ludovico Casati: 'for never will be found ... two leaves ... so similar that after an accurate inspection, a difference cannot be detected' (cited in Rodriguez-Pereyra, 2012: 141), and so is the diversity of human societies and the accordingly diverse dominant ideologies. Ideology should be defined in a much wider sense as no country's economic structure is the same as that of others. For example, the United States and Japan are undoubtedly both capitalist countries, but it would be

economically reductionist to assert that the mainstream ideologies in these two countries are exactly the same. Ideologies in Japan and the US share very strong similarities in terms of industrial diversity and economic policies, but still there are many obvious differences determined by material elements such as geography, weather, population and the historical and dialectical social relations based on the material elements such as their respective history of wars and demographic features which are widely defined as culture.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The tendency of the 'culturalism' within the frame of 'cultural imperialism' has sabotaged the sustainability of this paradigm in the present epoch. As what has been specifically pointed out in section 5.1 and reviewed in section 5.2, it is clear to the researcher that the concept of 'ideology' is much more suitable than 'culture' for the theoretical framework of this research. There are mainly two reasons for the necessity for such substitution. The first is that the concept of ideology, as defined in section 5.2.4, strengthens the critical attribute and tradition of the 'imperialism' studies in the field of international communication studies. The second is that the revised framework of 'imperialism' paradigm with the focus on 'ideology' draws a clear line between the existences of superstructure and economic base while highlighting the importance of both.

Based on illustrations outlined earlier and above, it can be concluded that the ideological imperialism, in this research, refers to the international process by which the dominant collective consciousness of one society is being formed by the adaption of its economic transformation impelled by the global capitalist structure. There exist a variety of ideologies based on the specific political and economic structures of different societies. In the field of international communication, the dynamics of the political and economic interactions between different countries in different ages, involves different types of ideological processes. For example, if there exists the ideology of Americanization, then we could probably argue that the Americanization in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the 21<sup>st</sup>

century are not the same ideology since international relations and global economic structures on which these ideologies based have changed. Similarly, among different countries, the ideologies of 'Russianization' or 'Japanization' are distinctive from 'Americanization'. Therefore, if we want to talk about the concrete manifestation of ideological dominance either within one country or between different countries, it is of vital importance to specify the political and economic realities within which such processes are located. As far as this research is concerned, it is designed to explore the dissemination of the prevailing ideology of China among the African people which is epitomized by the term Sinicization, and how this ideology is represented by the international news of China's state media in Africa and perceived by the elite African audience – university students from various African nations studying in China. In the next chapter, the political and economic realities between China and Africa which underpins the appearance of the ideology of 'Sinicism' will be introduced in order to further unfold the discussion on the manifestation of such ideology in the content of Chinese media in Africa and on the reception of their ideological agenda among select African audiences.

## **Chapter 6 - Ideological Sinicization through CCTV-Africa**

The ideology of any society in a particular epoch, it was argued in the last chapter, is dialectically determined by the social, political and economic structure in which it is embedded. As far as modern China is concerned, there is a specific kind of dominant ideology, which is termed 'Sinicism' in this thesis. Sinicism, it is suggested here, is shaping China's international interactions with other nations. To understand how the Chinese state media CCTV-Africa delivers the ideology of Sinicism to its African audience, it is of great importance to know the substance of the ideology. Therefore, this chapter aims to achieve two goals. First, to provide a definition of Sinicism, and the process of ideological Sinicization, through a comprehensive illustration of China's political-economic reality as a semi-peripheral country and its political and economic interaction with the peripheral countries in Africa deploying the revised theoretical frame of structural imperialism developed by Johan Galtung. The second goal is to look into the mechanism of the process by which CCTV-Africa news programmes represent ideological Sinicization.

### **6.1 Defining 'Ideological Sinicization'**

The origin of the term 'Sinicization' is derived from a trans-cultural phenomenon in Chinese history. It refers to the cultural integration between the Confucianism of the Central Plain area and the civilization of ethnic minorities in ancient China. It usually happened when an ethnic minority conquered vast tracts of the land or even the whole country and expected to stabilize their governance in the Central Plain area; such as with the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty and the Manchu Qing Dynasty (Chen Y., 1998: 30). There are five main features of the phenomenon of Sinicization: a) The representative of Central Plain culture that was widely accepted by the ethnic minority regimes was Confucianism which advocates Order, Hierarchy, and Rituals; b) Sinicization usually happened when the new 'minority' governors voluntarily reached out to learn Confucianism instead of being forced to do so; c) the acceptance and internalization of Confucianism with the ethnic minority was always a result of a top-down reform from the 'minority' rulers to their people; d) the civilizational transition was always from

inferior social structure to a higher one, such as from slavery to feudalism; e) the residual cultural customs of the ethnic minority would be reserved to some extent (Chen Y, 1998; Ho P., 1967, 1998).

However, this term has been rediscovered and redefined by some scholars in recent years to describe a new tendency of international relations. According to Peter Katzenstein in his 2012 book *Sinicization and the Rise of China*, Sinicization refers to the recombination in China's economic rise against the 'reification of numerous civilizations into simple categories such as East and West [which] is widespread in everyday politics and common in policy and academic writings' (Katzenstein, 2012: 2). To point out further the unique features of Sinicization, Katzenstein used a comparison between Americanization and Sinicization. While, on the one hand, Americanization refers to the 'the process of remaking a civilizational 'Other' to be more like the civilizational 'Self', either through total assimilation or by making 'Other' conform more closely to dominant civilizational practices', and on the other hand, Sinicization refers to the 'the process by which the 'Other,' through appropriating aspects of 'Self', exerts its effects on the civilizational center' (ibid: 8).

As far as this research is concerned, the concept of Sinicization is neither a historical phenomenon nor a new tendency of international relations. Sinicization, in my research, refers to a comprehensive international process of political and economic interactions between China and other countries, especially those less developed ones, and the dissemination of the ideology of Sinicism created during the process. As illustrated in Chapter 5, every ideology is underpinned by a certain form of economic base. To understand the substance of the ideology it is important first to understand the political and economic structure of the ideology. Therefore, Section 6.1.1 sets out in general terms the political and economic background of Sinicism, within a theoretical framework of a 'semi-imperialism', in which China is defined as a semi-peripheral country that is inevitably undergoing sub-imperialist expansion. Section 6.1.2 introduces the manifestation of the ideology of Sinicism in the case of Sino-African political and

economic relations and to illustrate how Sinicism, theoretically speaking, can be manufactured as ideological consent between the elite classes in China and those in African countries by the process of ideological Sinicization.

### **6.1.1 The Economic and Political Base of Ideological Sinicization**

‘Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will, whose essential character and direction are determined by the economic conditions of existence of your class’ (Marx and Engels, 2015: 27). As far as a nation is concerned, its position or the class it belongs to in the world system determines the macro ideology the nation expresses when it is interacting with other countries. The unique political-economic status of China as a semi-peripheral country determines the substance of the ideological Sinicization. Thus, to know the substance of Sinicism, it is of vital importance to have a clear understanding of the concept of semi-periphery and to comprehend the mechanism of semi-peripheral countries’ semi-imperialist expansion from a critical perspective.

In most cases, semi-periphery is regarded as the ‘euphemism’ of sub-imperialism (Bond, 2015: 16). The terms ‘semi-peripheral country’ or ‘semi-imperialist country’ both refer to those states which ‘play a particular role in the capitalist world-economy based on the double antinomy of class (bourgeois-proletarian) and function in the division of labour (core-periphery)’ (Wallerstein, 1976: 462). Sub-imperialist countries ‘do not just transfer surplus value to imperialist centres but also succeed in appropriating weaker countries’ surplus value by displacing some of the contradictions specific to dependent capitalism’ (Luce, 2015). This is to say that semi-peripheral countries have to play double roles – one is the ‘supplier of natural resources and cheap labour’ for the centre countries, and the other is the ‘capitalist exploiter’ of the peripheral countries. Most of the rising regional hegemonies whose economies are growing fast within the global capitalist system are more or less playing a double role, thus the range of semi-peripheral countries is quite broad. According to Wallerstein,

'It includes the economically stronger countries of Latin America: Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, possibly Chile and Cuba. It includes the whole outer rim of Europe: the southern tier of Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece; most of eastern Europe; parts of the northern tier such as Norway and Finland. It includes in Africa, at least, Nigeria and Zaire, and in Asia: Turkey, Iran, India, Indonesia, China, Korea, and Vietnam. And it includes the old 'white' Commonwealth: Canada, Australia, South Africa, possibly New Zealand ...' (Wallerstein, 1976: 465).

Even though this list was written in the 1970s and situations in some of those countries have changed, it is still correct to categorize China as a semi-peripheral state. If China was counted as a semi-periphery mainly because of its association with the Soviet Union in the 1970s, then in the age of global capitalism China is still playing the intermediating role between centre and periphery. Although China has experienced dramatic growth in GDP in the past few decades, it is still not yet a fully developed country but rather a semi-peripheral country which is struggling to squeeze into the centre of the world system.

Based on the revived theoretical frame of sub-imperialism, which was originally set out by Ruy Mauro Marini in the 1960s, Mathias Luce in his recent article 'Sub-Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Dependent Capitalism' summarized 'five determining elements that make sub-imperialism's relatively autonomous expansionist policy possible through state action' (Luce, 2015: 33). Any country satisfying the five elements is capable of sub-imperialist economic expansion, which are:

1. 'A dependent country's accession to regional sub-centre status in response to global accumulation patterns through its transformation into a sub-centre of heavy industry with a particular domestic level of production and capitalist financial operation;
2. Bourgeois unity through displacing internal contradictions;
3. The formulation of a national sub-imperialist plan;



4. Formation of national capitalist trusts that tie the dependent economy to imperialism via state intermediation;
5. The dependent economic condition that not only transfers value into imperialist economies but also appropriates the surplus value of weaker nations' (ibid: 34).

In the case of China, it matches the above features with slight differences. Firstly, China had indeed responded to the global accumulation patterns through its economic transformation since 1978 when Deng Xiaoping initiated the 'open and reform' policy (Harvey, 2010: 137). By constantly exporting capital to the less developed countries, it can be argued that China is trying to establish its own global financial order – 'a new pattern of all-around opening up ... economic system' (The State Council, 2015; Kurlantzick, 2007; Jacques, 2009). But different from Luce and other Latin American scholars' analysis based on the case of South American countries such as Brazil and Mexico, the reality of China's economic prosperity, which drives China to be the Asian centre, is based more on light industry rather than heavy industry. At the same time, the slowly progressive economic neo-liberalization in China enables the state to avoid becoming the passive recipient of imperialist countries' financial 'aid' and being stuck in the centre-periphery trap through the 'internationalization-internalization' process of shock therapy (Luce, 2015: 35). That is to say, China acting as the arbitrator of its own state-run enterprises has managed to keep the domestic production and capitalist driven financial operations at a certain level to find room for negotiation with the leading Western countries in the world system. Only by retaining their political and economic autonomy, can countries like China transform from periphery to semi-periphery and maybe later progress to the centre.

Secondly, 'given the dimension of the disadvantages existing between the imperialist bourgeoisie and that of dependent countries, the latter find themselves lacking the conditions to negotiate directly with imperialism ... Because of this they 'opt for consolidating the national state as an intermediary' (ibid). While, in the case of China, the relic of the so-called capitalist bourgeoisie, if there was still any left after 1949, has

long been vanquished, mostly during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960/1970s. However, since the 'open and reform' policy began in 1978, there has arisen a new round of 'primitive accumulation' conducted by the previous administrative staff in those state-owned industries (He, 1998: 140-62).

Thus 'a new bourgeoisie appeared under the auspices of the Communist Party' (Martínez, 2015: 137). In addition, the same group or class of people, whether they stay in the state-owned enterprises or establish private companies, are facing the same economic dilemma as the economy develops to a certain point. With 'the Xi administration's reluctance to commit to deep economic reform', China along with its bourgeoisie class nowadays is faced with 'several negative trends: over investment and over-capacity in several basic economic sectors, over borrowing by local governments, overstating of previous growth statistics, overvaluation of the Chinese yuan, and a coming demographic downturn' (Godement, 2015: 1). The 'new' bourgeoisie and governmental officials are ceaselessly trying to find a solution to these dilemmas through either upgrading the domestic industrial structure or exporting huge amounts of capital to less developed countries. Furthermore, ideologically the new bourgeoisie class in China is unified by a new combination of gradualism and pragmatism, which is now called 'new conservatism'. This tendency originated from Deng Xiaoping's talks during the open-and-reform period that 'development is the absolute principle' and 'no argument on different ideologies' (Gao, 2013).

Thirdly, in a speech titled 'The Chinese Dream Will Benefit Not Only the People of China, But Also of Other Countries', President Xi Jinping said that 'we will bring benefits to both the Chinese people and the people of the whole world. The realization of the Chinese Dream will bring the world peace, not turmoil, opportunities, not threats' (Foreign Language Press, 2014: 62). By 2013, in a speech given by President Xi during his visit to Kazakhstan, he proposed to build the 'Silk Road Economic Belt' to provide 'each other (neighbouring) Asian countries firm support on the central issues concerning interests such as sovereignty, territorial integrity, security and stability ...' (Foreign Language Press,

2014: 315-7). Such a proposal was regarded as the early stage of the later grand project of the 'Belt and Road Initiative', which was officially launched by the National Development and Reform Commission of China as 'a systematic project' to 'be jointly built through consultation to meet the interests of all, and efforts should be made to integrate the development strategies of the countries along the Belt and Road' (The State Council of PRC, 2015). With the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, mainly initiated by the Chinese government, there is little doubt that there is indeed a national plan for sub-imperialist expansion achieved through capital concentrated investment in less developed Asian or African countries.

Fourthly, 'the very nature of the phenomenon of peripheral capitalism lies in the transfer of a significant part of the labour value fund created by the population of a dependent nation, to the core countries' (Dzarusov, 2015: 200). In the case of China, stable and sustainable cheap and skilled labour, or the high quality 'human capital' in the modern context of an economy (Chow, 2010: 47), has always been a comparative advantage. This advantage won China a position in the global economic system and distinguished China from other dependent countries (Arrighi, 2007: 351-67). Since the 1980s the export-oriented industries in China mainly dominated by State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and driven by foreign investment have always largely depended on the labour-intensive manufacturing and production assembly constituted of millions of Chinese workers migrating from the rural countryside (ibid: 356-7). However, the profitable payback of foreign investment in China is only achievable when the investment meets the central government's purpose (ibid: 355). It is similar in the case of China's outward investment. It is estimated that 88 per cent of China's outward investment is from SOEs (Broadman, 2007, cited in Su, L., 2012a). Although there have been some conflicts between the state-owned companies and the Chinese government, mainly because of the complicated ownership of SOEs, it is widely admitted that the SOEs are always in line with the central government and will be the pillar of China's economic development in the long term (Su, L., 2012b; Szamosszegi and Kyle, 2011). There is indeed also an increasing number of private Chinese companies going abroad but they are all under the restriction of China's

overseas investment policies, and the overseas investments of private companies are still incomparable to that of the SOEs. Therefore, in a state capitalism structure like China, the role of the Chinese government is more than just as an intermediary. Instead, in most cases, the function of the state in the manifestation of SOEs is the capital trusts themselves, who are the largest financial trusts nationally.

Finally, the growing role of China as an investor with vast capital in many less developed areas is becoming increasingly evident. Earlier in 2001, there was a grand project launched by the central government to encourage Chinese companies, both public-owned and private, to go abroad (Salidjanova, 2011: 10). Since then the outward direct investment from China has increased dramatically. China's investment in Africa has grown significantly in line with this policy, although even in the early 1990s China was already beginning to regard its role in Africa with considerable importance. According to David Harvey's theories of new imperialism, over-accumulation of capital in capitalist countries at a certain degree will cause a crisis if the capital cannot be reproduced profitably. Therefore, the capitalist system needs the cheaper labour and resources from the 'outside' or 'less developed area' to stimulate the system to create a continued accumulation of capital, which Harvey called 'accumulation of dispossession' (Harvey, 2003: 141). China's outward investment follows the same economic logic especially under the status quo that China's GDP growth slows down.

As illustrated above, the economic model of China demonstrates the characteristics of sub-imperialist expansion. Therefore, China's economic relation with underdeveloped countries can be analyzed under the theoretical framework of sub-imperialism as well. In the next section, the concrete manifestation of Sinicism in the case of Sino-African political-economic interactions will be introduced and discussed.

### **6.1.2 Dynamics between Semi-Peripheral China and Peripheral Africa: Revising Galtung's 'Harmony of Interest' Model**

According to Johan Galtung's structural theory of imperialism, 'periphery-centre

relationships are maintained and reinforced by information flows and through the reproduction of economic activities' (Thussu 2006: 51). While the centres of the Periphery and the Centre are connected through 'harmony of interest', the peripheries of the Centre and the Periphery are separated by the 'disharmony of interest' (Galtung 1971: 84). This Centre-Periphery model is 'highly protective of the centre as a whole' (Galtung 1971: 82), so the very existence of the disharmony of interests between peripheral groups makes sure that the vertical peripheral groups will never be united to resist the union of the central groups. Therefore, the key to the maintenance of the structural dominance of the Centre-Periphery model relies on two aspects: One is the establishment of the harmony of interest between centres through political-economic alignment and ideological propagation. The other is the constant cultivation of the disharmony of interest between peripheries.

In Galtung's revised model of imperialism, while the Centre and the Periphery (with capital 'C' and 'P') indicate the interstate structure of the world economic system, centres and peripheries (with lowercase initials) should be understood, as Cox (1987) and others noted, as social rather than geographical categories *per se* that 'denote location in the transnational social structure' (Robinson 2004: 73). More specifically, although it makes sense to establish for example a metaphorical alliance between Beijing and Washington, it is theoretically difficult to fully unfold the complicated dynamics between the two powers. As Edward Soja once argued, Core and Periphery could be understood as 'the spatial expressions of the same underlying relations of production which define bourgeoisie and proletariat' (1980: 222). From this perspective, Galtung's theory of structural imperialism is exactly an attempt to incorporate the analytical lens of class into the imperialism paradigm, which strives to situate transnational class interests within the interstate system. The function of the media and information flows from the Centre to the Periphery, therefore, is to manufacture and reinforce the ideological consent between the ruling classes in both the Periphery and the Centre: 'the centre in the Centre nation has a bridgehead in the Periphery nation. This is established as such that the Periphery centre is tied to Centre centre with the best possible tie: the

tie of the harmony of interest' (Galtung 1971, 83).

In Galtung's words, the harmony of interest should be defined as a situation, where dominating stratum are pursuing compatible goals (Galtung 1971, 81). In the case of China and African countries such compatible goals can be understood and interpreted as a transnational elites' understanding of the 'win-win' strategy to promote economic development both in China and Africa. And the official language of the Chinese government has always been very pro-active in arguing that there is a bond between Africa and China. For example, as the former Chinese foreign minister Qian Qichen said, 'As developing regions that ... once suffered the oppression and exploitation of imperialism and colonialism, China and African countries ... easily understand [one another's] pursuit of independence and freedom and ... have a natural feeling of intimacy' (Qian, Q., 2005: 200).

However, as Appadurai noted, 'The new global cultural economy has to be understood as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing centre-periphery models [...] The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain disjunctures between economics, cultural and politics which we have barely begun to theorize' (1990: 296). Apparently, China is not yet part and parcel of the developed Centre, but remains within the Semi-Periphery, which 'transfers value into imperialist economies but also appropriates the surplus value of weaker nations' (Luce, 2015, 34). In this regard, the case of Sino-Africa relations cannot be properly captured by Galtung's original model of structural imperialism, from which the position of the Semi-Periphery was absent. By adding this new dimension, a revision of the model appears in Figure 6.1. In this triangular structure, centres/ruling classes of the Centre, the Semi-Periphery and the Periphery are all connected through the harmony of interest as a transnational capitalist alliance.

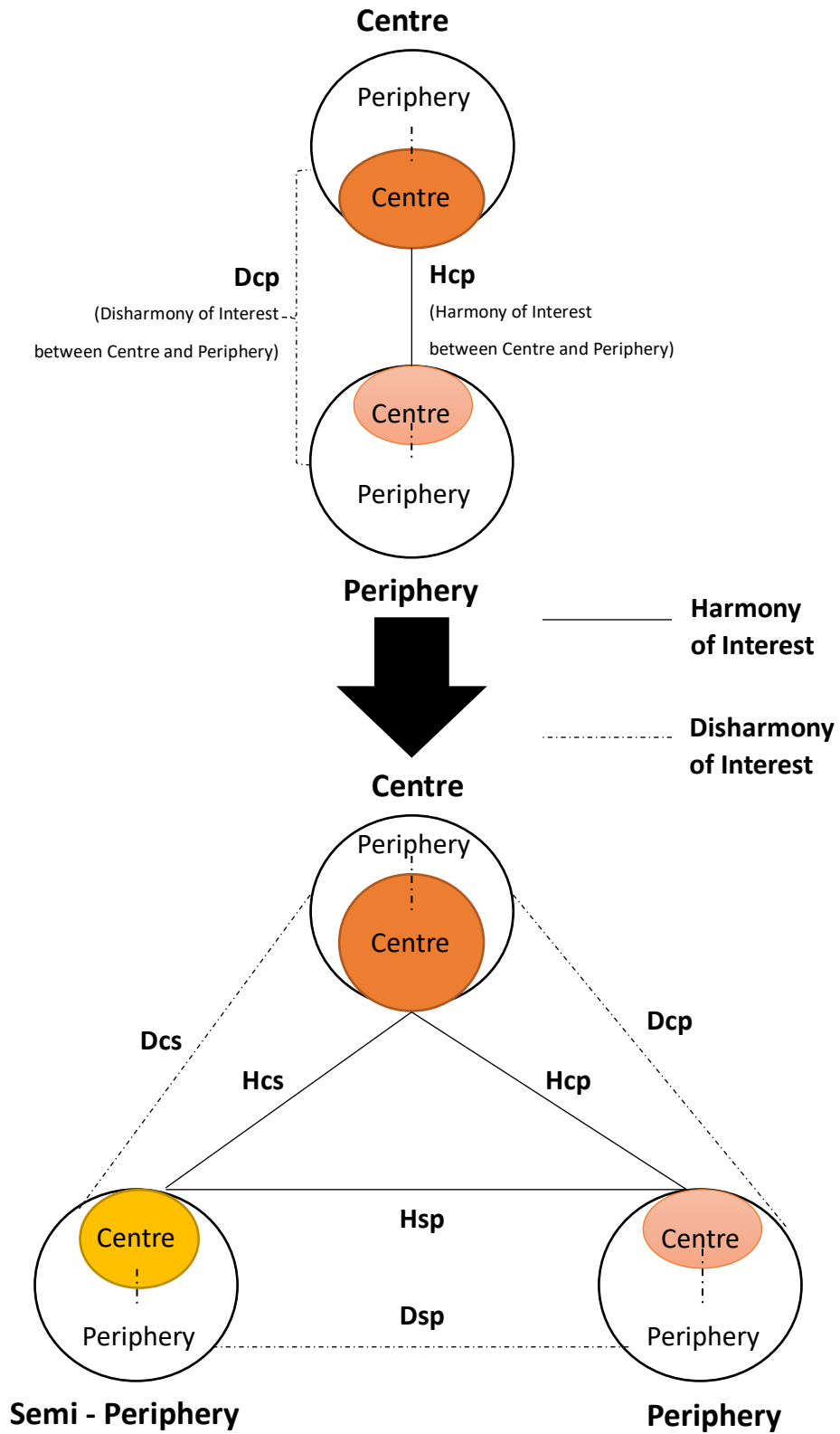


Figure 6.1 Revised Model of 'Harmony of Interest' between Centre, Semi-Periphery and Periphery (Xiang, 2018: 217)

However, when attempting to address any form of transnational capitalist alliance, we should always be aware of the following questions, as noted by Amin and some others, whether it is 'a group of associated classes that delineate a globally dominant historic bloc' or 'a group of classes with differing nationalities amongst other things who are conscious of their shared interests yet are still in competition with each other' (2011). William Robinson, who has gone the furthest in terms of arguing for the emergence of a transnational capitalist class (TCC), argues that there is never a single TCC that all capitalists belong to, instead there are 'multiple, overlapping, and competing forms of capital around the world' (2004: 47). Therefore, what needs to be made clear here is that the harmony of interest (Hcp) between the Centre and the Periphery is not the same as the harmony of interest (Hsp) between the Semi-Periphery and the Periphery. In other words, transnational corporate complexes/transnational capitalist associations between the Centre and the Periphery are different from those between Semi-Periphery and Periphery, which is the core point of this revision. And this distinction could be further dissected by Galtung's theory of a 'Conflict of Interest'. In the original definition provided by Galtung:

'There is conflict, or disharmony of interest, if the two parties are coupled together in such a way that the LC [living condition] gap between them is increasing; there is no conflict, or harmony of interest, if the two parties are coupled together in such a way that the LC gap between them is decreasing down to zero' (1971: 82).

Galtung's approach implies that there is not a bipolar or dichotomous relationship between harmony and disharmony, but the analytical capacity of unveiling 'degrees of harmony and disharmony by measuring the angle between the two trajectories', and more specifically, of comparing and contrasting 'weak and strong harmony and disharmony' (Galtung 1971, 82). In this regard, differences between Hcp and Hsp need to be situated back into the structural hierarchies of the world capitalist system and understood with regard to the distinctive attributes between Centre – Periphery



relations and Semi-periphery – Periphery relations, which indicates the nexus between distinctive characteristics of transnational capitalist alliances and the interstate structure of global capitalism.

As far as the semi-periphery country is concerned, it ‘transfers value into imperialist economies but also appropriates the surplus value of weaker nations’ (Luce, 2015: 34). This in-between position of semi-peripheral countries makes their goals in the peripheral countries different from that of the central countries. The dependency theory, which emerged in the 1960s, argued that the developed countries manage to keep the underdeveloped countries underdeveloped to secure their central positions in the world system – ‘in other words, to make conditions suitable for ‘dependent development’ (Thussu, 2006: 47). It, however, by no means implies that the economic reform brought by the developed centre to the periphery has no enriching impact on the latter. But, in the words of Galtung, what matters most is the ‘gap’ – the difference between the living conditions of Centre and Periphery determines whether there exists the imperialist expansion or not (Galtung, 1971: 87-88).

However, in the case of the interactions between semi-periphery and periphery, such dependent development becomes less significant as it has been replaced by a much more dynamic process involving a longer-term objective. In the previous model of Centre-Periphery, the dualistic positioning is relatively static. The group of centre countries, mostly Western nations, gained their central status through their colonization of other countries centuries ago or benefited from the new world order set in the two World Wars. In the 20th century, it seemed incontestable to assert that there did exist a global North that was much stronger than the global South. In the 21st century, however, the landscape has changed for obvious reasons. With the booming growth of big economies like India, China and Russia, the boundaries between strong North and weak South becomes increasingly vague. Instead, a much more global and dynamic system rises with new influential players and trans-national groupings such as BRICS. Therefore, as semi-peripheral countries, the goals of countries such as BRICS in the less developed

areas of the world are slightly different from that of the developed ones. This point can be proved in the case of Sino-African political-economic interactions.

### **6.1.3 Manifestation of Sinicism in China-Africa Relations**

As a semi-peripheral country that is exporting semi-imperialist expansion, China's international interactions with other countries are shaped by the economic realities of the country. Martínez summarized the dilemma faced by China: 'we see then that Chinese economic growth has been checked by the following limitations: the first consists of the population's resistance to the model of over-exploitation and deprivation, and the consequent demonstrations; the second is the health and other problems arising from pollution; and the third is the genuine lack of hydrocarbons and other strategic resources' (2015: 138). These problems lead to the two major demands of China: labour and resources. This section will talk about the expression of Sinicism in Sino-African relations from the perspective of labour.

In terms of labour, China's achievement benefits mostly from the binary, urban versus rural, structure of China's society which created a huge population of cheap labour (Arrighi, 2007: 351). According to the economist Arthur Lewis, the dual-sector economic structure in the countries with a large population is capable of producing an unlimited supply of labour (Lewis, 2000: 402). The case of China is even more complicated as the rural residents own their farming land while the urban residents do not. When the cities and other urban areas became marketized and rich, there appeared a huge number of immigrating rural residents who play the role of new proletarian class (Shen, Y., 2006). However, the reason the skilled labour has been very cheap in China is that, according to Marxist economics, immigrant workers from the rural areas are not thoroughly 'free' because they still own the means of production. 'Double freedom' means that 'workers must be 'free' to sell their labour-power and they must be 'free' from the means of production' (Marx, 1990: 874-5). Therefore, immigrant workers in China can stand the low wage because they hold a dual loyalty to land and factory (Burawoy, 1985: 103, cited in Shen, Y., 2006). This is what is called the 'accumulation without dispossession' based

on 'peasant economy' that immigrants in urban areas can always go back to their land in the countryside if they cannot survive in big cities (Yao Y., 2009).

However, Arthur Lewis also predicted that there will be a turning point: 'even if no legislative restriction were placed upon the flow of cheap labour, it seems inevitable in the long run that the early current of cheap labour should dry up, and that a reverse current should set in, with capital flowing to the lands of cheap labour' (cited in Hobson, 2013: 6). And 'since 2004, there has been a growing shortage of rural labour in the coastal area of South-East China ... at the same time, the cost of labour in China, in general, has increased constantly ... during 1991-2009, the growth rate of average wages in the manufacturing industry has increased to 14.7 per cent' (Zhao, Y., 2010). Therefore, the capitalist system in China needs the labour and resources from the 'outside' system to stimulate the internal system and to create continued accumulation of capital, which Harvey called 'accumulation of dispossession' (Harvey, 2003: 141).

According to the dependency theory briefly introduced in Section 4.3.2, peripheral countries in Africa have grown dependent economically on China as many of these peripheral countries 'remain economic appendages of the advanced capitalist countries and as long as their governments depend for survival on the pleasure of their foreign patrons' (Baran, 1973: 123). China wants from Africa cheap natural resources as well as sustainable cheap skilled labour to move in due course to the 'centre' of the global system. However, the reality is that many Chinese factories have to hire Chinese workers from China because the labour in many African countries is neither cheap nor as skilled as the Chinese labour (Wonacott, 2014). China, once the biggest 'sweatshop' in the world, has constantly been providing this kind of labour for the Western world for decades. Although it is not very easy to duplicate the unique social structure of China in other countries, it is still of great importance for China to find a similar transmitting country from a periphery to semi-periphery to replace its position of the global sweatshop.

There are interesting similarities between China and countries in Africa: Like China, Africa also has dual-sector economic models based on the rural-urban structure of African societies. For example, in South Africa, which is another semi-peripheral country of BRICS, there exists a rural-urban system which also produces a lot of labour, similar to the situation in China (Knight, 2007: 8). But in South Africa, immigrant workers were protected by the trades unions. Thus, although the rural workers in South Africa were less skilled their wages were higher, and it leads to the consequence that while China is suffering from labour scarcity, South Africa is suffering from unemployment of skilled workers (ibid: 2). In addition, the fast urbanization in Africa, from 15% in 1960 to 40% in 2010 (Freire, Lall and Leipziger, 2014: 1), creates the demands of factories in cities for more labour, so the immigrant workers from the countryside have the potential to become the new working class in the cities. And finally, the political status quo in most African countries is also similar with that of China as both believe that 'development has to come first before democracy' (Mensah, 2012).

In the case of Sino-African interactions, despite the fact that China is indeed profiting more from trading with African countries for natural resources, Africa in return has also benefited from the huge capital import from China (He W., 2012). And China apparently is expecting more than just a peripheral country with cheap resources from Africa. To accomplish the transition from semi-periphery to centre, China needs a much deeper economic transition. China is now facing many severe financial and demographic problems which align with the typical symptoms of a developing 'capitalist' country; such as over-accumulation of capital, rising price of domestic labour. President Xi has expressed the determination of the Chinese government to implement economic reforms in several speeches (Xi, 2012, 2013, 2014).

One of the main changes of Xi's economic policy noted by Francois Godement is 'the move to make China a capital-exporting country' which 'offers an outlet for the primary industry and state infrastructure sector whose further domestic development in China is no longer desirable' (Godement, 2015: 5). To obtain sustainable natural resources and

cheap skilled labour from African countries, China is expecting African countries to become more modernized and better governed. In order to secure its massive investment, China is also seeking for political stability through the soft power of the 'China Model, or Beijing Consensus' which proves that 'economic development and political stability can triumph over the need for a sound democratic system' (Sun, Y., 2014: 12). A modernized society with political stability is also the pursuit of the centre class of many African countries. As the President of Gabon, Ali Bongo Ondimba, said in an interview on CCTV-Africa's programme 'TALK AFRICA', African countries like Gabon want a real win-win strategy and Gabon invites anyone who 'really wants to come to Africa, to make money and (to) help us develop our countries' (14th August 2013). In 2013, a white paper on 'China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation' was officially published by the Chinese government, in which six important points were made. As far as the Sino-African economic relationship is concerned, China is expecting: 1) to promote sustainable development of trade; 2) to improve the level of investment and financing cooperation; 3) to strengthen cooperation in agriculture and food security; 4) to support African infrastructure construction; 5) to stress African people's livelihood and capacity building and 6) to promote cooperation under the multilateral framework (The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 2013). Three of these points are worthy of more attention: China's focus on agriculture, infrastructure and the importance of the African peoples' capacity-building abilities. The economic logic behind China's particular emphasis distinguishes it from the Centre countries.

Therefore, the definitive content of Sino-African centres' harmony of interest can be summarized in the possible simplest ways as two primary points: 1) sustainable economic development of African societies, and 2) political stability of African governments. These two points are also the concrete content of the ideology of Sinicism manifested in the case of Sino-African relations. In order to manufacture and reinforce this ideology, the Chinese state-controlled media CCTV-Africa has been programmed to produce the media content which represents the values of Sinicism with a particular target on the elite class of the African audience.

## **6.2 The Role of CCTV-Africa in Delivering the Ideology of Sinicism**

Marx and Engels said in the famous pamphlet of 'Communist Manifesto': 'the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class' (Marx and Engels, 2015: 31). And in modern societies, the production and dissemination of the ruling classes' ideas are mostly contributed by mass media and its wide audience. As illustrated in Chapter 5 where the concept of ideology was reviewed, the ideology of a society has a dialectical intercourse with the system of representation of mass media. If ideology 'legitimated a social world characterized by inequality', then the role of media is to construct consent to structural inequality to reinforce and disseminate this ideology' (Downey, Titley and Toynbee, 2014: 2-3). And when it comes to the concrete process of how the ideology is represented by the media to achieve a certain degree of influence on the public, the differentiation of the various media systems regarding their operating mechanism on an audience needs to be recognized and clarified. For example, in some Western societies where the mainstream value is the 'freedom of the press', the credit of ideology is actually grounded in the meta-ideological practices of media institutions which are 'independent of the direct play of political or economic interests, or of the state' in this claim, 'is not wholly fictitious' (Hall, 1988: 86). However, the case of China's state media is quite a different story.

China's state media has long been argued as the manifestation of propaganda model manufacturing consent discipline and mute the herd of public (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). However, the five filters of editorial bias, which are 'ownership', 'advertising', 'source', 'flak' and 'anti-communism' (Chomsky, 2013), implemented by the propaganda model are not entirely applicable in the case of CCTV in Africa. Not only CCTV in Africa is a transnational media with foreigners of other nationalities as audience, but also the news content of CCTV-Africa is rather positive messages instead of negative ones which increase the fear of public to make them dependent on governments. Therefore, in the field of international communication media studies, the propaganda model which used to be deployed to analyse China's state media needs to be revised to cater to the

dynamics and complexes of contemporary research purposes. And in order to have a clearer understanding about the true nature of CCTV as a state television, the following Section 6.2.1 is going to provide a brief introduction to the development of China Central Television and its English news channel CCTV- Africa with a focus on African programmes. The introduction is aimed to depict a general outline of CCTV and CCTV-Africa as the state-controlled media of the Chinese government. After the explanation of the broadcasting mechanism of CCTV, section 6.2.2 introduces the African audience and the rationale for the selection of African students in China, who are also part of the audience of CCTV-Africa as the research subjects of this thesis.

### **6.2.1 China Central Television and CCTV-Africa**

It is generally believed that:

‘critical theorists of the neo-Marxist and political economy traditions had little interest in explanations of the role of the media in relation to society, since the critical paradigm offered a clear message that the established, mainstream media were inevitably on the side of an unjust social order and a fundamentally flawed institution. Theorists and researchers worked at revealing the class bias and ideological character of media content and the general tendency toward hegemony’ (Christians *et al*, 2009: 14).

It can be argued that the main mechanism of all the capitalist media systems is consistently to manufacture ideology which reinforces the hegemonic social structure. However, different media systems of different societies work differently to produce various types of ideologies, even though all those ideologies are based on the same economic base of capitalism. Therefore, it is fair to say that ‘the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates. Especially, it reflects the system of social control whereby the relations of individuals and institutions are adjusted’ as expressed in the famous book *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm, 1984: 1-2). The typology of the *Four Theories of the*

*Press* has been criticized and revised for 'it defines the four theories from within one of the four theories – classical liberalism' (Christians *et al*, 2009: 4). But it is feasible to have a clear understanding of the differences of various media systems in the current global view especially when it comes to the particular example of the system of China's state-controlled media, which is largely different from many other media systems in the world.

Generally speaking, there are also four types of media systems which are 'authoritarian, paternal ('an authoritarian system with a conscience'), commercial, and democratic' (Christians *et al*, 2009: 8). A simplified definition is provided by Watson and Hill: 'The first (authoritarian) indicates a total monopoly of the means of communication and control over what is expressed. The second (paternal) is ... authority with Values and purposes beyond those concerning the maintenance of its power. The third (commercial) relates to control by market forces: anything can be said, provided that you can afford to say it and that you can say it profitably. Democratic control is the rarest category, implying active involvement in decisions by the workforce and, indeed, the readership or audience' (Watson and Hill, 2015: 177).

China's media system is a combination of 'paternal' and 'commercial'. With the growth and booming of the Chinese economy embracing global liberalization since 1978, China's media industry has undertaken many significant transformations (Xin, 2006). Although driven by liberal economy and reformist advocates, messages delivered by Chinese media like Chinese television 'considered as the most promising medium to be internationalized or globalized' (Xin, 2006: 03) is still clearly branded as the mouthpiece of government due to its distinct ideological content (Zhao, 1998: 181-94). Therefore, the commercial liberalization of media in China is limited to the area of apolitical media content production, while the eternal censorship is still in the hands of the central government. The development of China Central Television is a typical example of this mixed type of media system of China.

China Central Television (CCTV) was founded in 1958, but it was not until two decades



later when China started to embrace the world under the open-and-reform policy introduced by Deng Xiaoping, that CCTV finally launched itself into a new era of development and became a popular medium (Ju, 2009). Following the usual traditions for China's media, in the late 1950s, CCTV was a propaganda tool used to promote and to advocate the political machinery in China. After it changed its name from 'China People's Television Network' (or China's Peking Television) to 'China Central Television' in 1978, CCTV – or rather the Chinese leadership – took action to boost the country's new media industry, which was lagging behind world standards (ibid). CCTV was at the top of China's four-tier television pyramid that constituted national, provincial, county and city television stations (Zhu, 2012: 4). As the primary national media institution, CCTV was a powerful and driving force in championing the neo-liberal campaigns of the 1980s.

Although in terms of economic development, China has become much more neo-liberal due to rapid industrial marketization, the control on national media such as CCTV has never loosened. Since the day CCTV was born, it was under the administration and diktat of two of China's state information organizations, the Communist Party's (CCP) propaganda department and the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT). The former looks after ideological guidelines and issues directives on 'clear thinking and following Party policy' while the latter edits or censors all the daily content CCTV produces in case there are any sensitive topics (ibid). In exchange for this restrictive surveillance from China's Communist Party, CCTV enjoys many privileges such as the 'must carry' rule that other regional TV stations must supply news resources to CCTV and must rebroadcast the 7.00 pm CCTV News programme at the same time every day (ibid: 197); add to that the CCP provides CCTV with first-hand information about national policies and instructs all the local media, both broadcast and print, to use them with a name check to the main media source in Beijing. Due to the further marketization of the media industry, CCTV along with other state media has undertaken many institutional transformations to cater to its growing audience and to survive the increasingly fierce competition (ibid: 218). But CCTV still is, and will be for a rather long period, the

dominant player in China's television broadcasting market because of its unshakable political status (ibid: 3-7).

In 2001, the then Chinese President Jiang Zemin along with the SARFT administration jointly launched the trail-blazing 'Going Out' venture, which was directly aimed at 'taking the PRC's voice to the world' by making China's TV and radio channels accessible overseas (ibid: 169). This 'going out' project was actually first kick-started from the late-1990s with only 'industrial and trade enterprises' involved back then (Xin, 2009: 363). But even before that, to follow the instructions given by the central government to have an international approach and to become more effective in the market economy, CCTV established its own commercial company 'China International Television Corporation' (CITC) in 1984 and CCTV started to produce programmes with a foreign perspective or characteristics. In the 1980s, a programme called 'Follow Me' was produced, aimed at helping the Chinese public learn English and, in 1986, another English language programme was launched called 'English News' (Jirik, 2008). However, until 1995, when the management in CCTV started to expand the English programme team, 'English News' was just a fifteen minutes daily bulletin, which was basically a series of brief items translated from the main content of the then CCTV News (Xinwen Lianbo), which was a national news programme (Jirik, 2008: 82).

Four years later, CCTV's Overseas Service Center (OSC) was further developed to support and manage the foreign language channels better. Finally, in 2000, CCTV-9, was elevated from being three daily, half-hour bulletins on CCTV-4, to an independent English-language channel, which was the predecessor of the current CCTV-News. The establishment of CCTV-9 was incorporated and launched with the unprecedented enthusiasm and ambition of CCTV's leadership: 'A media manager involved in the 'Going Out' policy told one visiting researcher in 2003 that the aim of CCTV International was to be 'China's CNN, only cleverer'. According to CCTV management, the first time they heard the term 'China's CNN' was in a meeting with SARFT and the Chinese government's Propaganda Department in 2001 when Xu Guangchun used it to describe the role of

CCTV-9 in the context of the 'Going Out' project. The first step in realizing this goal had been the launch of CCTV-9' (Jirik, 2008: 84).

One month after its first broadcast in the new format in September 2000, CCTV-9 was instructed by the management to become a cable TV deliverer. Through cooperation with foreign media outfits, such as AOL-Time Warner and News Corporation, the channel obtained access to the foreign television market. Until then, CCTV-9 had faced a long journey in its goal of becoming a fully professional news channel in the sense that might be understood by CNN, Fox, Sky or the BBC, although it did offer a comprehensive service with programmes like 'Learn to Speak Chinese' and 'Travelogue' slotted into the prime time. The Chinese government leadership soon realized its shortcomings, and three years later in 2003 official instructions were issued by the then party Politburo's member Li Changchun insisting that CCTV-9 was mandated to 'present a Chinese perspective on issues that interest the world and that the channel must report world news in a timely fashion' (cited in Jirik, 2008: 103). This instruction led to a revamp within the channel with a significant adjustment to the broadcasting order of the programmes. More news-oriented programmes could now be seen at prime times, and also across the weekend broadcasting schedule. However, after the restructuring there was no instant or noticeable effect, essentially because the basic content of the channel was almost the same: a mixture of informational, educational and entertainment programmes.

This situation continued until April 2010 when CCTV-9 was re-launched with a brand-new name 'CCTV-News', and a fresh structure of programmes introduced, aiming to make it a professional international news channel. After a series of constant improvements since the channel was first set up, this final 'revolutionary' revamp was reckoned to be a major issue. CCTV-News, now with two main bureaux, or hubs - in Nairobi and Washington, both began broadcasting in late 2012 - is now the most recognizable face of China's official international TV channel and also 'the first international media to dedicate more time to Africa through CCTV Africa programmes such as Africa Live, Talk Africa and Faces of Africa' (Zhang, Y.Q., 2014). Compared to the

media operation in Washington, CCTV's African media centre in Nairobi seems more influential and dynamic. At the time, there was considerable worldwide interest in this move and the *Financial Times* newspaper wrote that the channel was launched to counteract what the Chinese government saw as a negative image of China spread by the Western media. Dong Tiance, a journalism professor at Jinan University in Guangzhou in southern China observed: 'The big Western news agencies dominate about 80 per cent of the news flow and if China wants to strengthen its soft power, it must speak through its own media. The strengthening of (China's) international broadcasting allows the world to understand us more thoroughly and increase our influence.' CCTV News Programming Director Zhuang Dianjun said, 'CCTV's African bureau marks another step in strengthening diplomatic relations between China and African countries. I am convinced that CCTV's increased coverage of Africa will provide Chinese viewers with a chance to understand better Africa ... The permanent secretary of the Kenyan Information & Commercial Ministry said, China has become a very strong partner in Kenya, any of the flyovers you see in Nairobi Chinese are building, any of the laying of fiber that is being done, Chinese are doing it, together with Kenyans we need to continue with these partnerships' (Zhang, N., 2010).

Apparently, China's long-term investment in Kenya helped in getting support for its CCTV bureau plans from the Kenyan government, and made it easier for Chinese media to penetrate into the indigenous society and 'dig out' more valuable news compared to what CCTV's reporters and presenters can achieve in its Washington hub. 'Some of the most familiar and talented (local) anchors were recruited to present the three programmes which marked the launch of CCTV Africa: 'Africa Live', an hour-long newscast on current affairs, business and sports, airing daily at 8 pm Eastern Africa Time; 'Talk Africa', a weekly talk-show discussing important events of the week; and 'Faces of Africa', a programme dedicated to remarkable figures in African history and to ordinary Africans who accomplished the extraordinary' (Gagliardone, 2013: 30). To local people, what CCTV was doing there perhaps meant far more than just reporting the news. According to Mark Masai, the Kenyan anchor of CCTV's show 'Africa Live', the Chinese

media was dedicated to ‘tilting the scale and ... Showing the potential and the solution to these [problems] and not just pointing out blatantly the bad side, the problems and the crisis that [Kenya] has’, and the mission of his programme – ‘Africa Live’ – is to change the narrative about Africa (McKenzie, D., 2012).

Galtung wrote that ‘we all know that the major agencies are in the hands of the Centre countries, relying on Centre-dominated, feudal networks of communication’ (Galtung, 1971: 93). However, in the case of CCTV-Africa, the reality is that it is currently technically and structurally incapable of competing with international media institutions like CNN, BBC, Fox or even Sky. Although China has been trying to penetrate and integrate into the local news industry in Africa for a few years, the mainstream of African journalistic professionalism remains highly Westernized. And Western media, though with different agenda-settings role, such as those of CNN and BBC, are far more influential than Chinese media in many African countries (Gorfinkel *et al*, 2014: 86). Thus, despite the fact that the theory of structural imperialism fits the reality of Sino-African relations on the political and economic level, it does not fully explain the particular situation of how Chinese media is paving its way in the African news market and manufacturing ideological consent among its target audience among the elite. However, understanding the ideological consent underpinned by the harmony of interest between Chinese and the African centre class is the key to revealing the mechanism of the structural sub-imperialist media flow from semi-peripheral to peripheral countries. Therefore, the process of manufacturing such ideological consent needs to be further discussed through the particular case study of the Africa-focused programmes produced by CCTV-Africa.

As discussed in the last section, the structural imperialism theory of Galtung tells us that the maintenance of the dominant global structure relies on the harmony of interest between the centre of Centre and centre of Periphery. The particular kind of harmony of interest between Chinese elites and African elites, as introduced in Section 6.1.2, has cultivated a specific form of ideology which is defined as Sinicism in this research and is

observable in the representation of the media content of CCTV-Africa. It has been noticed that the elite and official speakers are the major figures in the media coverage of Ebola report of CCTV-Africa (Marsh and Xiang, 2016). And the general media content of CCTV-Africa has been focused on the topics of 'solutions', 'social harmony' and 'stability' (Marsh, 2016). These studies suggest that the aim of CCTV-Africa is to target the elite class of the African audience instead of the whole public to build ideological consensus for elite cooperation.

### **6.2.2 African Students as Target Audience of CCTV-Africa**

As the first English news channel established by China Central Television, it is said that CCTV-news channel, previously CCTV-9, now covers 98% of the earth's surface through six satellites, and it has an audience of 40 million across Asia, Europe, and America (Yan and Ke, 2009: 70). However, there have been few further surveys to testify whether that 40 million audience exists or not. CCTV-news channel is accessible in many countries indeed, but little effort has been made to conduct methodologically reliable surveys, whether by academics or media practitioners, to identify its real overseas audience. The producers of CCTV-News do have a very general idea of who they are producing programmes for in the global English-speaking audience (Jirik, undated: 7).

One consultant of CCTV-news interviewed by Jirik described a more accurate target saying that 'the channel should be directed at the foreign audience, particularly overseas, and in particular at 'opinion makers'' (Jirik, 2008: 241). In reality, it seems that their goal has been partially achieved. Research conducted by Guo and his colleagues in 2005 indicates that about 77% of CCTV-News' foreign audience are from the middle or even higher class and their occupations include 'entrepreneurs, educators, politicians and technology developers' (Guo, Wang and Sang, 2005: 4). This profile of CCTV-News's target audience has been reconfirmed by other audience research. For example, one survey conducted by CCTV Golden Bridge International Media Group (CTVGB) shows that CCTV-News is not only targeting the oversea elite class but also the domestic opinion leaders as well (CTVGB, undated). And the data collected and analyzed by Guo and his

colleagues shows that, as indicated in Chart 6.1, the Chinese audience in China and the foreign audience outside China are the majority of the audience of CCTV-news. Therefore, instead of producing the news programmes for the public of a particular nation-state, CCTV-News is aiming its content for the global elite class.

While in the case of CCTV-Africa, the same principle applies: Gorfinkel and her colleagues noted that it could be quite difficult sometimes to tell whom the CCTV-Africa is programming for. With the slogan of 'Introducing Africa to the world', it seems that the 'African audiences are not intended', and 'occasionally programming appears to target primarily Chinese audiences' as well (2014: 83). However, it could be less confusing if the audience of CCTV-Africa can be analyzed as different classes instead of a homogeneous unity. As illustrated in the above sections, the Chinese and African centre class are united in the harmony of interest which is mostly manifested in the political and economic alignment between Chinese and African governments. And there is little doubt about asserting that the state-owned CCTV-News, especially under the restricted administration of Xi's media policy, is adequately representing the direct interest of the Chinese government exclusively. Therefore, CCTV-Africa with the particular focus on African issues is naturally programmed to facilitate and to promote the harmony of interest of Sino-African centre classes through continuously manufacturing and reinforcing the ideological consent on the subjects of economic development and political stability. The question remains though how this ideological consent is cultivated among the elite African audience.

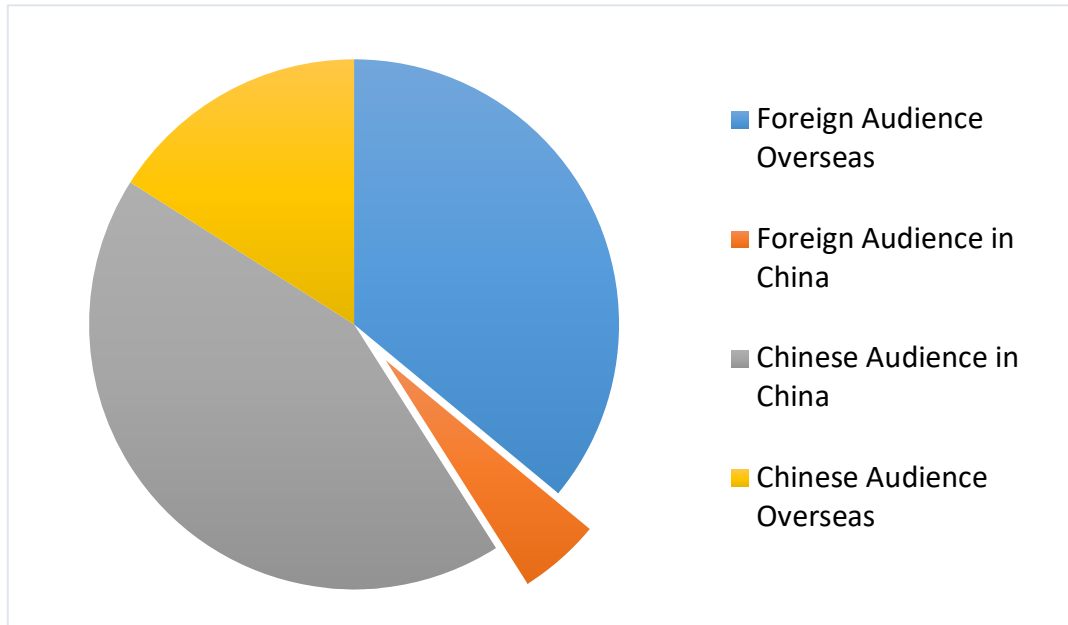


Chart 6.1 Audience Profile of CCTV-News (Guo, Wang and Sang, 2005)

The audience profile of CCTV-Africa in African countries is not very clear due to the shortage of related research. It is assumed that CCTV-Africa, in general, is still not very appealing to the African audience, though it is said that Chinese TV soaps are enjoying a certain degree of popularity in some African countries (Tao, 2015). However, a questionnaire conducted by a Chinese scholar among the African students (professionals) who were participating in a training programme organized by the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of China from June 2013 to June 2014, indicates that 92% of the 358 participants watched the programmes produced by CCTV, though not CCTV-Africa particularly, and 23.5% voted CCTV as one of their top three favourite international televisions next to the BBC (40.2%), France 24 (36.9%) and CNN (24%) (Yan, C.S., 2015). Clearly, there are different viewing habits among African audience due to their different social status. The demographic characteristic of African students who are studying at universities in China indicates they have the potential for being or becoming the elites of many African societies.

The origin of the educational cooperation between China and Africa can be traced back



to the age of Mao when China was following the principles of international communism to aid the colonized third world countries (Liu, 2013). After the establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of the scholarships offered by the Chinese government for African students, 'from 2000 awards in 2006 to 4000 awards by 2009 and to a total of 6000 by 2015' (King, 2013: 69-75). The actual number of the scholarships varies. According to an article in *The Guardian*, in 2013, there were an 'estimated 12,000 African students studying in China with the support of the Chinese government' (Allison, 2013). Despite the difficulty of establishing the number, it is doubtless that Chinese government is definitely making more efforts to boost the China-Africa educational cooperation in order to 'increase mutual understanding and friendship between our two peoples and particularly the young generations' as the former president Hu Jintao once said in an opening ceremony of a summit (Tarrósy, 2015). The logic behind the project seems quite understandable. 'Almost all the scholarships (for African students) are awarded at post-graduate level; the idea is to get people who are already well-educated and established in their home' (Allison, 2013). It is believed by the Chinese government that the 'African students who return to their homelands have played positive roles in their nations' politics and economics as well as cultural development respectively' (King, 2013: 68). Therefore, there are increasing higher education institutions in China, either supported by the governmental policy or encouraged by the profit of international students' markets, are recruiting students from all kinds of countries from the continent of Africa. And there is also an increasing number of training projects specially designed for journalists from Africa to deepen "their journalistic knowledge on China's development and its quest to enhance a common prosperity for all in the world" (Kargbo, 2017).

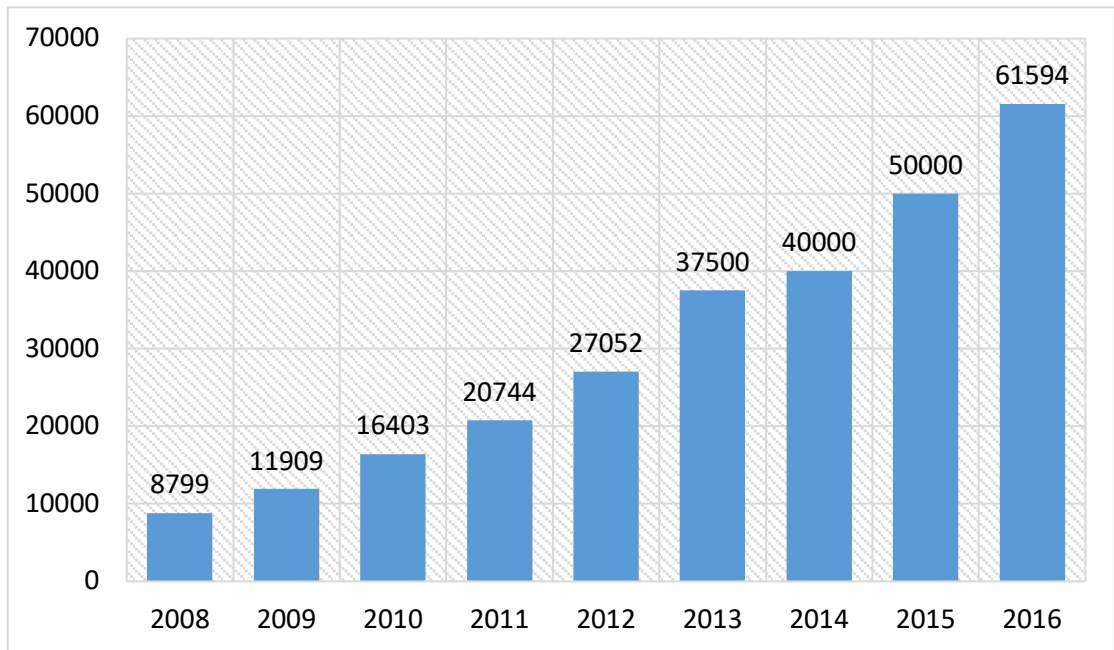


Chart 6.2 The Increasing Number of African Students Studying in China (Liu, 2013; Rowe, 2017; Breeze and Moore, 2017; ASKCI, 2017)

Thanks to the promotion of the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 and China’s national scholarship project, there is an increasing number of African students coming to China for education as shown in Chart 6.2 (Liu, 2013). It is estimated that by 2013, there were roughly 30,000 African students studying in China and 18,000 of them were self-funded (Allison, 2013). As part of the important component of African diaspora in China, African students studying in China are like the bridge between China and their original countries. As described in Adams Bodomo’s book ‘Africans in China: A Sociocultural Study and Its Implications on Africa-China Relations’: “African communities are really “working as a political, economic, cultural and linguistic link between Africa and China, bringing added benefit to the already existing connections” (Rodríguez, 2013: 198).

The foreign students’ project has always been seen as a strategy for the Chinese government to enhance its soft power and to improve its image. However, how powerful or effective the ‘soft’ power is regarding influencing people’s minds is difficult to measure. As discussed in Chapter 5 and the above sections, the formation of ideology is

fundamentally conditioned by the economic base. As one African student expressed in an interview: 'We are influenced by our time here (China), but that does not mean we'll be totally in favour of them. It's not like a father and child. We are the future leaders of our countries, and we'll look for the future benefit of our countries. We know what we are doing' (ibid).

However, despite the conflicting interests of different nation-states, a unified global ruling class has emerged in recent decades (Robinson and Harris, 2000). It is true to say that the unprecedented progress of economic globalization has, to some extent, increased the nationalism of different nation-states (Held, 2002: 123-9). However, according to the structural theory of imperialism, the ideology of nationalism is the barrier for the peripheral class of both centre and peripheral countries to unite to resist the dominant global structures. The members of the global ruling class, despite their different nationalities, have more harmony of interests than disharmony of interests, such as the Sino-African centre class as illustrated in section 6.1.2. And it is widely realized that 'within the next couple of years, many of these (African) graduates are going to be in positions of power and influence' (Allison, 2013). As the future elites of their countries, African students who are studying in China satisfy every requirement of being CCTV-Africa's target audience: well-educated and part of current or potential elite. Their roles as future leaders in Africa also means that they are a 'captive' future audience for CCTV, and China's cultural messages. They are also the group of people who are key to the dominant structure of global capitalism.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

In summary, as indicated in Chart 6.3, the ideology of Sinicism is produced due to China's semi-peripheral status in the global capitalist system. This particular condition pushes China to export sub-imperialist economic expansion to less developed countries to survive the competition and to work towards getting into the list of centre countries. On the other hand, the less developed countries also want to grow as a dependent economy on China to transfer from a peripheral country to semi-peripheral state. In the case of

China's political-economic interactions with African nations, the concrete manifestation of Sinicism has two dimensions. One is the pursuit of neoliberal economic development. The other is to maintain the political stability in African countries. These two points are the substantial content of the ideological consent shared by both Chinese and African elite classes, and which are being represented by the CCTV-Africa news programmes. By consistently delivering this ideology of Sinicism to the African students in China who are defined as the future elites of African countries, CCTV-Africa can reinforce the harmony of interest between Chinese and the African ruling classes.

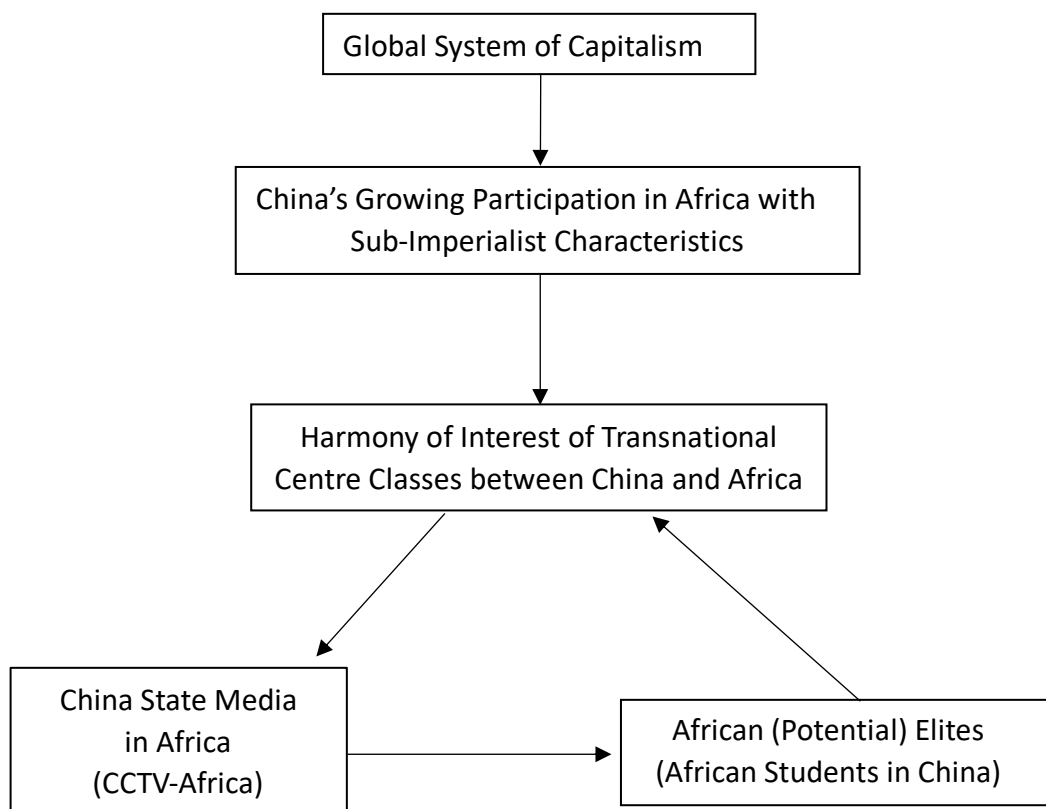


Chart 6.3 Sinicization of China into Africa

Therefore, exploring how the African students in China perceive this ideology of Sinicism delivered by CCTV-Africa is of great importance for us to truly understand the mechanism of mass media to build up the connection between social reality and human perception.

## Chapter 7 - Methodology and Methods

This chapter explains the research design, introduces the research questions, hypothesis and research methods of this thesis and illustrates the necessity of deploying a critical research method combining both qualitative and quantitative aspects. There are three main research methods deployed for the field research: an online questionnaire, individual interviews, and content analysis. Each is used to collect different data and materials for this research.

There have been two online questionnaires, which were conducted in 2014 and 2016 separately. The 2014 questionnaire was conducted at the very beginning of the research, which collected general information about the perceptions and viewing habits of foreign students in China. The results of that 2014 questionnaire were the empirical basis for assembling and shaping the final research questions and hypothesis. The 2016 questionnaire, on the other hand, was a pre-screening procedure to select the appropriate interviewees for individual semi-structured interviews in the summer of 2016. In order to provide solid research results endorsed by scientific proof, the third main research method – content analysis - was deployed as a triangulation to the qualitative research of individual interviews. The content analysis is based on a business news programme on CCTV-Africa called *Global Business (Africa)*. Besides the quantitative content analysis, the triangulation also contains a focused discourse analysis of a special edition of the business news programme. Therefore, both the main method and triangulation are comprised of qualitative and quantitative dimensions, which is also the methodological pursuit of this research.

This chapter is constituted of three main sections. The first is a brief review on the origins and characteristics of different research approaches. Through analysing the differences of these methods, it provides the rationale for deploying a mixed-method and critical approach for this research. The second section sets out the research design with detailed and systematic discussions on the necessity of deploying appropriate research methods

for each step; and especially in the sub-section of research questions and hypothesis, the empirical results of the 2014 questionnaire will be used as support for the formulation of the research question. The third section examines the limited validity of generalization of the methods deployed in this research with a brief conclusion directing attention to the numerous findings of the next chapter.

### **7.1 A Brief Review on Quantitative, Qualitative and Critical Methodologies and Methods**

The original research question which attracted the researcher to conduct the following research is based on the previous study by the researcher on CCTV-News and the 'going out policy' of the Chinese media. The curiosity of the researcher was aroused on the perception of foreign audiences of CCTV-News, which is a global Chinese government supported media platform aimed at foreign publics. Therefore, the initial research question is aimed at finding out how the foreign audiences of CCTV-news interpret and understand the agenda of the broadcasting organisation. In order to set up the foundation of methodology and to ascertain the most suitable methods to conduct scientific social research to answer the question accurately, a brief review of the current mainstream methodologies and related methods is necessary.

The concept of 'social research' refers to the 'academic research on topics relating to questions relevant to the social scientific fields, such as sociology, human geography, social policy, politics, and criminology' (Bryman, 2012: 4). The methodology deployed by the researcher reflects the fundamental ontology and epistemology of the social research. It is usually accepted that ontology is about people's 'beliefs about the nature of the social world', and epistemology is about the 'nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired' (Snape and Spencer, 2003: 2). There have always been divergences between different schools of epistemology and ontology in the field of social research. As shown in Table 7.1, the differences between qualitative research and quantitative research, regarding epistemological and ontological orientations, are that the research methodology of the former is usually objective and positive, and the latter is

constructive and interpretive. Moreover, unlike qualitative research which is mostly conducted to generate a new theory based on the knowledge acquired from ground, quantitative research, which follows the natural science model, is more likely to mechanically follow the structures of theories: either for or against. But it does not necessarily mean that these two research traditions are always in opposition to each other.

	<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>
<b>Principal orientation to the role of theory</b>	Deductive testing of theory	Inductive; generation of theory
<b>Epistemological orientation</b>	Natural science model, in particular, positivism	Interpretivism
<b>Ontological orientation</b>	Objectivism	Constructionism

Table 7.1 Fundamental Difference between Quantitative and Qualitative Research Strategies (Bryman, 2012: 36)

As illustrated in Section 2.4 of Chapter 2, the methodology of media audience research combines both the ethnographic method of anthropology and the scientific method of modern sociology. The former is usually qualitative, and the latter is mostly quantitative. Many scholars of media audience studies have advocated combining these two methods to get the maximized beneficial result from both. The difficulties of deploying a mixed research method are various, such as the ontological and epistemological divergence, inconsistency of research designs and so on. Therefore, to find out an applicable mixed method with both qualitative and quantitative natures, it is of great importance for us to first have a general idea of the definitions and practices of these two methods.

### **7.1.1 Quantitative research**

The most common definition of quantitative research is that it is ‘a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are used to obtain information about the

world' (Burns and Grove, 2005: 23). As we can see from Table 6.1, quantitative research is always regarded as positivist. The origin of positivism can be traced back to 1637 when the French philosopher René Descartes wrote a book called *Discourse on Methodology* 'in which he focused on the importance of objectivity and evidence in the search for truth' (Snape and Spencer, 2013: 9). In the following century, many scientists and philosophers, such as Isaac Newton, Francis Bacon and David Hume, were in approval of the epistemology that 'knowledge about the world can be acquired through direct observation' and the observation should be collected in an 'objective and unbiased way' which are 'key tenets of empirical research' (ibid). The emergence of sociology in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century was closely interlinked with the development of positivism:

'Sociology was characterised ... as 'an attempt to create a method of historical and political science in a form dependent on a pre-elaborated philosophical system, that of evolutionist positivism ... It became a philosophy of non-philosophers, an attempt to provide a schematic description and classification of historical and political facts, according to criteria built up on the model of natural science. It is therefore an attempt to derive 'experimentally' the laws of evolution of human society in such a way as to 'predict' that the oak tree will develop out of the acorn'' (Gramsci, 1971: 426).

Indeed, the widely-recognized founding father of sociology, Auguste Comte, 'asserted that the social world could and should be studied in much the same way as the natural world, based on direct observations from which universal and invariant laws of human behaviour could be identified' (Snape and Spencer, 2013: 9). However, during the 1930s and 1940s, there emerged scepticism about how the objective observation of the social world can contribute to the production of knowledge which is supposed to be helpful in revealing the truth of the world.

The epistemological divergence between inductive and deductive methodologies has pushed the positivist research towards a new tendency. The inductive logic 'involves



building knowledge from the bottom up through observation of the world, which in turn provide the basis for developing theories or laws' (Snape and Spencer, 2013: 7). However, it was realized that without the support of systematically established theories, 'it was always possible that a future observation might prove an exception' to the previous observations on the ground (ibid: 9). As Bryman as noted, 'Social scientists are sometimes prone to being somewhat dismissive of research that has no obvious connections with theory – in either the grand or the middle-range senses of the term. Such research is often dismissed as naïve empiricism' (Bryman, 2012: 22). The new tendency of positivism, which is later referred as 'post-positivism' or 'post-empiricism', advocates a deductive logic to conduct social research (Snape and Spencer, 2013: 9).

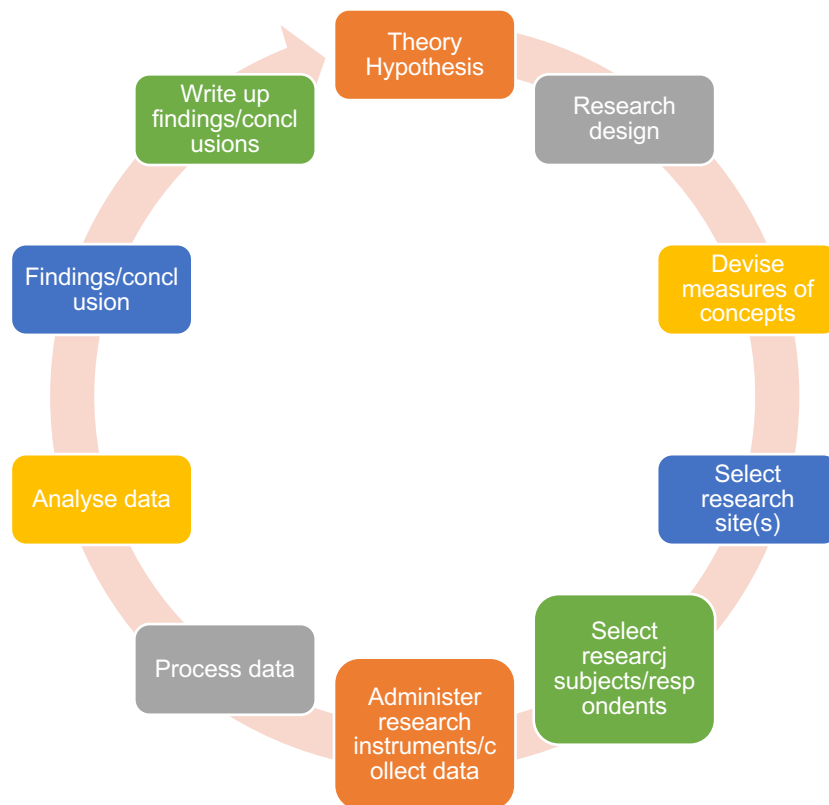


Figure 7.1 The Process of Quantitative Research (Bryman, 2012: 161)

Deductive logic refers to 'a top-down approach to knowledge. It starts with a theory from which a hypothesis is derived and applied to observations about the world. The

hypothesis will then be confirmed or rejected, thereby strengthening or weakening the theory' (ibid: 7). As shown in Figure 7.1, the circular process of quantitative research starts with a theory or hypothesis and ends up with a result proving or denying the original theory or hypothesis. The findings of the deductive quantitative research are always expected to provide a quantified and generalized truth for certain kind of social phenomena 'by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into useable statistics' (Wyse, 2011). Such characteristics can be noticed in the two most frequently deployed methodological strategies for quantitative research - 'Experiments' and 'Surveys' (Creswell, 2009: 14). The former 'includes true experiments, with the random assignment of subjects to treatment conditions, as well as quasi-experiments that use nonrandomized designs', and the latter 'includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection, with the intent of generalizing from a sample to a population' (ibid).

1. Only phenomena and hence knowledge confirmed by the senses can genuinely be warranted as knowledge (the principle of phenomenalism).	2. The purpose of theory is to generate hypotheses that can be tested and that will thereby allow explanations of laws to be assessed (the principle of deductivism).	3. Knowledge is arrived at through the gathering of facts that provide the basis for laws (the principle of inductivism).
4. Science must (and presumably can) be conducted in a way that is value free (that is, objective).	5. There is clear distinction between scientific statements and normative statements and a belief that the former are the true domain of the scientist. This last principle is implied by the first because the truth or otherwise of normative statements cannot be confirmed by the senses.	

Table 7.2 Five Principles of Positivism in Social Research

Although many researchers believe that positivism and post-positivism approve that 'the methods used in the natural sciences are appropriate for studying the social world' (ibid: 10), 'there is a long-standing debate about the appropriateness of the natural science model for the study of society' (Bryman, 2012: 28). In Table 7.2, the five principles summarized by Bryman indicate how positivist social research can be structured methodologically to study phenomena realized through subjective senses (2012: 28).

### 7.1.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research 'is often described as a naturalistic, interpretative approach, concerned with exploring phenomena 'from the interior'' (Flick, 2009). As we can see from Figure 7.1, epistemologically speaking, qualitative research is largely regarded as closely interlinked with interpretivism. Like positivism, the historical origin of interpretivism also involved another philosopher - Immanuel Kant. In his masterpiece *Critique of Pure Reason* published in 1781, Kant brought up new proposals on the approaches to obtain knowledge about the world:

'Perceptions relates not only to the senses but to human interpretations of what our senses tell us; Our knowledge of the world is based on 'understanding' which arises from thinking about what happens to us, not just simply from having had particular experiences; Knowing and knowledge transcend basic empirical enquiry; Distinctions exist between 'scientific reason' (based strictly on causal determinism) and 'practical reason' (based on moral freedom and decision-making which involve less certainty)' (Snape and Spencer, 2003: 6-7).

By highlighting the subjective autonomy of 'understanding' the experience that happens to us, interpretivism with an idealist perspective differentiates itself from positivism which is based on the absolute objectivity of truth. In later years, Max Weber inherited the idea of 'understanding', and 'he emphasised that the researcher must understand the meaning of social actions within the context of the material conditions in which people live' (Snape and Spence, 2003: 7). Weber further distinguished the differences of understandings in natural science and social science: 'in the natural sciences, the purpose is to produce law-like propositions whereas in the social sciences, the aim is to understand subjectively meaningful experiences' (ibid).

Especially in the postmodernist age of social science, 'advocates of postmodernism have argued that the era of big narratives and theories is over' and instead 'locally, temporally, and situationally limited narratives are now required' (Flick, 2009: 12). Such emphasis

on contextual triviality and individual subjective perceptions can be noticed in the strategic approaches deployed by qualitative research. Table 6.3 displays five main strategies of qualitative research summarized by John W. Creswell, which are ‘ethnographies’, ‘grounded theory’, ‘case studies’, ‘phenomenological research’ and ‘narrative research’:

<p><b>Ethnography</b> is a strategy of inquiry in which the research studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting, primarily, observational and interview data. The research process is flexible and typically evolves contextually in response to the lived realities encountered in the field setting.</p>	<p><b>Ground theory</b> is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants. This process involves using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information.</p>	<p><b>Case studies</b> are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Case are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time.</p>
<p><b>Phenomenological research</b> is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants. Understanding the lived experiences marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning.</p>	<p><b>Narrative research</b> is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives. This information is then often retold or restoried by the researcher into a narrative chronology. In the end, the narrative combined views from the participant's life with those of the researcher's life in a collaborative narrative.</p>	

Table 7.3 Five Main Qualitative Approaches (Bryman, 2009: 13)

Compared to the deductive quantitative research method, the process of qualitative research in social science is much more inductive. As indicated in Figure 7.2, the process of qualitative research method is bottom-up with more reflexivity. Qualitative research starts with a general question derived from physical observation, and data is collected to export theory instead of being guided and limited by the theory. Moreover, as shown in Figure 7.2, the interaction between step 4 and 5 allows the researcher to analyse the data and rationalize the theoretical frame more dialectical by reconsidering each other with more solid empirical or theoretical ground. And the extra self-circle of step 5a and

5b subsumed within step 5 indicates the flexibility of social research in terms of strengthening the core theme of research and collecting valuable data. As Bryman points out: ‘research is done to answer questions posed by theoretical considerations. But an alternative position is to view theory as something that occurs after the collection and analysis of some or all of the data associated with a project’ (2012: 24).

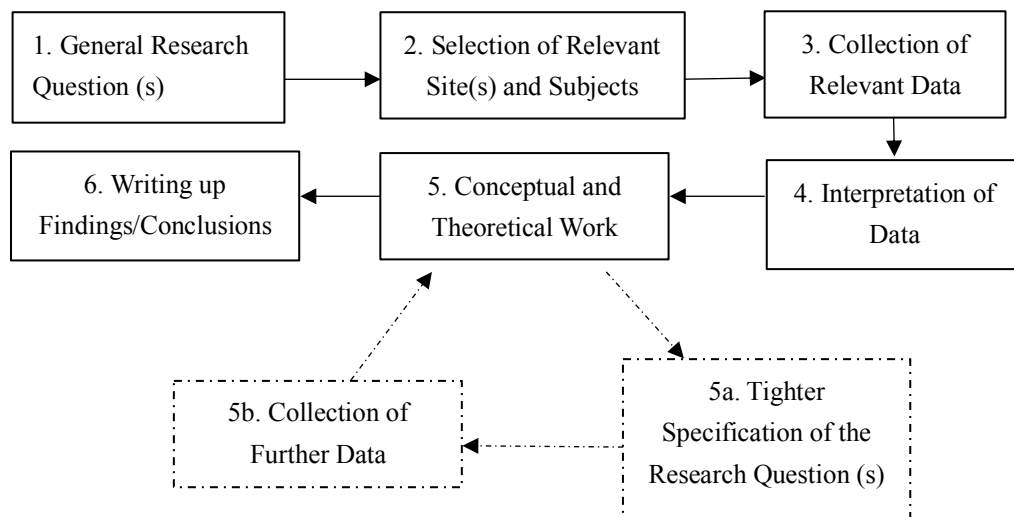


Figure 7.2 An Outline of the Main Steps of Qualitative Research (Bryman, 2012: 384)

### 7.1.3 Critical Research

Both the epistemology of quantitative research or qualitative research is deeply concerned about how ‘true knowledge’ is acquired by human beings. Although there seems an irreconcilable contradiction between positivism and interpretivism in terms of defining the substance of knowledge, ‘the history of social science research reveals a pattern of using both qualitative and quantitative techniques and approaches without deliberately drawing attention to this’ (Rocco *et al.*, 2003: 596). More importantly, following the philosophical tradition invented by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and carried forward by Karl Marx and adopted by the Frankfurt School, there emerged a rather neutral and dialectic approach to study sociology which is framed as the critical theory or critical research (Vine, 2009).

Similar to the qualitative inquiry, critical research shares an interpretivist stance of

recognizing the importance of subjective cognition in the formation of knowledge. However, critical theory is sceptical of how the subjective interpretation of the objective environment is forged in the first place. By questioning the human subjective cognition, critical theory further 'attempts to dig beneath the surface of historically specific, oppressive, social structures' (Harvey, 1990). The eternal goal of critical research is to free human beings from 'the constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender' (Creswell, 2009: 63) which have been incorporated into the existing knowledge system. Therefore, 'critical social research involves an epistemological perspective in which knowledge and critique are intertwined' (Harvey, 1990). Here is the definition of knowledge in critical social research provided by Lee Harvey:

'Knowledge is a dynamic process not a static entity. Knowledge is not a bucket into which grains of information are dropped in the hope that they somehow coalesce into some kind of explanation of the world. For critical methodologists, knowledge is a process of moving towards an understanding of the world and of the knowledge which structures our perceptions of that world' (1990).

To critical researchers, the formation of knowledge is the consequence of the dialectical intercourse between nature and human beings as a perpetual dynamic process. This dialectical method places no particular priority on the metaphysical importance of human consciousness, but also pays equal attention to the significance of physics – the objective material environment which conditions the human consciousness. As Leon Trotsky once wrote, 'society is a product of the development of primary matter, like the earth's crust or the amoeba' (Trotsky, 1940). The production of knowledge in human societies is therefore realized by constant searching for scientific evidence through positivist research and thereafter evolving theories through interpretivist meditation. As indicated in the Marxist methodology of dialectical and historical materialism, scientific methods of positivism are of great importance in respect of understanding the reality of a given era which the human knowledge is based on and determined by (Soares, Campos and Yonekura, 2013).

Therefore, a dialectical approach should neither be dominated by empirical evidence as ‘facts as descriptions of surface appearances are anathema to critical-dialectical thinking as they reify common sense at the expense of deconstruction’ nor be engulfed by speculative imagination as ‘a theory analysis that fails to engage the material world through empirical material is itself limited’ (Harvey, 1990). The ideal approach then is the combination of ‘empirical analysis together with theoretical conjecture’ which is ‘essential for a dialectical analysis of inner connections’ (ibid).

As far as this PhD project is concerned, the outline of the main steps deployed in this critical research, as indicated in Figure 7.3, represents an integration of both positivist and interpretivist research traditions. First of all, similar to qualitative research, this critical research starts with a very general question triggered by the observation of a certain social phenomenon. Instead of deploying a ground theory and to collect data directly, the researcher is more likely to build a connection between the original observation and the established theories. By building up the connection, it is expected to unearth the historical lineage of the social phenomenon and thereafter to contribute to the human knowledge in a more systematic and scientific way. Following an established theoretical frame, it is common to envisage a hypothesis at the primary stage to guide the rest of the research. Additionally, in order to design the research rationally, there should be a step to consider how to link the essential concepts and notions to the subjects of field research. Inheriting the qualitative tradition, in the step of conceptual and theoretical work, there will be two extra steps for reflexive analysis and to further complement evidence to perfect the theoretical analysis. Finally, different from qualitative research but more similar to quantitative research, the conclusions of this research are not supposed to be the linear closure but a supplementary and circular contribution to the existing theoretical frame. In section 7.2, there will be detailed description about how this research follows this specific dialectical approach.

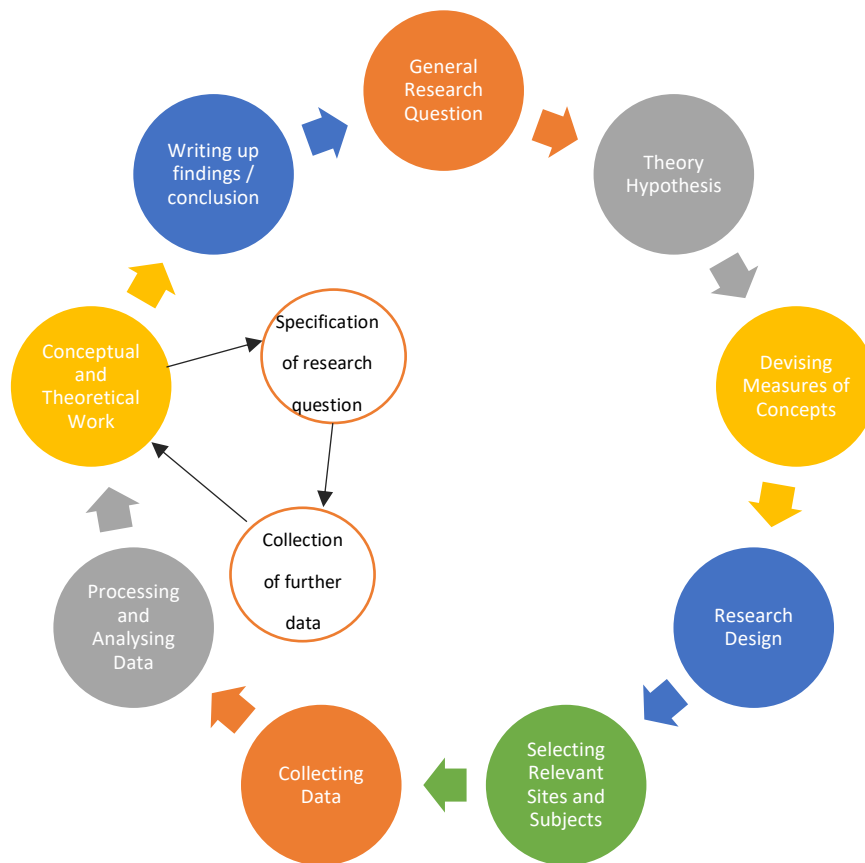


Figure 7.3 The Process of Critical Research Deployed in This Research

## 7.2 Research Design

This section is mainly constituted of three sub-sections. The first sub-section of research questions and hypothesis contains the illustration on the necessity of deploying an online questionnaire to forge the research questions and the content of the 2014 questionnaire including its relevant major findings. The second sub-section depicts the details of conducting the field research using the methods of a questionnaire (again), individual interviews, content analysis and discourse analysis.

### 7.2.1 Research Questions and Hypothesis

The starting point of this research is based on the researcher's interest in exploring the agenda of globally expanding CCTV-News and how the foreign audiences interpret the media content of the news channel. The general research question as displayed in the process of Figure 7.3 is both shaped by the researcher's interest and also the empirical



results of an online questionnaire survey conducted in 2014. The 2014 questionnaire helped the researcher to have a general understanding of the status quo of the foreign audience of CCTV-News\* and to narrow down the scope of research sites and subject. Therefore, the importance of the questionnaire needs to be spelled out as it is used in a specific way for this research.

At the beginning of the research in the early 2014, the researcher's original idea regarding the foreign audiences of CCTV English news channel was rather preliminary and vague. Back then, a general survey was required to provide the concrete details as inspirations for workable research questions and objectives. The method of a questionnaire was regarded as a suitable and efficient way to collect such details. Generally speaking, there are two main objectives in conducting a questionnaire. The first is 'to maximise the proportion of subjects answering the questionnaire' and the second is 'to obtain accurate relevant information for the survey' (Leung, 2001: 187). Therefore, a questionnaire is suitable for collecting raw data to draw a general picture of the research subjects.

More importantly, it is a very practical method with many advantages. Bryman summarizes five of these: 1) cheaper to administer; 2) quicker to administer; 3) absence of interviewer effects; 4) no interviewer variability; 5) convenience for respondents (2012: 233-4). Given the large scale and difficulties of collecting such general information through personal interviews, conducting an online questionnaire, at the primary stage of research, to acquire basic information of research subjects is very reliable as it standardises the answers of the respondents in a way designed by the researcher for his/her research purposes.

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\*More information and results of this questionnaire can be found in the Chinese article '*Developing Countries' International Communication Pattern Analysis* (发展中国家外宣媒体的全球传播探究)', written by author and Liao Dieer, published in '电视研究 (TV Research)', Vol.1 (326), pp. 27-30, in 2017.

In consideration of practicability, the online questionnaire conducted in November in 2014 was limited to foreign students studying in China. The first reason for this choice was that compared to conducting an international questionnaire, it was much more feasible to conduct it within one country and, at the same time, the diversity of the foreign interviewees could also be ensured. Secondly, foreign students in China are the biggest group of foreign residents in China. According to the statistics of the 2010 population census of the Chinese government, the international students who were studying in China were 26% of 593,832 foreign residents (National Bureau of Statistics of PRC, 2011). Additionally, foreign students are more likely to watch China’s media due to either their interest in Chinese culture or the limited access to foreign media.

The 2014 questionnaire (the detailed content of this questionnaire and results can be found in Appendix 1) has collected 182 samples with 155 of them valid. As indicated in the following tables and figure, interviewees participated in the questionnaire were from 37 countries (Table 7.7) across five continents (Table 7.5), 75% of them were between the age of 18 to 30 and 87% of them have stayed in China less than three years (Table 7.6). As Figure 7.4 shows, the geographical distribution of interviewees in China covered twelve provinces, three municipalities and one special administrative region. The main significant results are listed below which inspired the researcher to carry out further exploration on the audience study of the CCTV-News channel.

<b>Age Range</b>	18≤20	21≤25	26≤30	31≤35	36≤40
<b>Number of Interviewees</b>	49	68	31	5	2

Table 7.4 The Age Range of Interviewees

<b>Original Region</b>	Africa	Asia	Europe	North America	Oceania
<b>Number of Interviewees</b>	55	68	23	8	1

Table 7.5 The Geographical Distribution of Interviewees' Origins

<b>The Length of Time Spent in China</b>	Less than one year	1 to 3 years	3 to 5 years	5 to 10 years
<b>Percentage of Foreign Interviewees</b>	41%	46%	10%	3%

Table 7.6 The Length of Time Interviewees Spent in China

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of people</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of people</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of people</b>
Nigeria	19	Sierra Leone	3	Kenya	6
Uganda	3	Philippines	1	Somalia	6
Rwanda	2	Ghana	3	Zambia	3
Sudan	1	Mauritius	1	Namibia	2
Italy	2	Argentina	1	India	13
Spain	1	Panama	1	Russia	6
Czech Republic	1	Nepal	1	Turkey	1
Germany	1	Bulgaria	1	Japan	6
Kazakhstan	1	Belgium	1	Malaysia	1
Indonesia	4	Thailand	19	Canada	1
South Korea	23	South Africa	2	United Kingdom	6
United States	8	DR Congo	2	Papua New Guinea	1
Côte d'Ivoire	1				

Table 7.7 The Nationality of Interviewees

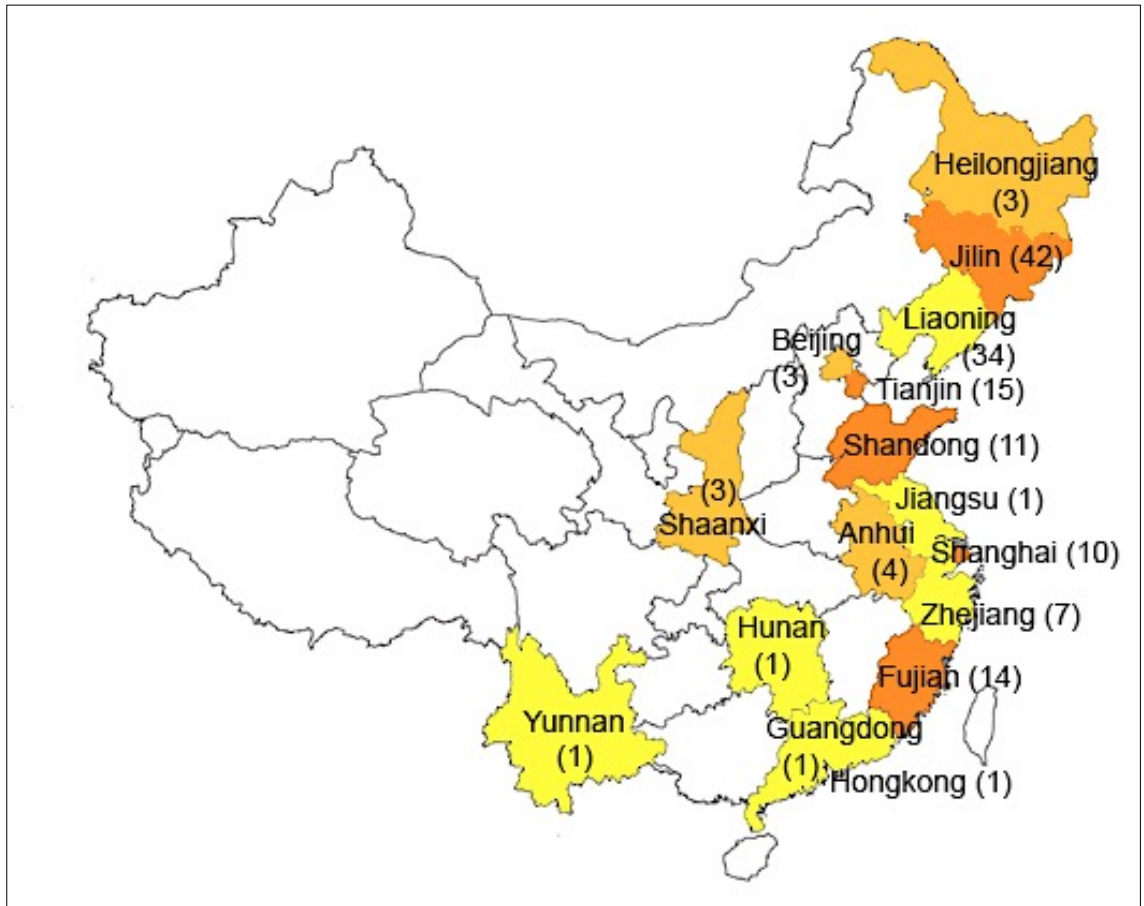


Figure 7.4 The Geographical Distribution of Interviewees in China

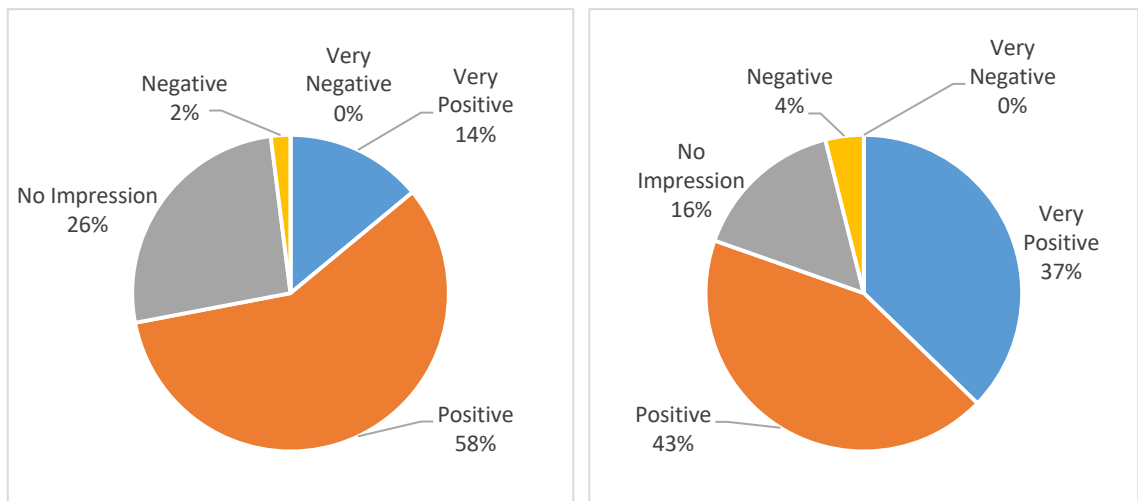


Figure 7.5 African Students' Perception of CCTV-News Channel (left) and the Image of China Presented by CCTV-News (right)

According to the above statistics, it is interesting to note that in the 2014 questionnaire there were a considerable number of participants from the continent of Africa compared to other areas. According to the statistics from the Ministry of Education of the PRC in 2015, African students studying China represents the third biggest group of international students (49,792 – 13%) next to Asian foreign students (240,154 – 60%) and those from Europe (66,746 – 17%) (China Scholarship Council, 2016; Ministry of Education of PRC, 2016). More interestingly, African students held much more positive opinions on the media content of CCTV-News. As shown in Figure 7.5, 72% of African participants held positive attitudes towards CCTV-News and 80% of them thought very positively about the image of China on CCTV-News, and no African students were very negative of CCTV-News and the image of China at all. Despite the fact that the questionnaire was perhaps not sufficiently all embracing enough to portray an in-depth assessment about how exactly participants interpreted such a positive stance, it is a still very intriguing point as an inspiration for a research question. Another element contributing to the final choice of conducting a reception analysis of African audiences is an observation of the establishment of CCTV-Africa's bureau in Nairobi in Kenya in 2012. As well as CCTV-News providing a comprehensive international news channel, it also has two special editions focusing exclusively on news from the continent of Africa and United States, those programmes emanating from CCTV-Africa and CCTV-America. Both these editions have independent broadcasting times in many African countries and in the US. This implies a very important strategic emphasis of CCTV-news on the Sino-African media flow and content. The fact that CCTV, as an official state-controlled media platform, representing the interests of the Chinese government, the Sino-African political economic background is therefore inevitably brought into consideration, which is another key factor influencing the formation of the questions and objectives of this research.

All in all, based on the general results acquired from the 2014 questionnaire and certain observations on the status quo of CCTV-News channel, the research questions that were raised were: 1. How do the African students studying in China (as the potential future elite opinion leaders of their local societies) understand the (ideological) message

delivered by the news produced by CCTV-Africa? 2. How does the reality of the enhanced Sino-African political and economic interaction contribute to the way that African students understand the media content of CCTV-Africa?

The objective of this research is to cast a glimmer of light on the discussion about the correlation and struggles between mass ideologies and political economic structures from a transnational perspective using the case study of CCTV-Africa and its African audiences. Based on the literature review and theoretical framework as indicated in the preceding five chapters, the hypothesis of this research is that African students studying in China, conditioned by the political and economic structure of Sino-African bilateral interaction and their social class, tend to interpret CCTV-Africa positively and decode most of the ideological messages delivered by the news in a dominant position (applying the theory and terminology of Stuart Hall on encoding and decoding (Hall, 1980).

## **7.2.2 Interview**

### 7.2.2.1 Pilot Questionnaire

If the above 2014 questionnaire can be regarded as the first stage in the survey to frame research questions and hypothesis, then the online questionnaire conducted in the summer of 2016 is clearly an important and relevant second stage, which was also used not as a sole and independent method to achieve key results but rather as a functional tool to collect general data and select suitable respondents for further in-depth interviews. In order to clarify these two questionnaires designed for different purposes, they are respectively named '2014 questionnaire' (the one introduced above) and '2016 questionnaire' (or pilot questionnaire as the title of this sub-section indicates).

The pilot testing, usually in the form of a mini-survey, was conducted to reduce the risk of not fully understanding the conditions of the interviewees and putting together unnecessarily complex questions, and it 'helps you to avoid making mistakes and can save time and effort in the long run' (Mytton, 1999: 73). As far as this research is concerned, a random sample survey, with a specific focus on the group of African

students in China, was conducted before the interviews as a pre-screening method to select the interviewees who are fit for the following interviewing sessions. This online questionnaire, which was put online on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016, collected information from 90 African students studying in China. Finally, 38 of them were found to be suitable, willing and available to be interviewed (the detailed content of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2).

The results of the pilot testing, as displayed in Figure 7.6, provided a general picture of the African students' community in China. Nearly half of the interviewees of pilot questionnaire claimed themselves to be regular viewers of CCTV-Africa and 65.8% of them held a rather positive perception towards CCTV-Africa. It is surprising to find out that 42.2%, nearly half, of the interviewees are self-funded students and the scholarships were largely issued by the Chinese government rather than their national governments. All in all, these results have helped structure the further interview questions in a very effective way.

Questions	Answers		
<b>Gender Proportion</b>	Female: 36.7%	Male: 63.3%	
<b>Are you a regular reviewer of CCTV-Africa?</b>	Regular Reviewer: 51.1%	Non-Regular Reviewer: 48.9%	
<b>Are you planning to return to your country in Africa after you finish your study in China?</b>	Yes: 55.2%	No: 1.1%	It depends: 43.7%
<b>Are you obliged to return to you country after graduation?</b>	Yes: 53.3%	No: 46.7%	
<b>What diploma are you studying for in China?</b>	Bachelor's Degree: 43.3%	Master's Degree: 41.1%	PhD: 15.6%

<b>How are you funded?</b>	Chinese government and institutions: 53.3%		African government and institutions: 4.4%		Self-Funded: 42.2%
<b>What is your general impression about CCTV-Africa</b>	Positive: 40.2%	Relatively Positive: 25.6%	Neutral: 23.2%	Relatively Negative: 9.8%	Negative: 1.2%

Table 7.8 The Results of Pilot Questionnaire (2016)

#### 7.2.2.2 Individual/Semi-structured Interview

To test the hypothesis, various methods are deployed for the field research. The method of interviewing is the most common one for qualitative research. 'In qualitative research interviewing, the researcher wants rich, detailed answers' (Bryman, 2012: 470). In-depth interviewing therefore is ideal for digging into the much deeper and complicated subjective consciousness of interviewees. There are mainly two types of interviewing: group and individual. The former method in media audience studies is mostly used for focus group interviewing on the understanding that 'focus groups create concentrated conversations that might never occur in the 'real world'' (Morgan, 1998: 31). Group interviewing is usually used to explore diverse opinions of the participants among whom there is a gap regarding social class, educational background etc. (ibid: 57-9).

As far as this research is concerned, the theoretical hypothesis of the sampling of respondents assumes that elite audiences are more 'able to articulate some of the presentational codes of the discourse which structure it in the direction of a preferred/dominant reading' (Morley, 1980: 40). Therefore, the demographical character of the interviewees in this research is concentrated on the group of African students in China. Group interviewing, though 'a quick way to pick-up relevant themes around a topic' (Smithson, 2000: 105), is always affected by the possibility that a few strong voices dominate the whole group (ibid: 107). Additionally, limited by reasons of



practicality and logistics, it is nearly impossible to assemble all the interviewees together from across China into a focus group for interviewing. And because of the different situations of individual interviewees, such as time and location, it is much more sensible and efficient to organize individual interviewing instead of undertaking the group sessions.

Individual interviewing can also focus on specific topics, and it is designed 'to determine responses to particular communication ... which have been previously analysed by the investigator' and crucially providing a means of focusing on 'the subjective experiences of persons exposed to the pre-analysed situation in an effort to ascertain their definition of the situation' (Morley, 1980: 32-3). Thus, the subjective interpretation of the media content of CCTV-Africa by African students is, therefore, the essential outcome that this field research is looking to evaluate and summarise.

The format of the interviewing procedure is semi-structured, and this practice, along with unstructured interviews are the methods frequently deployed when conducting research on media audience studies. Unstructured interviewing, 'similar in character to a conversation', is usually conducted during a relaxed and informal occasion, which allows the interviewees to speak freely, and it usually involves more than one interview with the interviewee (Morley, 1980: 471). For anthropologists who are expecting to have extensive descriptions about the context of local communities and to spend a rather long period of time in the field, unstructured interviewing seems the appropriate method to deploy. In contrast, semi-structured interviewing is quite effective and efficient. This qualitative research method 'incorporate(s) both open-ended and more theoretically driven questions, eliciting data grounded in the experience of the participant as well as data guided by existing constructs in the particular discipline within which one is conducting research' (Galletta, 2012: 45). It is ideal for a mixed-method research, in that semi-structured interviews incorporate both the features of qualitative research that emphasize exploring the subjective experience of the interviewees and the characteristics of the quantitative research is guided by the organized structure following

the theoretical framework.

### 7.2.2.3 The Conduct of the Interview

Interviews were conducted from the end of May to the middle of July in 2016 in China. As shown in the Figure 7.7, 38 interviewees are originally from 19 different African countries across the continent of Africa. Participants, ranging from 20 to 37 years of age, were residing in four cities (Changchun, Harbin, Jinhua and Ningbo) and three municipalities (Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai) in China, and therefore the interviews were conducted in these cities separately. The average interviewing time length was from 30 minutes to one or two hours depending on the responses of the interviewees individually.

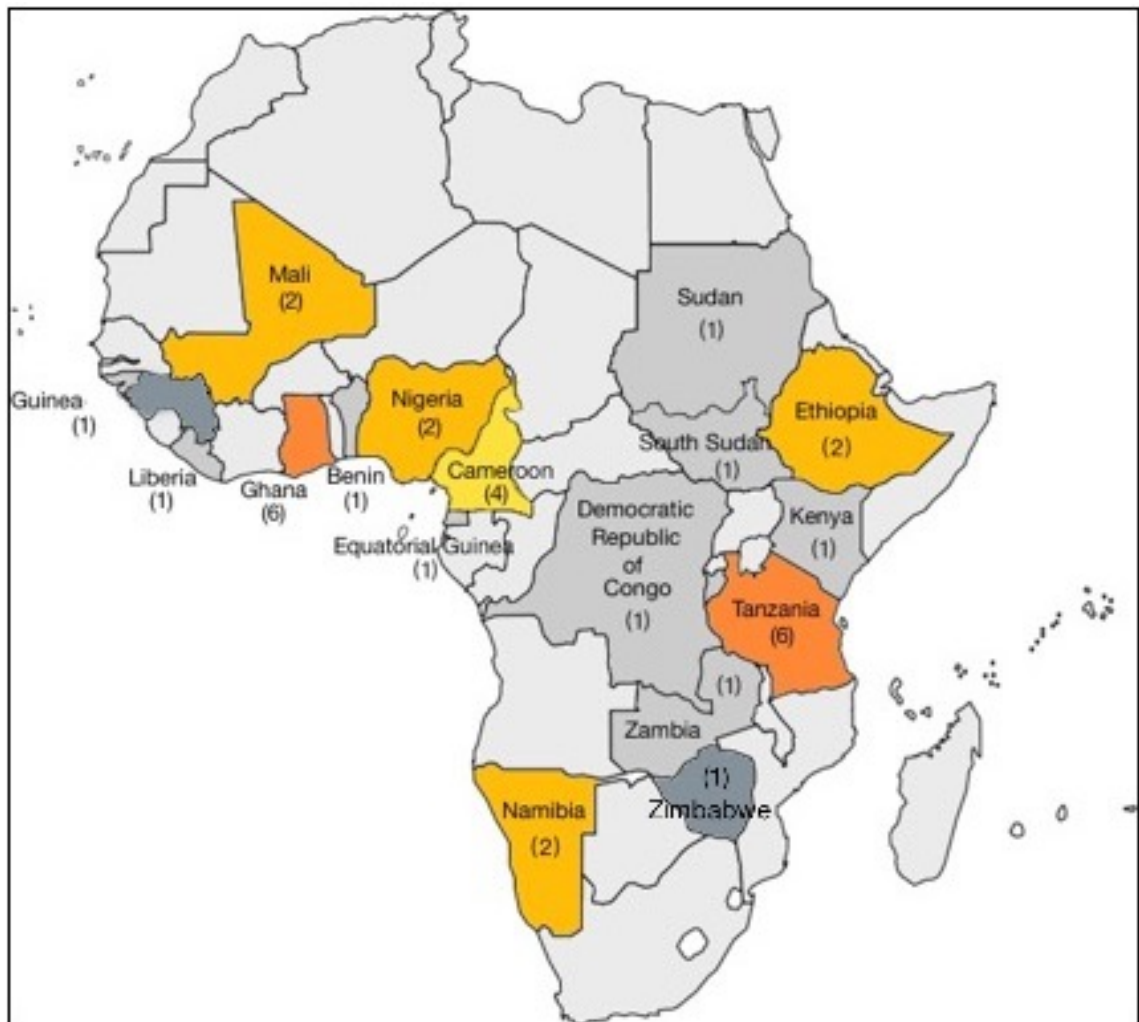


Figure 7.6 The Nationality Distribution of African Interviewees

Due to the fact that not all the interviewees are regular viewers of CCTV-Africa (as

indicated in Table 6.8, only 31.7% of them are regular viewers), the researcher deployed the quasi-experimental approach to conduct the audience interview by showing the interviewees two pieces of latest news videos from the website of CCTV-Africa selected by the researcher in advance. The selection of news is based on the nationality of the interviewees. Two pieces of news include one with a positive title and another one with a negative title (such as the story about the establishment of an industrial park versus the drought in the countryside in Ethiopia). It was felt that in this way, the researcher was able to provide the interviewee the balanced background information about CCTV-Africa and to provide solid news content for the interviews to build on. There were exceptions as up to date examples of coverage by CCTV-Africa in a few specific African countries was limited, and in that case, the latest news was selected regardless of its content (The detailed information about the news selected can be found in Appendix 3).

Gender		Education		Funding		Type of Viewers		Impression of CCTV-Africa	
Male	24	Bachelor	21	Chinese	18	Regular	12	Positive	12
				Government				Relatively Positive	11
Female	14	Master	15	African	1	Non- Regular	26	Relatively	11
		Government	Doctorate	2	Self-Funded			19	Negative

Table 7.9 Information of 38 Interviewees

The interview questions, prepared by the researcher as guidance for the semi-structured interviews, can be found in Appendix Six. When the interviews were conducted in real life, some of the above questions were rephrased to suit the variable knowledge structures of individual interviewees. To bring more context into the questions to make them understandable for the interviewees to comprehend, most of the questions were adjusted to a much more personalized and conversational style (the brief field notes can

be found in Appendix 4).

### **7.2.3 Content analysis**

In order to enhance ‘the validity of evaluation and research findings’, various data ‘resources and methods’ are expected to be deployed ‘to lead to a singular proposition about the phenomenon being studied’ (Mathison, 1988: 13). Therefore, another research method deployed to provide a complementary illustration as the triangulation of this research is the content analysis of CCTV-Africa’s *Global Business (Africa)* programme. As an additional but necessary contribution to depicting a full picture of the ideological agenda of CCTV-Africa in terms of promoting Sino-African bilateral economic cooperation, the content analysis of *Global Business (Africa)* was conducted during the same period of time when the individual interviewing took place in order to resonate with the reception of the African audience.

Although this research is mainly focusing on the audience reception of television news which is the decoding part of mass communication, analysing the encoding part plays an indispensable and equally significant role in terms of conducting a systemic and thorough research on exploring the mechanism of television communication. Research methods on media content are various, but the value of Content Analysis (CA) lies on the aspect that ‘in essence it involves the classification of parts of a text through the application of a structured, systematic coding scheme from which conclusions can be drawn about the message content’ (Rose, Spinks and Canhoto, 2015: 1). In this way, the results of content analysis can be efficiently connected with that of other methods.

The quantitative origins of this method ‘as the use of mass communication as data for testing scientific hypotheses and for evaluating journalistic practices’ has been gradually merged with the qualitative essence of sociological researches (Krippendorff, 2004: 8). Although quantification of data does have an advantage of providing clear summative results, a more qualitative approach gradually grew stronger after the Second World War to compromise the ‘shallow results reported by the content analysts’ (ibid: 16). The

qualitative content analysis, rooted in 'literary theory, the social sciences and critical scholarship' (ibid: 17), have three basic features: 1. 'A close reading of relatively small amounts of textual matter'; 2. 'The re-articulation (interpretation) of given texts into new (analytical, deconstructive, emancipatory, or critical) narratives that are accepted within particularly scholarly communities that are sometimes opposed to positivist traditions of inquiry'; 3. The acknowledgment of analysts in terms of 'working within hermeneutic circles in which their own socially and culturally conditioned understandings constitutively participate' (ibid: 17).

In this research, the content analysis involves two interlinked but separate study subjects. The first one is relatively more quantitative. It is an analysis of the types of interviewees that appeared in the programme *Global Business (Africa)*. It is expected that the findings would, to some extent, reveal the agenda of CCTV-Africa in terms of representing the interest of certain classes. This quantification of news content has limitations, not only because the class the interviewee belongs to matters but also the message he/she communicates. An overwhelming proportion of the coverage of certain groups of people indicates the preference of the media in respect of valuing some over the other. The period of the programme chosen to be studied is the same period as that of individual interviewing, from 25<sup>th</sup> May 2016 to 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016. The total length of all the 36 episodes of the programme during the time is roughly 17 hours (The detailed record of the content analysis can be found in Appendix 5).

Besides conducting a content analysis of the types of people being presented on the *Global Business (Africa)* programme on CCTV-Africa, there is also a general content analysis of the frames of the news produced by *Global Business (Africa)*. This specific mix-method approach incorporates the functions of two research methods – content analysis and frame analysis. Therefore, the definition and practice of the framing paradigm should be spelled out at first.

Somewhat different from the method of content analysis, which possesses a outstanding

feature of quantification, frame analysis is rather qualitative and even subjective relying on the perception of researchers in some cases. As Entman has pointed out, 'framing essentially involves selection and salience' (1993: 52). In a way, similar to the Marxist definition of ideology as an illusionary representation of reality, 'frames call attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements, which might lead audiences to have different reactions' (ibid: 55). Resonating with Stuart Hall's definition of the 'dominant code', Entman wrote that the 'dominant meaning consists of the problem, causal, evaluative, and treatment interpretations with the highest probability of being noticed, processed, and accepted by the most people' (ibid: 56). The meaning or message that audiences interpret from the context of the news is rather integral information instead of fragmentary concepts. Therefore, to study the frame of news is not to study the atomic elements of news in a quantitative way. As Entman notes: 'a framing paradigm cautions researchers not to take fugitive components of the message and show how they might be interpreted in ways that oppose the dominant meaning' (ibid: 56). Therefore, frame analysis of news or media content, in general, is to analyse the meaning of the message by extracting an overall impression of it based on its concrete context constituted of images, sounds, texts, etc. The hermeneutic approach of framing studies has the disadvantage of being dominated by the subjective interpretation of researchers, because 'the perception and coding of frames strongly depend upon how the researcher perceives the issue' (Matthes and Kohring, 2008: 260).

To overcome the disadvantage and to reduce the subjective dominance of researchers over the extraction of frames, the frame analysis of *Global Business (Africa)* put out by CCTV-Africa in this research follows the existing frames categories cited from the research of Vivien Marsh (2016) which was summarized from the original work by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). By pressing 'an article into an already existing frame category', 'frames are defined and coder schemata are developed', and therefore 'it might be difficult to observe the emergence of new frames' (Marsh, 2016: 261). To apply the existing frames categories to this research, one new frame (China's Positive Involvement) is discovered and added to make the categories more suitable and

connected. As shown in the following Table 7.9, there are seven major categories used for this research.

<b>Framing Categories</b>	
Conflict*	Does the story involve disagreement or accusations between parties (including countries) or refer to two or more sides to a problem or issue?
Human Interest*	Is there a human angle to the coverage, does it show how individuals or groups are affected, or does it depict scenarios that might prompt outrage, sympathy, compassion or empathy?
Responsibility (Cause)*	Does the report contain a suggestion that an individual, group or level of government is responsible for the issue or problem?
Responsibility (Solution-oriented)*	Does the report indicate solutions or suggest that officials or government are capable of solving or easing the problem?
Morality*	Does the story bear a moral message or appear to tell viewers how to behave?
Sustainability**	Is reference made to the stability (or lack of it) of a country, government or society, or fears or hopes about future stability?
China's Positive Involvement***	Is reference made to the involvement of China which contributes to the positive solution or result for issue

Table 7.10 Framing Categories (\*summarized by Marsh from Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000: 100; \*\* Marsh, 2016: 180; \*\*\* Added by the researcher)

Additionally, the above frames used to identify the news output of *Global Business (Africa)* are further processed in a quantitative approach. The frequency of these frames appearing in the news is counted, and the proportions of each frame compared to each other express the core tune of this news programme. This two-step method is named as

'content analysis of news frames' in this research.

#### **7.2.4 Discourse Analysis**

The discourse analysis is based on a specially edited section of the news programme *Global Business (Africa)* called 'Grass Root'(GR). The results obtained from this research method constitute a minor part of the research findings. However, it is still a very relevant and key finding which can directly and concretely reflect the neoliberalist economic agenda of *Global Business (Africa)* or even the whole channel of CCTV-Africa. Media discourse takes a rather dynamic form – 'interactions that take place through a broadcast platform' which can barely be thoroughly covered by quantitative data (O'Keeffe, 2011: 441). Media discourse analysis, on the other hand, with its linguistic origins, has been used to dig into the deeper level of the institutional and social mechanism beneath the written texts as well as audio and visual texts). It reaches into the ideological dimension of the media content. The qualitative nature of media discourse analysis, therefore, balances the quantitative approach of analysing the encoding part of CCTV-Africa and adds storytelling characteristics to the findings of this research.

#### **7.3 Validity and Generalizability**

For most research into modern social sciences, the limitation of methods is inevitable. As far as this research is concerned, there are some issues in the validity of the research design and findings due to the constraints of the methods deployed.

The first is about the effectiveness of the 2016 questionnaire (pilot questionnaire) as a pre-screening tool. The questions listed on the 2016 questionnaire, which can be found in Appendix 2, were designed to select suitable respondents for individual interviews. However, most of the questions are multiple-choices with given answers which can easily be quantified but at the same time are limited by the knowledge of the researcher. Therefore, there is a certain degree of simplification in terms of finding out the subjective experience of respondents as viewers of CCTV-Africa.



The second and third concerns are the sampling of respondents constrained by reasons of practicality. As illustrated in the above section, although more than half of the respondents of the 2016 questionnaire claimed that they are part of the regular audience of CCTV-Africa, there were only 11 of them who finally participated in the individual interviews with the researcher. The high mobility of African students in China and the limited time of the researcher in the field led to the consequence of changing the original plan of sampling the respondents. The reduced number of regular viewers as interviewees is on the one hand a realistic compromise but on the other hand a chance to bring in more variables to the research.

Additionally, the simplified consideration of the backgrounds of respondents from different African countries is also another limitation which may influence the validity of the research result. The audience study of this research is to reflect how the African audiences interpret, receive and negotiate with the ideology of CCTV-Africa. Therefore, the political and cultural backgrounds of the respondents are considered less significant in this research. The 18 African countries where the respondents came from were not selected for a designed purpose but rather a random result. However, because the sampling for individual interviews is based on the online questionnaire conducted for African students in China, the variety of the nationalities of these students also reflect the multilateral relations between China and these African countries.

The fourth is about triangulation. Although the qualitative dimension of the content analysis used in this research has improved the flow of qualifying media content, it is inevitable that the quantitative nature of the triangulation has some limitations which make the result of the research less thorough. For example, the types of frames to categorize the news of *Global Business (Africa)* to some extent limit and rigidify the qualitative content of news and lose some of the connotative meaning of the content which can be quite pluralist in various contexts.

Besides the above concerns, the generalization of this research is also constrained by the uniqueness of the design of this research. For example, as illustrated in Section 7.2.2, one screening feature of sampling the respondents for interview is how they are funded for their study in China. As shown in Table 6.8, almost 50% of the interviewees are funded by the Chinese government or related projects, and the other half are self-funded. Although the funding resource is a designed variable which is assumed to be influential in terms of shaping the perception of African audiences of Chinese news, the particular and specific political and economic backgrounds of these respondents make their participation in this research less applicable in other situations and contexts. Also, the unrepeatable timing and the fact that objective conditions could not be duplicated further reduces the generalization of this research. However, limited generalization does not neutralize the value contributed by this thesis. Abundant and detailed research findings contain significant information and academic value which can be found in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 8 - Findings**

This chapter presents the data and findings from the results of the empirical research conducted by the researcher for this thesis. There are two main sections: the findings on the news content of CCTV-Africa, which illustrates the encoding stage of the process in the output of CCTV-Africa, and the reception of this by its audiences, which constitutes the decoding stage of the process. The encoding part of the content analysis is to triangulate the main findings of the decoding on the part of the African audiences. However, in order to set out the complete communication process of television news, the encoding section is discussed before the decoding process in this chapter.

### **8.1 Encoding *Global Business (Africa)*, CCTV-Africa**

*Global Business (Africa)* is a regular news programme broadcast by CCTV-Africa of about 30 minutes in duration from Monday to Friday. Unlike the channel's other programmes, *Global Business (Africa)* has a specific focus on economic and financial news related to the continent of Africa. Because of its direct connection with the core economic interests of both Chinese and African governments and businesses, the narratives of *Global Business (Africa)* are of great importance for analysing the role of CCTV-Africa in constructing and representing the 'harmony of interest' between Chinese and African elites. This research analyses around 980 minutes (16.2 hours) of programme content stored on CCTV-Africa's official website, which covers all the *Global Business (Africa)* output from Monday to Friday between 25<sup>th</sup> May and 13<sup>rd</sup> July 2016, deploying a mixed methodological approach with content analysis of speaker representations and the news frameworks of the programme.

#### **8.1.1 Content Analysis of Speakers in *Global Business (Africa)***

The first finding is achieved by conducting a content analysis of speaker representations in the programme. There are four main types of speakers, as categorized by the researchers, in *Global Business (Africa)* (see Table 8.1), the complex underlying messages of which will be discussed as follows.

<b>Speaker Typology</b>	
Ordinary People	Students, customers, taxi drivers, residents of communities, farmers, start-up entrepreneurs, etc.;
Business Elites	Bankers, CEOs, directors, managers, members of chambers of commerce, etc.;
Governmental Officials	Presidents, ministers, local governors, spokespersons, parliamentary committees, etc.;
Observers	Scholars, researchers, analysts, experts, economists, etc.

Table 8.1. Four Types of Speakers in *Global Business (Africa)*

As illustrated in Table 8.1, this special edition of the programme – ‘Grass Roots Series’ – most frequently features speakers from the so-called ‘ordinary - people’ with a conspicuously positive attitude towards the development of entrepreneurship within the general public. For example, the small business owners selected by the programme are usually the ones whose businesses are tending to be growing stronger. At the same time, the entrepreneurship element is usually presented as introducing positive social influences, such as growing numbers of female entrepreneurs in generally conservative Islamic societies, more opportunities for unemployed young students, enhanced social security with the help of third-party information agencies and so on. This pattern can also be noticed in the selection of speakers from ‘Business Elites’. Although not all the speakers under the ‘Business Elites’ category are wealthy capitalists or occupying high-level managerial positions - some are ordinary employees - their views show a strong consistency with regard to the core interests of their respective corporate affiliations (such as the employee from Huawei in the 02/07/2016 programme). As for the government officials, their voices are also unified when it comes to the role of local government in socio-economic development. However, it does not mean that the programme is ignorant of the serious contradictions and confrontations in contemporary African societies. Some local governors interviewed by the programme have also expressed their concerns for unequal economic development in a ‘self-restricted’

manner, such as the provincial governor in Democratic Republic of Congo who talked about how the local mining industries are being exploited by foreign companies without mentioning any specific names (in the 08/07/2016 programme). Moreover, the fourth category refers to the ‘independent’ voices that are supposed to either provide ‘objective’ explanations on certain background information or present alternative opinions from academia. However, by and large, the speakers in the fourth category are also eagerly advocating the dominant narratives about economic development and political stability, as one Nigerian economist remarked (in the 13/07/2016 programme), that the unification of policies and the long-term national plan are key to the growth of the economy.

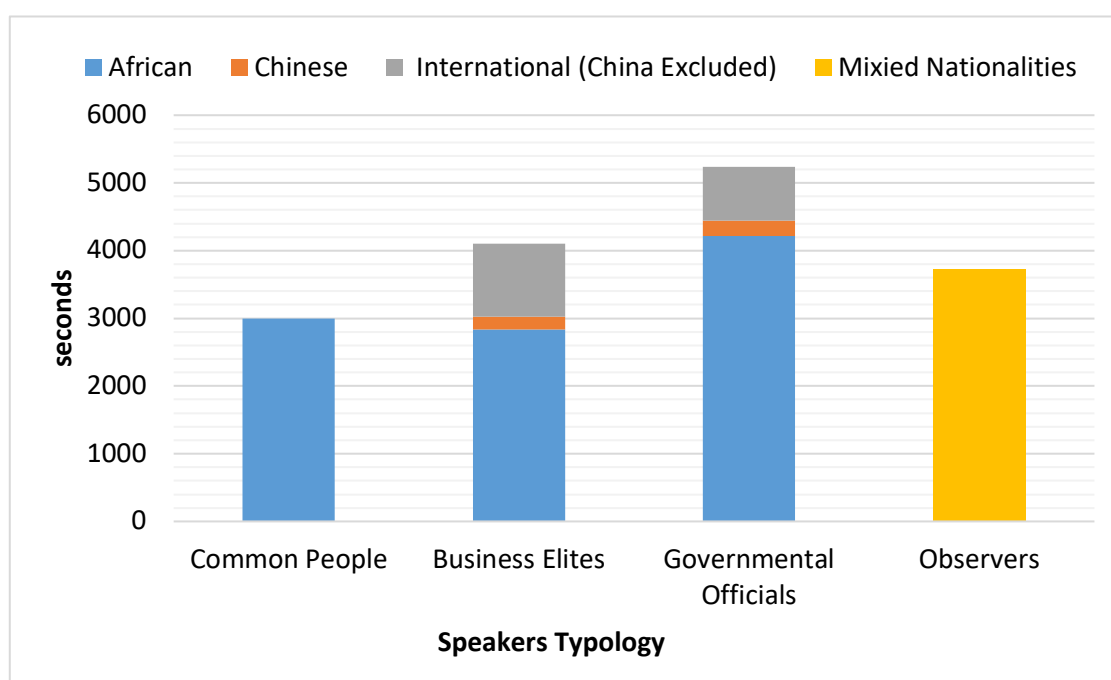


Chart 8.1. Proportions of Different Speakers in *Global Business (Africa)*

Calculated by the total length of appearance, Chart 8.1 shows the proportion of the four different types of speakers in the programme from 25<sup>th</sup> May and 13<sup>rd</sup> July 2016, presenting two main findings. The first is that the total proportion of business elites, government officials and experts’ appearance is almost four times larger than that of common people. It was quite often the case that CCTV-Africa would feature government

officials instead of ordinary people in the reviews of social issues such as an economic crisis and increasing unemployment, the causes and aftermaths of which were thus fully explained from the perspective of the government rather than the ordinary citizens. Even in certain cases, ordinary interviewees did express their concerns, but still very few dissident voices against the government were presented. As analysed above, it is assumed that a particular kind of agenda is pursued by all types of speakers to promote a positive image of the socio-economic situation in Africa, which has been further underpinned by the programme's emphasis on featuring elite opinions. This elite-centric journalism as displayed by CCTV-Africa undoubtedly embodies the discursive alliance that Chinese government is trying to build with both local business tycoons and political leaderships among African nations.

Another interesting finding is that, among the business elites and government officials featured in the programmes, the proportion of Chinese speakers is around 10% of international speakers. On the one hand, although 10% is not an impressive number, China as a single country unsurprisingly occupies a predominant position in the coverage of *Global Business (Africa)* produced by the Chinese state-owned CCTV-Africa. On the other hand, it indicates that, supporting the theoretical assumptions, the alliances and struggles between the centres of Core and Periphery and the centres of Semi-Periphery and Periphery are coexisting and intertwined with each other on the continent of Africa. It appears that the legacies of the 'old' imperialist regimes still have great significance in Africa, as most of the continent was historically so deeply encroached by colonialism, while China is a relative 'new comer'. Even so, the presence of China and its political-economic agenda in Africa have become too ubiquitous to be neglected. Another finding, as indicated in the next section, on the news frames of *Global Business (Africa)* shows that the attempt by CCTV-Africa to carry out its agenda in Africa is often concealed.

### **8.1.2 Content Analysis of News Frames in *Global Business (Africa)***

By using a mixed method to approach the frames extracted from the news coverage of *Global Business (Africa)* in a quantitative way, the analysis here uses both qualitative and

quantitative methods. It examines some specific interesting meanings from particular contexts while also summarizing the overall tone of the news programme. In order to further reduce the interference of the researcher's (naturally) subjective bias, the frames applied here are revised from Vivien Marsh's summary of the five news frames devised by Semetko and Valkenburg based on the analyses of 2,601 newspaper stories and 1,522 television news stories (2000: 93). Including Marsh and the authors' own frames 'stability' and 'China's Positive Involvement', there are six frames in total deployed in this research.

The first five frames, as shown in Table 7.10 in the previous chapter, are some general observations on professional news. The 'conflict frame' 'emphasizes conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions as a means of capturing audience interest' (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000, 95). As a result of commercial interest or other driving forces, highlighting or even constructing conflicts to enhance audience ratings by oversimplifying each party's opinion or stance is commonly observed in news production. However, as a state-controlled media outlet, CCTV-Africa always prioritizes its diplomatic mission over profits. It is rare to see Chinese journalists report conflicts in Africa in a sentimental or provocative way. Of course, stories on conflicts are never scarce in the coverage of CCTV-Africa. As shown in Table 3, 17.4% of the political news in question used the 'conflict frame', which ranks third among all the frames. Generally speaking, though, the 'conflict frame' only constitutes 12.4% of the overall news coverage of *Global Business (Africa)*. Apparently, 'capturing audience interest' by creating or making-up conflicts is not the primary purpose and strategy of CCTV-Africa.

Secondly, the 'human interest frame' 'brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem' (ibid), which has become a standard component of professional news that aims to show the 'human touch'. Resonating with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's claims about the endeavours of CCTV-Africa – 'CCTV embraces the vision of seeing Africa from an African perspective and reporting Africa from the viewpoint of Africa' (quoted in Marsh, 2016, 177) - CCTV-Africa has apparently

made great efforts to represent the people's voices with its own agenda. As mentioned above in the last section, the special edition 'Grass Roots' focuses primarily on the start-up entrepreneurs who epitomize the vibrancy of the African economy. As shown in Table 8.2, 25.2% of the news coverage on 'economic development', which has a conspicuously positive tone, has used the 'human interest frame', ranking second among all the frames. In sharp contrast, the proportion of the same frame drops down to 13.2% when the news reports focus instead on an 'economic/financial crisis', which quite often indicate negative portrayals of local situations. In this way, the 'human touch' of CCTV-Africa is rather selective and purposeful. More specifically, this frame is mostly observed in the stories that people benefited from certain policies of local governments and/or have strong confidence in the market economy. There appear to be attempts by CCTV-Africa to distract economic crises away from ordinary people's everyday experiences while manufacturing public consent around the recent developments of the market economy.

What requires extra attention here is the two dimensions of the 'responsibility frame', the respective focuses of which on 'cause' and 'solution', in conjunction with their different perspectives on 'conflict,' embody the distinctions between the traditional Western critical journalism and what is labelled as 'constructive journalism' ('peace journalism'). It was argued by Yanqiu Zhang that CCTV in Africa is reporting news following the principles of constructive journalism that 'covers positive and solution-focused news formats' (2014: 8). Putting aside the arguments about whether constructive/peace journalism is proper journalism or not (Lyon, 2007), the initiator of peace journalism Johan Galtung has a clear answer for how the 'conflict frame' should be handled. He said '... the road of peace journalism, focuses on conflict transformation ...' (2003: 177). Apparently, the key difference lies between 'conflict as an end-in-itself' and 'conflict as a process/means'. Surely, it is obvious in Table 7.3 that the proportion of the 'responsibility (solution-orientated) frame' outnumbers the 'responsibility (cause-orientated) frame'. However, the small proportion of the 'conflict frame', especially in contrast with the 'stability frame', indicates that controversial issues on the continent of Africa have not been sufficiently addressed by CCTV-Africa. It is noted



by Gagliardone (2013) that there are certain political crises being intentionally avoided by the Chinese news networks. In addition, he has shown that stories about African workers striking against Chinese companies or Chinese ivory traders' involvement in illegal poaching have never been found in the coverage of CCTV-Africa. As Xiaoling Zhang has observed, CCTV-Africa has almost zero negative reports on China's engagement with Africa (2013: 13-16).

Another unusual feature of CCTV-Africa is, as noted by Marsh is its emphasis on 'stability'. The 'stability frame' of *Global Business (Africa)*, as defined in Table 8.2, refers to the narratives that the stability of local societies is the primary concern. As shown in Table 7.3, this frame is the most frequently deployed among all frames, which directly reflects the core political and economic interests of the Chinese government in Africa. Driven by its domestic dilemmas such as increasing labour wages (Wang, H. and Wang W., 2014), polluted environment and over-capacity of steel or cement (Fan, 2015), the Chinese government is eager to find cooperative peripheral countries to locate cheaper labour, natural resources and new markets. It is also very important that the partner is stable in respect of its government and market. As a firm believer in the positive correlation between social stability and economic development (Wang and Hu, 2010), the Chinese government has managed to achieve the former in mainland China for several decades and is expecting to make it happen in certain African countries as well. Constrained by its non-interference policy and other realistic issues, at the current stage, the Chinese government is unlikely to exert influence on local politics directly. However, it is clear that its pursuit of stability has pervaded the agenda of CCTV-Africa and possibly other Chinese media in Africa as well.

The last news frame is the 'China's positive involvement frame'. It would not make much difference if the frame were renamed as 'China's involvement frame' because almost every single Chinese element in the news of *Global Business (Africa)* is positive and benevolent. Therefore, in the discourse of CCTV-Africa, China's involvement equates to a positive influence. As manifested in Table 8.2, in contrast to the relatively high

exposure of China’s positive involvement in economic development (6.4%), local crises seem to have very limited connection with China (0.6%). The efforts made by CCTV-Africa to embellish China’s expanding participation in African countries are pleasing governments in China and Africa. Chinese officials are quite satisfied by the fact that CCTV-Africa has somehow fulfilled its mission to ‘enhance China’s image in Africa’ (Feng, 2015), while African officials are happy that the positive reporting of CCTV-Africa is helpful for increasing foreign investment and gives them a relief from all the stereotypical criticism from Western journalism on corruption, violence, malnutrition, etc.

<b>Overall Frames (211)</b>	<b>Economic/Financial Crisis (86)</b>	<b>Economic Development (111)</b>	<b>Political News (14)</b>
Stability 23.9%	Responsibility (cause) 24.8%	Responsibility (solution) 26.3%	Stability 39.1%
Responsibility (solution) 23.2%	Stability 23%	Human Interest 25.2%	Responsibility (solution) 17.4%
Responsibility (cause) 18.7%	Responsibility (solution) 21.1%	Stability 23.7%	Conflict 17.4%
Human Interest 18.5%	Conflict 17.3%	Responsibility (cause) 12.2%	Human Interest 13%
Conflict 12.4%	Human Interest 13.2%	China’s Positive Involvement 6.3%	Responsibility (cause) 8.7%
China’s Positive Involvement 3.3%	China’s Positive Involvement 0.6%	Conflict 6.3%	China’s Positive Involvement 4.4%

Table 8.2 Content Analysis of the News Frames of *Global Business (Africa)*

This particular reporting focus of CCTV-Africa on the ‘positive’ or ‘constructive’ information is not only welcomed by neoliberal globalists within the Chinese

government and academia but also highly praised by the ‘impatient elites’ in Africa, who desperately want to improve their ‘image’ (Zhao, 2014) and to ‘set themselves apart from the obligations of the postcolonial state’ by pursuing every possible means of transnational capitalistic integration (Prashad, 2012, 6). The ambassador of Zimbabwe in Beijing, Paul Chikawa, has expressed his dislike of the BBC’s documentary *The Chinese are Coming* at a China-African official event (a private workshop in Beijing funded by the Gates Foundation and supported by the Chinese government officials). He contended that the negative construct set up by that documentary undermined the harmonious and mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries, and further emphasized that ‘China and Africa should talk to each other directly’ (27 July 2016). As noted by the South Africa-based academic Paul Tembe, there exists an ideologically constructed and mass-mediated consensus between Chinese and African elites as manifested in the interconnectivity between the prevailing ideas as incorporated in the ‘Chinese dream’ and ‘African dream’, both of which to some extent focus upon integration into the world economy and rejuvenation of national power and prestige (Tembe, 2015).

### **8.1.3 Brief Discourse Analysis of ‘Grass Roots Series’**

‘Grass Roots Series’ (GR) is a short segment (around three minutes) incorporated in the main programme of *Global Business (Africa)*. It mostly interviews the start-up entrepreneurs who are running small businesses and are achieving pleasing progress. As indicated in its title, the focus of ‘Grass Roots’ is on the ordinary population rather than financial giants, which underlines the ‘human touch’ of CCTV-Africa and increases the proportion of the news frame – ‘human interest’ as shown in Table 8.2 above. The interviewees of ‘Grass Roots’ (GR) are from all kinds of backgrounds, from female street food vendors in Egypt to student bakers in South Africa. They have one thing in common: they are enthusiastic about entrepreneurship and their businesses are getting better, according to what they say.



Picture 8.1 African Interviewees in the ‘Grass Roots Series’ (Xiang, 2017)

The topics of ‘GR’ cover various aspects, and by highlighting the industrious spirit of the ordinary, even vulnerable, people such as unemployed older women, ‘GR’ creates a very positive atmosphere about economic development in very local African social and economic contexts. As one interviewee Rosebill Satha from Malawi, a female entrepreneur who ‘turns her [weaving] hobby into a profitable venture’, spotlighted in the programme: ‘we need the change of mind-set ... and it is not from top, it’s mainly from the bottom, from brothers, husbands [and] your neighbours’ (CGTN, 2016). The coverage of such bottom-to-top optimistic views for entrepreneurship and economic development by CCTV-Africa not only corresponds with the instruction from the Chinese government to report ‘Africa from the viewpoint of Africa’ (CCTV News 2014, cited in Marsh, 2016: 177), but also advertises ‘China’s model’ of social development which prioritizes economic growth across the continent of Africa. This specific edition depicts a very positive and industrious image of African societies with the focus on encouraging entrepreneurship. Therefore, ‘Grass Roots’ directly reflects the one key agenda of CCTV-Africa, which is to promote economic development in African local societies.

#### **8.1.4 Conclusion**

The above analyses of the news frames and content of CCTV-Africa indicate that there is a clear ideological agenda underpinning the operation of the news channel. On the one hand, it is undeniable that, as indicated in Table 8.3 in Section 8.2.1 below, the journalistic approach of CCTV-Africa is to provide more solution-oriented reports. On the other hand, the obvious preference of CCTV-Africa to promote the image of the Chinese government and companies in Africa reduces its credibility in deploying an authentic constructive approach. From the perspective of critical political and economic media studies, this very contradiction defines the characteristic of CCTV-Africa, indeed even Chinese media overall in Africa. As discussed in Chapter 6, the ideological Sinicization represented by CCTV-Africa is to promote the sustainable economic development in African societies by advocating a positive and harmonious image about the local political and economic environment. Not only do the elite speakers outnumber the grassroot class of people, but also the latter is depicted as rather positive and supportive of the ideas both of joining the global economic system and cooperating with the Chinese government.

#### **8.2 Decoding CCTV-Africa by the African Audience**

This part of the research findings covers both a quantitative questionnaire with 89 participants and qualitative individual interviews with 36 interviewees from 18 African countries conducted by the researcher in the summer of 2016, specifically from the end of May to the beginning of July. All participants either for the questionnaire or the 'face-to-face' interviews were African students studying for Bachelor's, Master's or PhD degrees in mainland China. Some of the interviewees had already been watching the channel before they came to China. The accesses of the interviewees to CCTV-Africa were various. Since all interviewees of this research are international students in China, the dormitories in China's universities for international students were usually equipped with television. Most of the interviewees who said they were regular audience of CCTV-Africa watched the news channel on the television in their dormitory rooms. The broadcasting time of CCTV-Africa on the channel of CCTV-News in Chinese time is one

o'clock in the morning. This broadcasting time in mid night suits some of the interviewees' timetable. Except watching CCTV-Africa on television, before the relaunch of CGTN on 1<sup>st</sup> January of 2017, interviewees also had the access to the channel on the website of CCTV-Africa (which now is replaced by the website of CGTN-Africa).

The ethnical identities of African interviewees in China are sometimes one of the problems faced by researcher of other nationalities. As Adams Bodomo wrote in his book 'Africans in China': "many people from the Maghreb countries rejected [the] requests for interviews because they did not consider themselves Africans" (2012: Chapter one, Kindle Edition). Therefore, in order to eliminate the misunderstandings of the researcher (who is ethnically Chinese) on the ethnical origins, the identities of the interviewees as African students are confirmed by the interviewees themselves.

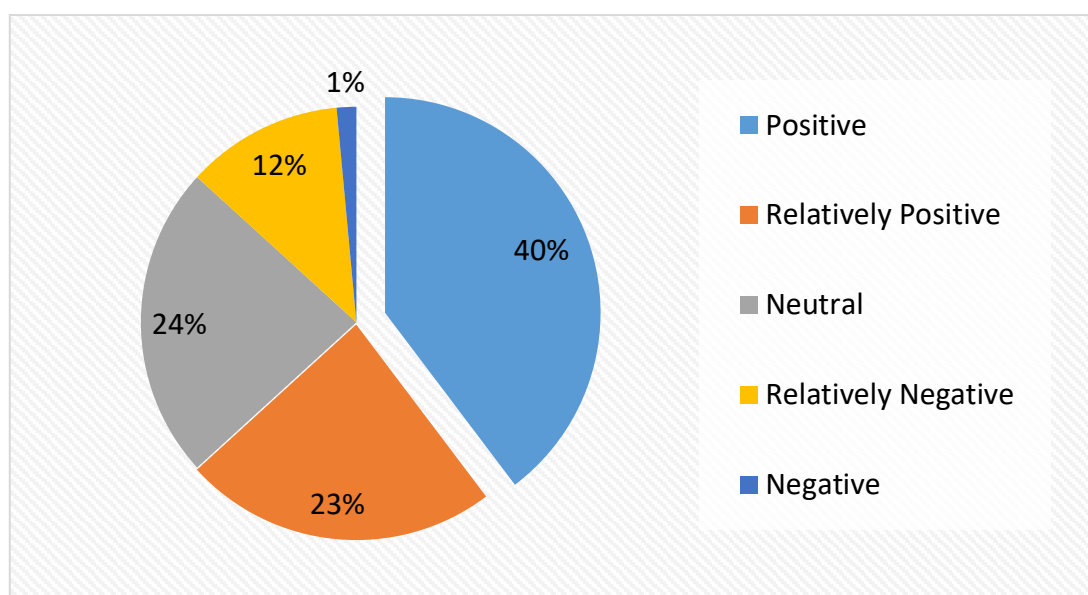


Chart 8.2 The Perception of African Students with regard to CCTV-Africa (2016)

One clear result of the questionnaire survey is that it has provided a useful overview of African students' perception of CCTV-Africa. As shown in Chart 8.2, among the 89 participants, 63% of them have a rather positive impression of CCTV-Africa, and only 13% of them regard it negatively. In order to further understand how students from Africa perceive the media content produced by CCTV-Africa positively and negatively, in-depth

individual interviews were conducted with interviewees selected from the questionnaire results. The average time length of each individual interview was about 40 minutes; 36 interviews were conducted in four cities (Changchun, Harbin, Jinhua and Ningbo) in three provinces (Zhejiang, Jilin and Heilongjiang) and three municipalities (Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin).

### **8.2.1 Seven Categories of African Audience's Reception of CCTV-Africa**

According to Stuart Hall, there are mainly three types of codes deployed by general audiences to interpret the message encoded in media content which are: hegemonic codes, negotiated codes and oppositional codes (2006: 171-3). Hegemonic codes refer to the reception that audience decode 'the message in terms of the reference code in which it has been encoded' (2006: 171). Negotiated codes refer to the mixed reception of adaptive and oppositional understanding of the encoded media message (2006: 172). Oppositional codes refer to reception when the audience, though understanding very well the connotative meaning of the media content, tries 'to decode the message in a globally contrary way' (2006: 172). Matching the three types of codes with the typology of the audience's reception of CCTV-Africa, it is clear that the reception categories of 'conscious of the ideological agenda and agree with it' and 'partly conscious of the ideological agenda but agree with it', fit the hegemonic codes well; the category of 'conscious of the ideological agenda but only agree with parts of it' resonates with the negotiated codes, and the category of 'conscious of the ideological agenda but disagree with it' conforms to the oppositional codes.

However, what if the typology used in this research does not fit the analytic frame of Hall's reception code, i.e. when the audience is unconscious of the ideological agenda encoded in the media content? It is because the encoding/decoding model used by Hall is based on the significant moments that happen in the process of disseminating information only within the media system. The premise of the three reception codes is that the significant moments of encoding and decoding do happen. But for the audience unconscious of the ideological agenda of the 'connotative levels of signifiers' in media

content, the moment of decoding fails to happen thoroughly if it happens at all (Hall, 2016: 169). Hall aimed to provide an analytic frame to understand the audience's reception mainly from the perspective of media discourse, which is simultaneously a denotative reflection and a crucial part of the wider societal structure. For audiences who are unconscious of the media agenda, they are hardly influenced by the ideology expressed by the media discourse; their agreement and disagreement with the ideological agenda encoded in the media content is primarily forged by the reality of the audience members lives within the overall societal structure. Therefore, the formation of the ideology of an audience, as indicated in the typology in Table 8.3, is not only under the direct influence of media but more likely conditioned by the broader political economic structure.

As shown in Table 8.3, the typology deployed in this research to categorize interviewees' perceptions of the agenda of CCTV-Africa is based on the typology of ideologies summarized by Christian Fuchs in his book *Culture and Economy in the Age of Social Media* (2015). There are nine categories that incorporate audience perception of the ideological agenda of media content. The empirical results collected from the interviews in this research fall mainly into seven categories, which are: 1) Unconscious of the ideological agenda in CCTV-Africa but agree with it; 2) Unconscious of the ideological agenda in CCTV-Africa and agree with only parts of it; 3) Conscious of the ideological agenda in CCTV-Africa and agree with it; 4) Conscious of the ideological agenda in CCTV-Africa but only agree with parts of it; 5) Conscious of the ideological agenda in CCTV-Africa but disagree with it; 6) Partly conscious of the ideological agenda in CCTV-Africa but agree with it; 7) Partly conscious of the ideological agenda in CCTV-Africa but partly agree with parts of it.

	<b>Agree with the ideological agenda</b>	<b>Agree/Disagree with parts of the ideological agenda</b>	<b>Disagree with the ideological agenda</b>
<b>Unconscious of</b>	1) They do not	2) They do not	They do not



<b>the ideological agenda in CCTV-Africa</b>	recognize it in CCTV-Africa, but they agree with it in reality.	recognize it in CCTV-Africa, but they partly agree as well partly disagree with it in reality.	recognize it in CCTV-Africa, but they disagree with it in reality.
<b>Conscious of the ideological agenda in CCTV-Africa</b>	3) They recognize it in CCTV-Africa, and they agree with it in reality. <u>(Hegemonic Code)</u>	4) They recognize it in CCTV-Africa, and they partly agree as well partly disagree with it in reality. <u>(Negotiated Code)</u>	5) They recognize it in CCTV-Africa, but they disagree with it in reality. <u>(Oppositional Code)</u>
<b>Partly conscious of the ideological agenda in CCTV-Africa</b>	6) They partly recognize it in CCTV-Africa, and they agree with it in reality. <u>(Hegemonic code)</u>	7) They partly recognize it in CCTV-Africa, but they partly agree as well partly disagree with it in reality.	They partly recognize it in CCTV-Africa, and they disagree with it in reality.

Table 8.3 Typology of Audience’s Reception of CCTV-Africa  
(adapted from Fuchs, 2015: 87)

It is difficult sometimes to draw a clear boundary between the receptions of ‘agree’, ‘partly agree’ and ‘disagree’. In some cases, the audiences’ reception of the ideological agenda (promoting China-Africa economic cooperation) can only be defined according to the subtle differences of wording, speaking tone even facial expressions. Therefore, instead of mechanically defining and categorizing the audience’s reception according fixed standards, the typology deployed in this research to analyse the qualitative results of interviewing tends to depict a general change about the overall attitude and understanding of audiences. The following seven sections are the organized findings of individual interviews which are structured and edited by the researcher in order to

present a systematic analysis. Only a few words of the interviewees have been revised to better express his or her meanings. Some grammatical awkwardness is retained to ensure authenticity.

Category 1: Unconscious of the Ideological Agenda but Agree

<b>Name<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Diploma</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Perception</b>	<b>Habit</b>
Diana	23	Female	Tanzania	Bachelor's Degree	Self-Funded	Relatively Positive	Non-Regular Audience
Rukia	22	Female	Tanzania	Bachelor's Degree	Self-Funded	Relatively Positive	Non-Regular Audience
Chen Fei	27	Male	Tanzania	Bachelor's Degree	Chinese Government	Unknown	Non-Regular Audience
Martin	31	Male	Cameroon	Master's Degree	Self-Funded	Positive	Non-Regular Audience
Laina	28	Female	Namibia	Bachelor's Degree	Self-Funded	Positive	Non-Regular Audience
Hajo	37	Male	Sudan	Doctoral Degree	Chinese Government	Positive	Non-Regular Audience

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<sup>2</sup> The names of interviewees displayed in this research are provided by the interviewees themselves without further verification by the researcher. In most cases, only the last names are provided by the interviewees, and they have given the researcher the consent to use the names given by themselves in this research.

Abduhali	26	Male	Djibouti	Master's Degree	Chinese Government	Positive	Non-Regular Audience
Deborah	25	Female	Benin	Bachelor's Degree	Self-Funded	Unknown	Non-Regular Audience
Jia La	28	Male	Mali	Master's Degree	Chinese Government	Positive	Non-Regular Audience
Ibrahim	30	Male	Mali	Master's Degree	Chinese and Malian Government	Neutral	Non-Regular Audience
Lubari	28	Male	South Sudan	Master's Degree	Chinese Government	Positive	Non-Regular Audience
Lawrens	28	Male	Equatorial Guinea	Master's Degree	University Scholarship	Neutral	Regular Audience

Table 8.4 Twelve Interviewees of Category 1

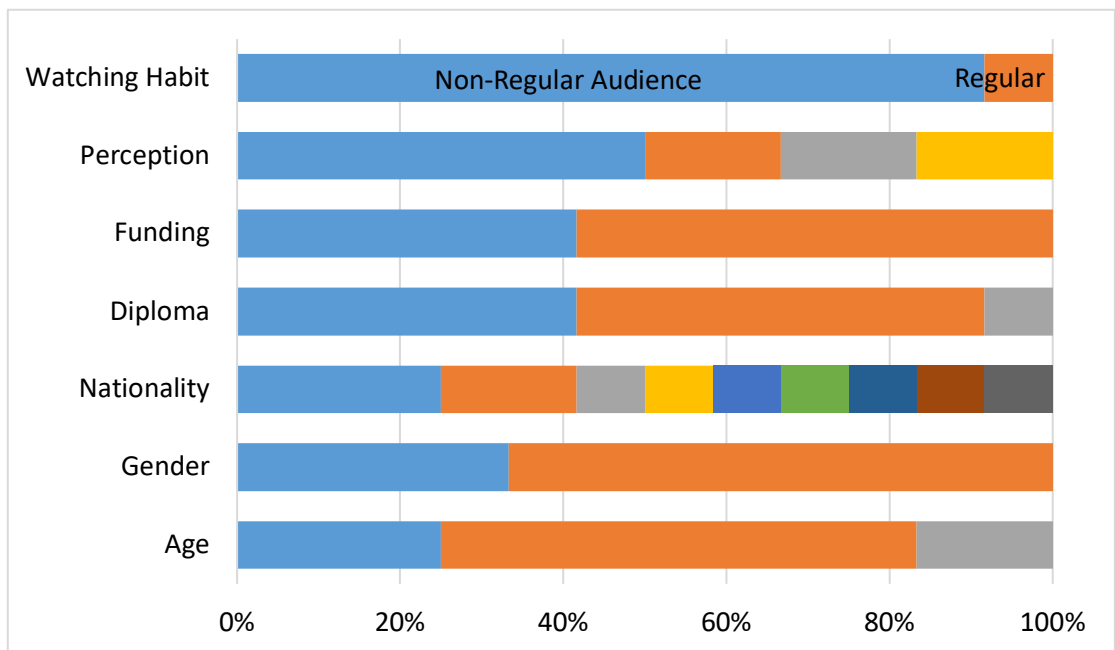


Chart 8.3 Twelve Interviewees of Category 1

For this group of interviewees, they have different perceptions on whether CCTV-Africa is producing international-level quality news. Some of them, such as Chen Fei from Tanzania, have negative assumptions about international news (mainly Western media). As Chen Fei said: '... International news always depicts Africa as chaotic with wars, diseases and natural disasters' (25<sup>th</sup> May 2016).

Many of the African interviewees hold a similar perspective towards international news. Non-regular audiences of CCTV-Africa like Chen Fei naturally assumed that CCTV-Africa is producing news with the same logic. Even after watching the news of CCTV-Africa about infrastructure development in the Tanzanian capital city of Dar-es-Salaam, Chen Fei still regarded CCTV-Africa as 'one of those stereotyped international news media'.

Although Chen Fei thought negatively of CCTV-Africa, he still claimed that he is supportive of the idea of China-Africa cooperation and economic development in their societies. There seems a contradiction between his perception of CCTV-Africa and his personal experience in real life.

This kind of contradiction is easily understood in some cases with interviewees having a generalized understanding of media as critical tools. Martin from Cameroon said: 'I don't think (CCTV-Africa) is negative. It is just what media does' (4<sup>th</sup> July 2016). For Martin, being a state-controlled media does not really make any difference to the quality of news. Lubari from South Sudan expressed his firm faith in the absolute truthfulness of CCTV in Africa saying that 'I believe in CCTV. .... CCTV will tell the truth' (24<sup>th</sup> May 2016).

Regarding media as objective or never having critical thinking about the role of media in real life are the main reasons why some interviewees are ignorant of the ideological agenda of CCTV-Africa. When asked 'do you think CCTV-Africa has a certain kind of reporting style that reflects its nature as a state media', Deborah from Benin just simply shook her head.

Hajo from Sudan who was studying material sciences in Shanghai Donghua University also seemed clueless about the logic behind the screen. He agreed with the interviewer that there are indeed some kind of purposes behind CCTV broadcasting in Africa, but 'I am not a political person' said Hajo (7<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Although they claimed to be unconscious of the news agenda, when watching the CCTV-Africa news about their countries they tended to agree with the perspectives of the content. Martin was impressed by the report about the video game industry in Cameroon, and he quoted from a speech given by the Cameroonian president: 'China or France. They are all same people. But the difference is that China does not take anything from you ... France, they don't give what the China gives. So, to me, [this news] coming from CCTV is really a very nice thing. I'm very happy to see that from CCTV'.

In contrast, there are other interviewees who were also non-regular viewers of CCTV-Africa and usually consume BBC and CNN for international news, who had a rather clear and favourable attitude about CCTV-Africa. When asked how she found out about the news video she just watched, Diana from Tanzania gave a very affirmative answer: 'I watched a video on the infrastructure system of my country (Tanzania) and the new system of the fast buses, considering that this is a new system for my country it is an excellent experience to see that CCTV-Africa has taken upon itself to report on the matter, but I think the report should have also looked at the problems that have been brought about by the new buses, such as the many traffic accidents that have been brought about by the ignorant drivers that tend to drive their cars onto the special roads assigned to the buses alone. Also, the report could have given a chance to more citizens to give their opinions on the new system and what they think can be done to make things better' (24<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Rukia from Tanzania described CCTV-Africa news as 'educative and informative' (25<sup>th</sup> July 2016). Laina from Namibia said: 'I feel good about CCTV-Africa and I feel that they are

well strategized. They mostly report news all around Africa and that gives one an opportunity to learn what is going on around the African continent. Considering the fact that I am based in China, I feel good to be informed of the on goings, whether good or bad, back in Africa and particularly my country' (20<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Even though Laina thought highly of the CCTV-Africa news, she did not believe that 'the content has any kind of agenda.' They both liked the Chinese news, but also, they were very positive about China-Africa governmental collaborations and economic cooperation. Rukia said, 'My government's attitude towards China is very positive and good, [since] Tanzania and China have had good relations for a long time. The relationship with Beijing is a cooperative one and I support my government's opinion of cooperating with the Chinese government'.

Such a positive attitude is further established upon a comparison of behaviours between China and leading Western countries in Africa: 'We like Chinese. China has been signing contracts (with African countries). Because for America, even you don't have a bill, you still have a gun. Africa would totally be afraid of something (like that), but Chinese won't (do that). And we still make a lot of contracts with China' (Abduhali 14<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Some interviewees also showed strong support for the development approach of the China model. Jia La from Mali, who provided only his Chinese name instead of his Malian one, also spoke highly of the protection of governmental policies over domestic industries in China, which, in his opinion, is the key to the success of the China model and a good example for his own government to follow. Another Malian interviewee was Ibrahim, who also claimed that he was not aware of the agenda of CCTV-Africa and wanted to 'skip this question'; and when further asked by the interviewer about the soft power of CCTV in Africa, was also rather positive and supportive about the 'win-win' policy between China and Mali (26<sup>th</sup> May 2016). Lawrens from Equatorial Guinea admitted that 'my country and China to be partners is good for us' as China can provide 'a lot of opportunities' (5<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

As shown in Table 8.4, almost all interviewees in this category were non-regular viewers of CCTV-Africa. This is possibly the major reason why they are unaware of the ideological agenda of the news channel, as awareness can rarely be raised by watching two short pieces of news videos but is rather based on long-term perception of growing Chinese presence in their respective countries and in the African continent more generally. However, in terms of being influenced by the media effect, the audience's consciousness did not really play a decisive role in changing their perspectives on China-Africa relations. In this case, the information they got from CCTV-Africa news resonated with their personal experiences, more or less. Their views were based on their preconceptions of matters related to China-Africa interactions, and the significance of the media, therefore, was less evident.

Category 2: Unconscious of the Ideological Agenda but Partly Agree

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Diploma	Funding	Perception	Habit
Japhet	20+	Male	Tanzania	Master's Degree	University Scholarship	Neutral	Non-Regular Audience
Nobert	28	Male	Cameroon	Bachelor's Degree	Self-Funded	Relatively Positive	Non-Regular Audience
Magareth	32	Female	Namibia	Master's Degree	Chinese Government	Relatively Negative	Regular Audience
Abdul	25	Male	Ghana	Master's Degree	Self-Funded	Relatively Positive	Non-Regular Audience

Table 8.5 Four Interviewees of Category 2

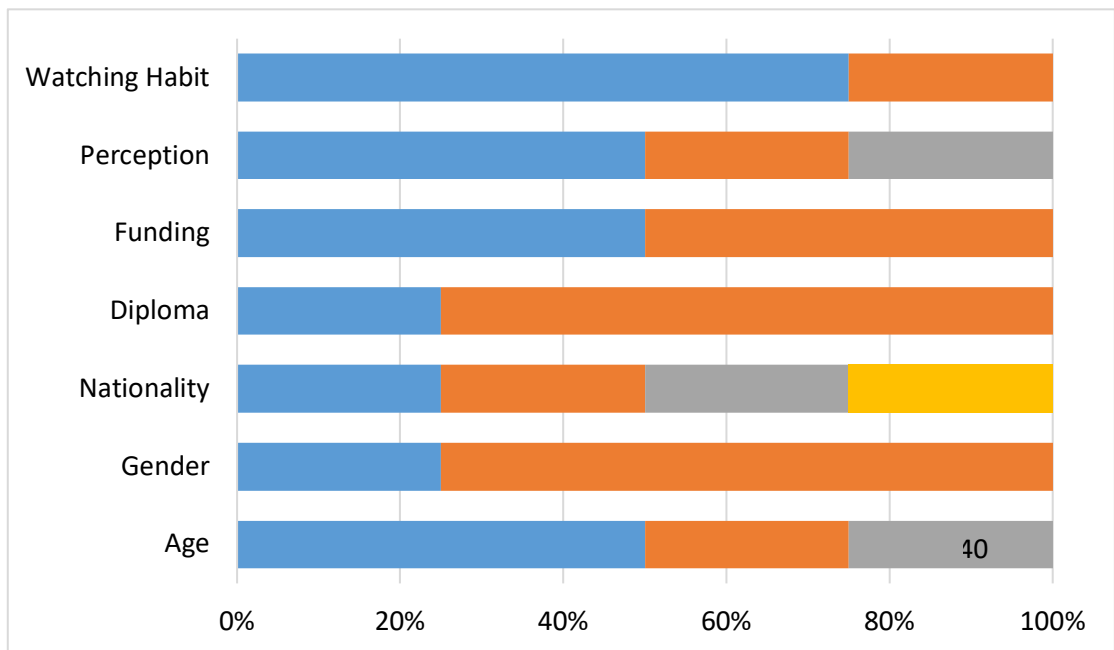


Chart 8.4 Four Interviewees of Category 2

After watching the news video about the infrastructure development in Tanzania, Japhet talked about his limited knowledge of China-Tanzania history: ‘... maybe I don’t know [a lot] about history (on China and Tanzania), but I got one of Tanzanian professors ... say[s] that even before the second world war, maybe after the second world war, Tanzanians come to China to [ask] to help them because at that moment, China was socialist. My country, socialist (too)’ (3<sup>rd</sup> July 2016).

Japhet also talked about the giant football stadium built by the Chinese and many forms of Chinese investment in his country; also about his pride for the Tanzanian capital Dar-es-Salaam as it was quickly developing. Compared to a news video of CCTV-Africa about an attack on a mosque, Japhet expressed a clear preference for positive news: ‘I like the good news, the public transportation (one).’ He was a little concerned that the recent surge in tourism in Tanzania as it declined in Kenya because of the latter’s terrorism could be influenced by its own domestic terror attack. Japhet also admitted that the two news reports were both good in terms of professional journalism and he did not think the news produced by CCTV-Africa was directly related to what China was doing in Tanzania.

Due to his previous working experience and his close observation of the job market in



Tanzania, Japhet had a less rosy perspective on Chinese companies in his country:

‘For sure, in Tanzania, it’s easy to get a job. You can get a job. But people are going to say how much [it] will pay. You can ask anyone here from Tanzania. China maybe needs to improve its policy for their salary. If they improve, they can mobilize more people to learn Chinese ... We have German companies there, we have Spanish companies there, normally people try to think to go to European companies. I think for Chinese companies; they need to increase the salary. Yes, you can get the cheap labour, but for those who are educated you should increase the salary.’

He agreed with the idea that Chinese investment is contributing to the development in Tanzania, but he saw a few problems, such as low salary, a topic rarely mentioned in CCTV-Africa news reporting about many African economies.

Nobert from Cameroon shared the opinion of Japhet on CCTV-Africa creating good images of their countries: ‘CCTV is trying to say something good. Because China broadcasts the whole nation to the world, I think it’s of great importance ... So many people are going to know this country’ (5<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

Nobert’s understandings of CCTV-Africa and China’s participation in Cameroon were rather ambivalent. He had a rather realistic understanding of the approach of China’s investment in Cameroon and the disputed cheap but poor quality ‘Chinese goods’.

Unlike Western developed countries, Nobert thought China knew Cameroon better: ‘China seems [to] know our country is not established, is still developing, so China knows the way they invest ... Dealing with a country like Cameroon, I think China knows what the people need; they know what they can afford.’

Accordingly, Nobert is quite clear about the cheap goods from China: ‘Most people complain that the Chinese products are not of good quality, but still, they consume them.

They're happy using them, even if there're complaints, but it's good because the local community can afford them, and it's helpful.'

Regular viewer Magareth is originally from Namibia. She had a positive understanding of international relations: 'We live in a global world. So, it's very common/normal for Chinese officials to travel to African countries because they have something to share.' (25<sup>th</sup> May 2016). Therefore, the 'positive message' that CCTV-Africa sends to the world, in the eyes of Magareth, did not necessarily imply a specific political and economic agenda for China's presence in Africa.

However, regarding the participation of China in Namibia, Magareth thought 'everything has two sides.' She had noticed some very serious environmental pollution caused by Chinese companies in Namibia, which, in her opinion, were the result of the weak environmental protection policies of local government: 'Probably for the economy to grow, you need to boost it, and that comes down to industries. As we know, more industries produce more pollution, but I don't think there is a price that you can pay for human health, but it all depends on regulations.'

Magareth had an understanding of the messages she was getting from the Chinese media, such as CCTV-Africa, in relation to China's investment in Africa. She said:

'investment, I think, is a good thing for any country, but I think countries have to strengthen their policies. They must make their policies clear, and have all their people in place, because you make policy but people need to implement them, like we know there is a lot of corruption. You end up with the situation that policies are not strictly followed, and there are consequences.'

She also made it very clear that compared to the news she watched on CCTV her personal experience studying in China influenced her mind more.

Another interviewee Abdul, from Ghana, had quite a different perception of the two news videos he watched on the interviewer's laptop. The positive one is about an airline joint venture between Ghana and China and the negative one was about the slowing down of economic growth in Ghana. Abdul liked the former better than the latter because he thought the positive one helped to correct the negative images of Africa portrayed by western media such as the BBC; the latter is 'not objective' and not telling the whole story (3<sup>rd</sup> July 2016).

As a non-regular viewer, Abdul did not have a clear understanding about the specific way CCTV-Africa reports news in Africa. Like many other interviewees, he was very surprised to hear that CCTV had a media centre located in Nairobi in Kenya. But Abdul was deeply concerned about the increasing involvement of China in Africa. 'You have a lot of Chinese investment in Africa. Basically, in five years, Africa belongs to China ... The gold, the oil, the diamonds, everything ... More Chinese people in Africa, more Chinese investment in Africa. And then, in the long run, Africa is flooded with Chinese people. And the continent would become a continent of China. I hope it doesn't happen. But it's gonna happen.'

On the other hand, Abdul did notice that China's investment and financial aid have brought Ghana some positive changes: 'We just [have a new] studio in the center place of Ghana which is funded by Chinese people. Very nice. And we just finished the international theatre. It was built by the Chinese and was a gift given to Ghana.' Abdul agreed with the fact that China-Ghana cooperation does bring good results to the development of the local society but the old nightmare of being 'colonized' still haunts him.

From the above examples, it is noticeable that the regular viewers had a relatively deeper understanding of CCTV-Africa as a media tool to gain more soft power in the international relations arena. As for the other two, they had rather different understandings of the Chinese media and Chinese economic involvement in Africa. It is

very possibly because that they are not familiar with the state-controlled nature of CCTV. However, the obvious observation in this case is that the positive reports by CCTV-Africa about African local societies can trigger the audience's associated knowledge about the good side of China-Africa relations whether in the past, current or future. This 'act-response' causal relation is key to the significance of the media effects especially in the situations when audiences of Category 2 have a mixed feeling about China in Africa.

### Category 3: Conscious of the Ideological Agenda and Agree

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Diploma	Funding	Perception	Habit
Yorgri	35	Female	Ghana	Doctoral Degree	Chinese Government	Relatively Negative	Non-Regular Audience
Wendy	26	Female	Ghana	Master's Degree	Chinese Government	Neutral	Non-Regular Audience
Benjamin	27	Male	Ghana	Master's Degree	Chinese Government	Relatively Negative	Regular Audience
Martina	19	Female	Nigeria	Bachelor's Degree	Self-Funded	Relatively Positive	Non-Regular Audience
Kosy	22	Male	Nigeria	Bachelor's Degree	Self-Funded	Positive	Regular Audience
Paul	30	Male	Cameroon	Master's Degree	Self-Funded	Positive	Non-Regular Audience
Boris	21	Male	Burundi	Bachelor's Degree	Self-Funded	Positive	Non-Regular Audience
Henry	29	Male	Liberia	Master's	Chinese	Relatively	Regular

				Degree	Government	Positive	Audience
Judith	20	Female	Tanzania	Master's Degree	Self-Funded	Positive	Regular Audience

Table 8.6 Nine Interviewees of Category 3

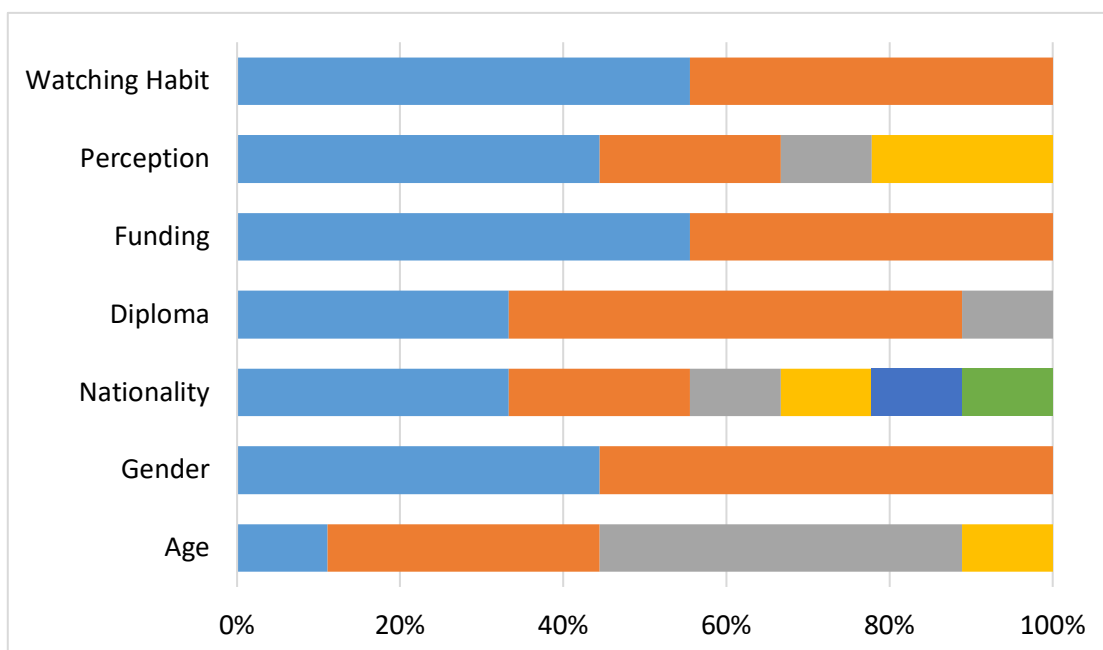


Chart 8.5 Nine Interviewees of Category 3

Interviewees in this category usually had a clear understanding of CCTV-Africa as state-controlled media and that it had a particular agenda which was closely related to China-Africa interactions.

Boris from Burundi said bluntly: 'CCTV is Chinese. It depends on the political agenda they have between Burundi and China, so they don't really go to the negative side as well as the positive side of the political crisis ... most of what CCTV Africa shows is about business ... (Chinese government) encourage[s] the Chinese investors to invest in Africa' (4<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

CCTV reports on issues in Africa demonstrated, even in the eyes of non-regular viewers such as Wendy from Ghana, that 'the Chinese government is trying to break into the

Ghanaian market also the global markets, and [the Chinese government] wants to promote its cooperation with the Ghanaian government' (25<sup>th</sup> May 2016).

Yorgri from Ghana said: '(there is) an agenda that China is pushing to strengthen the ties between China and Ghana ... I don't think it's a very bad idea ... but depending on the strings that might be attached to it' (25<sup>th</sup> May 2016).

Judith from Tanzania noticed the ideology incorporated in the CCTV-Africa news implied that 'development occurs in process. It took time for Tanzania to have well developed infrastructures, but here are some improvements being made' (26<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

The media expansion of CCTV in Africa did not really concern the interviewees as much as the critics, as Benjamin from Ghana said: 'I wouldn't worry about [the critique of China's cultural imperialism]. It depends on how you use the resources ... You will see why the government invests in the media centre in Africa. Because they know that they do things and Africa will pay them back. Why is China embarking on 'one belt one road'? Why is China building a railway from China to Philippines? Because we need a boosted economy' (27<sup>th</sup> May 2016).

The interviewees' agreement with the agenda of CCTV-Africa was largely based on their daily life experiences.

Benjamin explained his opinion about the 'soft power' of CCTV-Africa saying: 'It doesn't matter whether CCTV is made free to the rural people ... Actions speak louder than words ... when I was hungry, and you fed me matters much more than you just saying you love me'.

Apparently, to audiences of this category, the China-Africa economic cooperation is bringing much more positive influences than negative ones. Interestingly, when asked their opinion on some negative issues of China in Africa, such as poor-quality products

or illegal mining factories, interviewees tended to tell the other side of the story and to emphasize the fault of their own governments.

Wendy explained why African people would have a bad impression of Chinese products:

‘Most of our things [are] made in China and people will think that it’s not durable or it’s fake. Because the producers come [to China] and tell the manufactures “I want [this product] at this price.” And the producer says fine. If you want that maybe it will be 100RMB, then you are going to get very good quality. Then the suppliers say that “No. If I send it to Ghana, I cannot make more profit, so give me for 30 RMB”. For 30RMB you are not going to get that quality. Ghanaians will buy, so people have this mentality that things from China are not durable. Until I got to China, then I realized this wasn't true. So anytime I talk to my people back in Ghana, I tell them China has a lot of quality things, it depends on the money you have and what you want.’

As for the environmental pollution caused by Chinese factories (also factories from other countries as well), Benjamin accepted the fact and said that ‘it is the price that we have to pay (for economic development).’

Yorgri was trying to convince the researcher that unfairness is a common and natural existence. She said:

‘... society is not fair. Nature is not fair. Our fingers are not same. We are unique in our own ways ... What I’m also saying is that if there wasn’t any cooperation, there wasn’t any stronger ties, those were involved in a business will not get the opportunity of travelling to China. It’s because of the cooperation, that’s why you can get a visa to come to China to buy this and to sell. And when they come here to buy, some people can also buy from there. They can also employ some people to be selling and then there is some trickle-down effect. You get my point.’

Besides showing firm support for the political and economic agenda behind CCTV-Africa, some of the interviewees were quite pleased with the news produced by it: '... CCTV is good because it is not trying to take any part or any kind of position ... Personally, I think it is good (to sell the good image of Africa) ... Because the bad news will shock people ...' (Boris).

Martina and Kosy were also happy with the constructive tone of the news they watched about Nigeria: 'I think the content of this news (about the emerging online shopping industry in Nigeria) portrays optimism towards sustainable development in Africa' (Kosy, 21<sup>st</sup> July 2016). Judith also thought that the reports of CCTV-Africa can make Africa 'be known at a certain point'.

Paul from Cameroon was glad to see that there was news from CCTV-Africa reporting the innovative industry of the young generation in his country: 'I really appreciate the reports on this, because most of the reports I get from Africa, Cameroon [are] not really showing the good side of the country. You know. Most of the reports we get show mostly about the war ... has killed [many] people ... I think if CCTV and the west can be showing the good side of things that are happening in the country, I think it will really encourage more people to invest in areas of Africa' (4<sup>th</sup> July).

To Henry, who is originally from Liberia, CCTV-Africa covers more aspects on Africa than just the political conflicts shown by Western media: 'For the BBC, most events are political, for CCTV, they give the news on what's happening. Some things people should know or be informed about.' (23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016).

One common thing about interviewees of this category is that they expressed straightforwardly that they 'want [foreigners] to see the good side' of their countries (Henry). In terms of promoting the positive image of their countries, interviewees are on the same page with their governments which are approval of the constructive reporting style conducted by CCTV-Africa is appealing. The positive and energetic image of Africa



is good for attracting foreign investment, as the interviewees believe that economic development is the priority for developing countries in Africa and the China model is a good example for their governments to follow (Benjamin). This was also the main reason why they choose to go to China for further studies. Judith said: 'The Chinese government and our country have a very good relationship in general, and I support the cooperation. Because we have a lot to learn from China as it is one of the developed countries in the world. I myself have learned a lot just by studying here in China.'

Even though some of them realized that China may profit more from its economic cooperation with African countries, it seems to them an inevitable process to join in the world system as an active participant, something which China has achieved in recent decades. The messages they received from CCTV-Africa reconfirmed their pre-concepts about China in Africa – constructive, friendly and helpful. Therefore, the reception level of this category suits the very description of Hall's 'dominant decoding'. The significant moment happens, and the encoder's message is decoded exactly the way expected (at least according to the words of interviewees).

#### Category 4: Conscious of the Ideological Agenda but Partly Agree

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Diploma	Funding	Perception	Habit
Johnny	34	Male	Ghana	Master's Degree	Chinese Government	Neutral	Non-Regular Audience
Mamudu	24	Male	Zambia	Bachelor's Degree	University Scholarship	Relatively Positive	Regular Audience
Joe	22	Male	Cameroon	Bachelor's Degree	Self-Funded	Neutral	Regular Audience
Nmanka	24	Female	Tanzania	Bachelor	Self-	Relatively	Non-

				's Degree	Funded	Positive	Regular Audience
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Table 8.7 Four Interviewees of Category 4

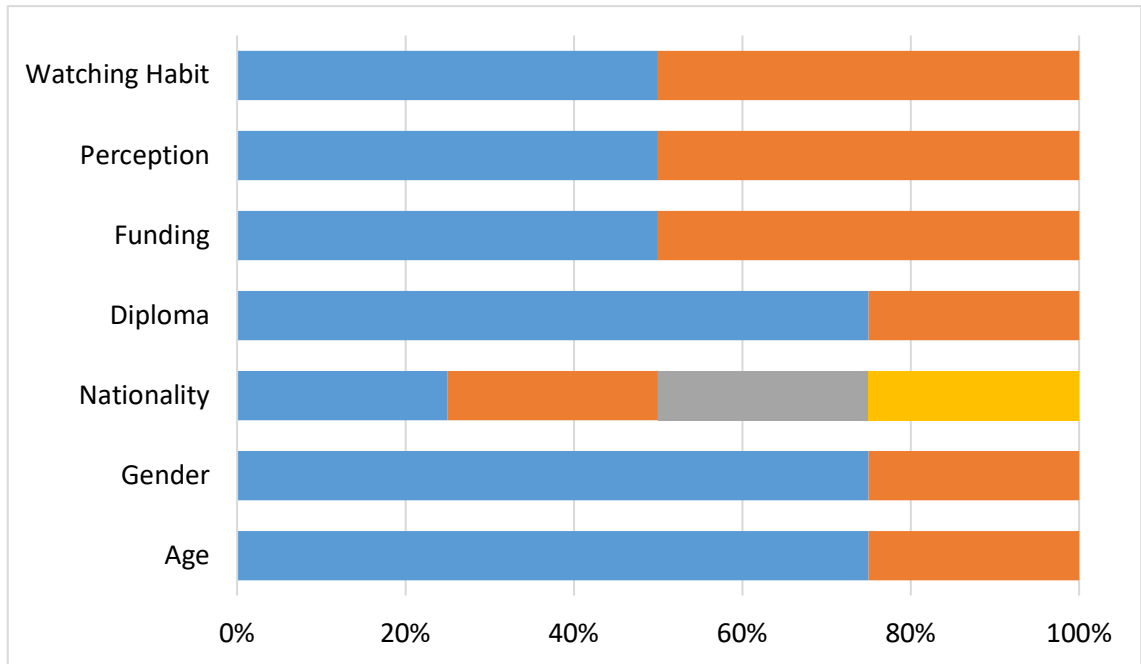


Chart 8.6 Four Interviewees of Category 4

Interviewees in this category did not unconditionally accept the messages encoded in the news content of CCTV-Africa, although they were fully conscious of the agenda of CCTV-Africa. On the one hand, interviewees had different understandings of the reporting style of CCTV-Africa.

Joe from Cameroon thought that '[CCTV-Africa's] programmes are really nicely displayed ... the difference (from Western media) is that CCTV-Africa goes deeper in [its] news while the Western ones discuss the general matter only' (26<sup>th</sup> July 2016). Mamudu from Zambia spoke highly of CCTV-Africa as he believed that CCTV-Africa 'can correct the false information about Zambia and Africa' (3<sup>rd</sup> July 2016).

However, Johnny from Ghana claimed that he 'did not see differences between CCTV-Africa and other media ... If the information is credible, the report or news should be

what they are giving. If BBC have given some reports about the negative aspects of the society, they are just telling the truth and it's the true pain we have' (24<sup>th</sup> May 2016).

Similarly, Nmanka from Tanzania thought 'CCTV-Africa has no big different [in terms of reporting] approach on covering news from those (Western) main-stream [media] such as the BBC and CNN' (24<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

On the other hand, they all seemed to be clearly aware of the agenda of CCTV in Africa. Joe said that 'The content of the news about Cameroon does convey a certain ideology that development occurs and is finally in the process of taking place.' Mamudu realized that the message of CCTV-Africa tries to deliver is to encourage people to 'come and invest.'

Most interviewees agreed with the fact that China's investment and its economic cooperation with their countries are helpful and good in a general sense. 'I think it's a good thing, because they have done a lot for Zambia, and China has made a lot of money from that' (Mamudu). They were clearly aware of the fact that the 'cooperation between the two governments is approved by all because the changes are visible in the country' (Joe). However, when they were asked about their personal opinions about China-Africa economic cooperation, they became rather reserved.

Johnny from Ghana who was studying for a master's degree course of Public Administration at Harbin Institute of Technology had asked the interviewer to stop recording the interviewing more than once. Due to Johnny's on going official position in his local government, he seemed very concerned about certain 'sensitive' questions on the relations between the Chinese and Ghanaian governments. However, the off-record conversations showed his realistic and rather pessimist attitude towards Ghana's foreign relations with countries of stronger economies. As Johnny said on the record: 'I see China as a business man, to gain profit, to invest money... always interested in profits' (24<sup>th</sup> May 2016). The pragmatism of China impressed Johnny. Although he reserved his

comments on some controversial phenomena of China in Africa, which was regarded as a form of disagreement in the view of this researcher, he thoroughly agreed with this development approach either for his country or for himself: 'Everyone wants to survive.'

Compared to Joe's complete silence on the questions about his personal perceptions on the ideology he sensed from CCTV-Africa's news and Johnny's reserved expressions, Mamudu from Zambia talked about the inequality in the local society which contributes to uneven and variable perceptions of the African public on the participation of China in Africa: '... not all people get [profit from China's investment in Zambia] ...For example the Chinese government gives us the scholarships. They (the Chinese government) really want people to do something better, to come [to China] to study. But ... they will give it to the government [of] Zambia. When your mother, or your father, your sister or your brother is not [part of the government then] you will not get the scholarship, so this is not good.' Overall, though, Mamudu admitted that, although China gets profit from Zambia, China also provides monetary aid, which is good: 'Chinese don't mind to give certain amounts of money. That thing I think is really good. And the Chinese like Zambia. They make a lot of money from there even more than in their own country.'

Nmanka had a negotiated understanding about the image of China in Africa presented by CCTV-Africa:

'According to the two videos I just watched and other programmes I have watched before, I think the news does convey a certain kind of ideology. Because once a media is managed by the state, some news will be limited to protect the state and the people of the country ... CCTV-Africa presents an ideology of giving more news about the government[s'] activities rather than an insight into the people's daily life and complaints to the government for the things they have done wrongs or things they need to do.'

Even though Nmanka actually partly agreed with the criticism that Chinese media in

Africa appears to be a new form of cultural imperialism ('I think the criticism is portraying the true current situation to some extent,') she still supports the decision of her government to cooperate with China: 'My country (Tanzania) and China have a very strong relationship. I would say it is a very cooperative one. To some extent I do support my government's opinion and cooperation with China.'

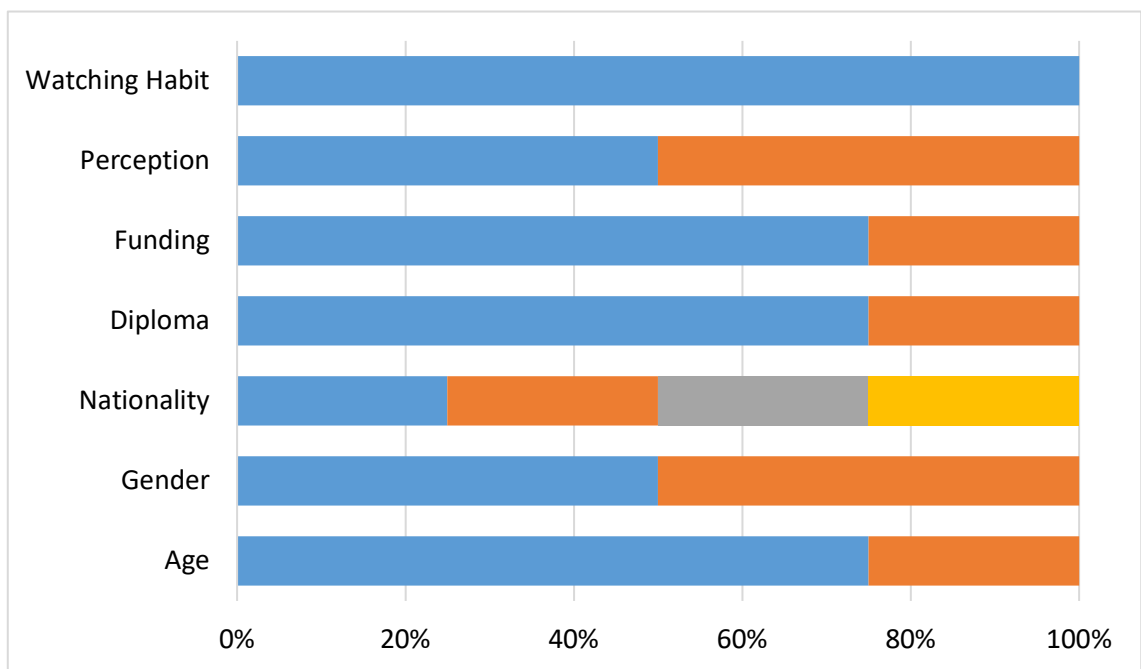
When the audience understands the ideological agenda that the media is trying to deliver through encoded messages but partly appreciate the media content, as indicated in this category, then there emerges a possible rift of the ideology underpinned by the pseudo-environment of media. This rift, representing the potential room for critical thinking, is opened further by the contradiction between what audiences are told by the news and what they see in real life. The fact that they are conscious of the agenda of the news programme but not fully convinced by it shows the complexity of the audience's reception of the effect of the media. However, the negotiated decoding of interviewees in category 4, as indicated in the above interviewing records, seems inadequate in terms of bridging the doubt of audiences about real life problems within the overall background of China-Africa neoliberal economic cooperation as presented by the agenda of CCTV-Africa. What is more important is that, as shown in the case of Johnny from Ghana, even though the good image of China was questioned by the audience, the ideology of pragmatism prevails. This kind of ontology of pragmatism in the manifestation of the prevailing ideologies of 'economic development as a priority' is the essential agenda reflected in the case of Chinese media in Africa and far beyond this concrete example pointing directly to the escalating global economic system of capitalism.

#### Category 5: Conscious of the Ideological Agenda but Disagree

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Diploma	Funding	Perception	Habit
Mamadou	26	Male	Guinea	Master's Degree	Chinese Institute	Neutral	Non-Regular

							Audience
Vanessa	21	Female	DR Congo	Bachelor's Degree	Self-Funded	Neutral	Non-Regular Audience
Leroy	23	Male	Zimbabwe	Bachelor's Degree	Self-Funded	Relatively Positive	Non-Regular Audience
Leroy's Friend	20+	Female	Unknown	Bachelor's Degree	Self-Funded	Relatively Positive	Non-Regular Audience

Table 8.8 Four Interviewees of Category 5



Chat 8.7 Four Interviewees of Category 5

Mamadou from Guinea pointed out the falseness of the foreign media in Africa saying that ‘Sometimes what they say is just bullshit. So, they usually focus on the negative African news and how to try to help us but not doing it ... That’s why I don’t believe the news that the media give me’ (27<sup>th</sup> May 2016). He noticed that ‘The way they (CCTV-Africa) report. They come to Africa with aides from China. If there is a problem, they

bring the solution. China is proposing order to help those countries. I think this is what is happening now, Chinese companies are everywhere. They have cooperation with the governments.'

However, Mamadou expressed his concern for the growing expansion of China in Africa:

'I really appreciate the help we get from the government, and Chinese officials. But there is one thing that needs asking: What's going to be the payback? What are they expecting from us in the future after they help us? When we talk about this we usually think about the past when the French came into my country. They said that they will help you guys; they do everything, like teaching us their language. But at the end of the day, till today, we want to be free of these people. They exploited us in various ways. They come to our country to exploit our gold. Our labour is cheap the goods are cheap. I just hope China won't do the same thing.'

He also talked about the negative side of China doing business in Africa: 'If the government itself wants a win-win, while some officials just want their own interests, there can be bribery. The Chinese officials can pay the money to get the contracts and do whatever they want to do ... it's happening. I have some proof about it. That's how Africa works ... Some Chinese companies in your country give a lot of bribes. I know a lot about this in Sudan and Nigeria. There was damage to environment due to oil exploitation, so people protested about it.'

Mamadou was not very optimistic about the increasing participation of China in Africa. But still, heavily influenced by his father who used to be an independent reporter in Guinea, Mamdou believed in the development model of China. 'I think we need to follow this model. China comes from nothing. Decades ago, China and Africa were at the same level ... My dad always tells me whenever I come home that wherever you go, all the countries you been, always watch and try to imitate. And he always tells me that China's development model is a good example.'

Such dualistic perceptions of China as a good example for African countries to follow and its controversial participation in Africa are also noted in the conversation with Congolese student Vanessa.

Originally from Democratic Republic of Congo, Vanessa was studying medicine at a university in the city of Tianjin in northern China. The researcher did not manage to find a positive news video on CCTV-Africa website as the comparison to a negative one due to the fact that, during that period of time (from May to July 2016), the DRC was afflicted by widespread unrest in the country. This was possibly part of the reason why Vanessa did not recognize the difference in reporting style between CCTV-Africa and other foreign media in Africa. But she did notice that compared to other media reports she watched on the issue about the unrest, CCTV-Africa seemed reluctant to present the whole truth: 'the reality is much worse than what the news reported,' said Vanessa.

Although she was not a regular viewer of CCTV-Africa, she seemed fully aware of how the agenda of this Chinese media works. It was obvious to her that the target audience of CCTV-Africa was the elite classes in local societies: 'Given the fact that they (elite and middle classes) are the only ones watching. That's their agenda (to report news they care about instead of the public). They are the only ones who have access to it. It makes sense' (30<sup>th</sup> May 2016).

Vanessa agreed that her government prefers positive reports about the DRC rather than negative ones because 'if they (media) show the real deep stuff, that gives them (the government) a bad image, and that would be worse.'

She thought that the preference to watch good reports about one's own country was a normal thing for anyone who is, more or less, patriotic: 'Anyone who is smart and has seen any news that is reported about the country would be happy to see they are reporting something positive, because 99% of the news about Congo is negative ... when



they show the positive parts, especially [about] financial [development], my country [as] one of the richest countries in resources, it attracts investors.'

However, from a more critical perspective, Vanessa doubted that the investment of China in the DRC and bilateral cooperation were really helping her country develop as much as many Chinese and African politicians promised. 'Chinese people go to our country. They come with their own food, with their own plants, with their own everything. They come with their own workers, especially for the lower classes. [Therefore], even if the economy is seemingly rising, right now there is serious financial crisis.'

Additionally, the monetary aid and the wealth created by bilateral economic relations are only visible to a certain group of people in local society. 'Even if it does bring money, the population would never get to see. Only the people in the elite class would be able to get access to it ... No one in the working class gets it,' said Vanessa.

Yet, Vanessa saw some valuable characteristics about Chinese culture that is a key to successful economic development. 'One thing I admire about China is the unity among the people. Back home, this tribe is fighting against that tribe, this people want to kill that people. [If I'm the boss], you are my relatives and friend, you get employed ... The second thing I think is that China is smart, investing in many things.'

When asked about how to rationalize her seemingly contradictory perceptions about China and China in Africa, Vanessa explained: 'You have to weigh the pros and cons (of dealing with China). When you invest in something, you have to see what the benefits are.'

To Leroy and his female friend, the 'cons' of China's involvement in the domestic issue in Africa outweigh the 'pros.' Regarding a news video about an investigation on the diamond trade in Zimbabwe, Leroy and his friend expressed their sceptical opinion on

the improper involvement of China: 'That's two hundred million dollars if diamonds disappeared. And they (the local government) just let it happen. China must have something to do with it' (30<sup>th</sup> May 2016).

They also noticed that instead of using the words 'diamond theft', CCTV-Africa used a rather neutral term 'diamond trade', which clearly showed the stance of the Chinese government on this matter. Leroy said that many local media in Zimbabwe bluntly accused China of 'stealing away' the diamonds when the government of Zimbabwe decided to nationalize the diamond company of AnJin which used to be a joint venture between Chinese and Zimbabwe companies.

After watching another news video about the economic growth in Zimbabwe, Leroy did not change his perspective on CCTV-Africa. To Leroy, the reporting style of CCTV-Africa is no different from the mainstream Western media that he has watched. 'It (the reporting style) is very Westernized,' he said. However, it seemed a futile strategy to Leroy and his friend: 'Why are all the presenters non-Chinese? If they want to express the Chinese opinion, the Westernized style is definitely not helping.'

Compared to the interviewees who partly agree with the agenda of China-Africa economic cooperation, viewers in this category hold a rather sceptical opinion of it. On the one hand, they doubt that the economic penetration of China into Africa is anything else but another round of 'scramble for wealth and riches' that was the motivation of many of the European and American colonial adventurers and entrepreneurs in the 19<sup>th</sup> and even 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although they clearly blame their local governments for such negative consequences, they do not see China-Africa economic cooperation changing the status quo. However, on the other hand, the interviewees in general do believe the development path of China in the past thirty years indicates an alternative approach for their own country to succeed in the global economic system. To them, though, the dominant global structure seems unlikely to change. Compared to contributing to a fairer global system, it is more practical for these interviewees to imagine their countries

becoming another emerging economy within the current structure.

As indicated in Table 8.8, all interviewees were non-regular viewers of CCTV-Africa. Therefore, their understanding of the agenda of this news channel is based on their long-term awareness about the political economic logic of transnational media, fragmented knowledge about CCTV-Africa and the new videos the interviewer showed to them during the interviewing process. The construction of an audience's consciousness about the ideological agenda of a news programme, as indicated in this case, is made up of a very complicated process during which the sole role of media incorporated in the mechanism of societal structure is less significant in terms of shaping the audience's knowledge system about the objective environment.

Category 6: Partly Conscious of the Ideological Agenda and Agree

Name	Age	Gender	Nationality	Diploma	Funding	Perception	Habit
Sidon	20	Female	Ethiopia	Bachelor's Degree	Self-Funded	Neutral	Non-Regular Audience
Isaac	28	Male	Ghana	Master's Degree	Chinese Government	Relatively Positive	Regular Audience

Table 8.9 Two Interviewees of Category 6

Interviewees in this category did not have an independent awareness of the existence of the news agenda of CCTV-Africa. However, when asked if he/she has sensed efforts by CCTV-Africa to build up positive images of their countries and China in Africa, viewers like Sidon agreed, and another like Isaac did grasp part of the agenda of the news programme.

Sidon from Ethiopia did not think that there existed governmental influence in the news of CCTV-Africa that the interviewer showed to her. She 'understand[s]' that CCTV-Africa

deploys a rather positive or constructive reporting style to cover stories either in Ethiopia or the continent of Africa. She did not deny that there existed a clear agenda of CCTV-Africa and yet neither did she express clearly what the political and economic purpose of CCTV-Africa was as a government-guided media operation.

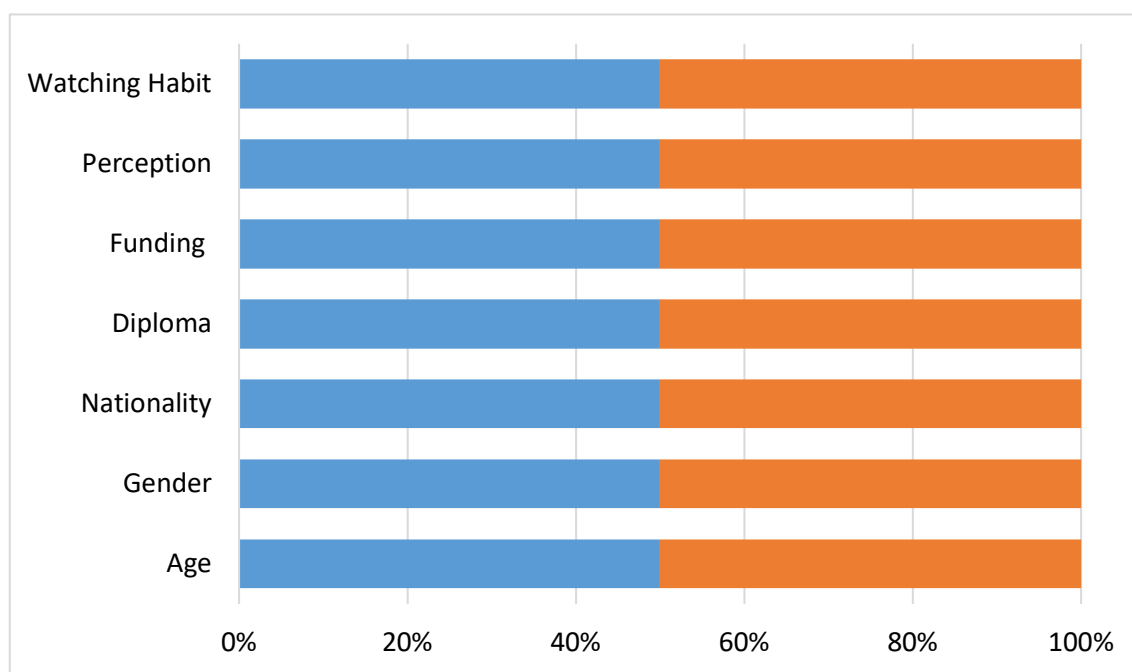


Chart 8.8 Two Interviewees of Category 6

However, Sidon seemed a firm supporter of China-Ethiopia cooperation: ‘...five years ago, we did not have any trains and metros. We did not have the African Union headquarters, (in Addis Ababa) where all the leaders of Africa get together to talk. It’s like the UN. So that was a gift from (funded by) China to Ethiopia. They built it for us. So, this cooperation between the two nations is good because it’s obviously developing our country ... It’s helping us developing ourselves. It’s good’ (5<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

She also observed the different approach of China in Africa compared to Western countries. Sidon said: ‘America helps us and aids us a lot. But I think it’s more with money rather than building ... On the other hand, China, they train our people there. They teach us and they help us build it. So that’s good. That helps us more rather than just the money in your hand, and not knowing what to do with it ... China’s trying to help us. I support that decision.’

On a different tack, Isaac from Ghana appreciated the governmental ‘guidance’ behind the television station’s output. He said: ‘The media will have an influence to push the agenda of Chinese government on other countries ... mostly CCTV talks about aid to Africa’ (23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016).

He agreed with the ideology of the Chinese government on the issue of economic development and political stability: ‘It is beneficial to call for the investment, and ... political stability is good.’ The investment from and cooperation with China, in the eyes of Isaac are ‘playing a vital role in the [Ghanaian] economy.’

Interestingly, Isaac expressed a strong denial of the media effect on his views. When asked ‘does watching CCTV influence your thinking of China’, Isaac firmly answered: ‘No, I am afraid, I have seen the news report for four years. I think I see differences from my environment ... It has nothing to do with whether I watched the programme or not.’

Category 7: Partly Conscious of the Ideological Agenda and Partly Agree

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Diploma</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Perception</b>	<b>Habit</b>
Hillary	29	Male	Kenya	Master’s Degree	Chinese Government	Relatively Positive	Non-Regular Audience
Ephrem	24	Male	Ethiopia	Bachelor’s Degree	Ethiopian Government	Positive	Regular Audience
Alan	24	Male	Tanzania	Bachelor’s Degree	Self-Funded	Positive	Regular Audience

Table 8.10 Three Interviewees of Category 7

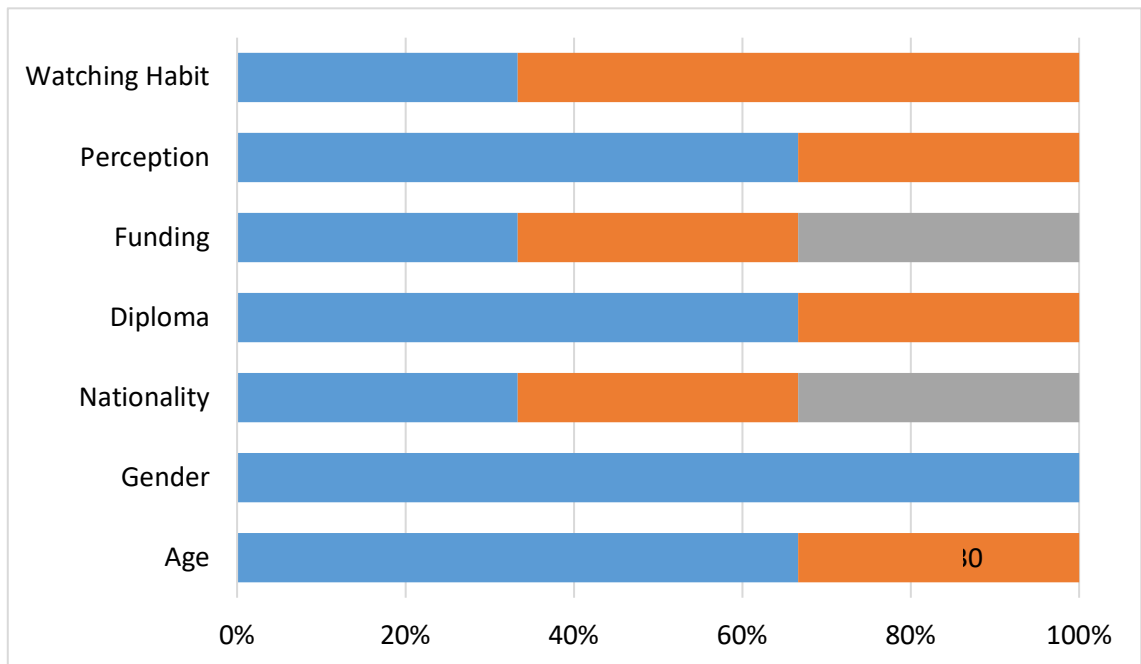


Chart 8.9 Three Interviewees of Category 7

Alan from Tanzania told the interviewer that from the news video he watched about the new public transportation system in Tanzanian capital, he sensed that CCTV-Africa is trying to build up an investment-friendly picture of Tanzania to attract investors (6<sup>th</sup> July 2016). He was glad that CCTV-Africa is trying to show the good side of his country, because ‘before it was negative ... people died. There is hunger. People had nothing. But now you see, it's a good place to live.’

Although Alan noticed that compared to the BBC and other Western media, CCTV-Africa goes deeper into the background of stories in Africa, he did not realize the specificity of the ideological agenda of CCTV-Africa and he said: ‘I think they have similar rules to follow, so there is not much difference.’ He also realized that there are certain topics that CCTV-Africa will never explore in any detail for political reasons.

For example, Alan explained there are some illegal activities in Tanzania that involve the participation of Chinese people, like poaching. It was also caused by the ‘high level of corruption.’ ‘Everything is possible, if you have money, people just do this. I give you money. It’s illegal, but people want to do that.’ According to Alan’s observations, news about poaching on CCTV-Africa never probes about who is really carrying out such

unlawful business.

However, Alan still believed that the government-controlled media contributes to the development of a country: 'Why in China can they do better than in Tanzania? When it comes to news in China, they can cover everything.'

Hillary is originally from Kenya where the headquarters of CCTV-Africa is located. To Hillary, it was also an obvious fact that CCTV-Africa as a Chinese state media is speaking for the interest of its own people: 'In CCTV, you have to defend yourself, so you have to talk good about yourself' (7<sup>th</sup> July 2016).

After watching the news video about a 'Safe City project' coordinated by the Kenyan government and the Chinese company Huawei (which is ostensibly privately owned but obviously comes under Chinese government scrutiny), Hillary told the interviewer that 'the local security isn't getting any better.' He believed that this kind of positive news is to 'bring investment to us (Kenya),' and he thought the agenda of CCTV in Africa is 'Bring[ing] confidence. [Showing that] We are safe. [Encouraging people] Come to invest.'

Although Hillary said that he thought China-Africa cooperation and Chinese investment in Kenya are good, he also saw a lot of problems caused by such multilateral interactions. The changes brought by the foreign investment in Kenya were 'some good, some bad,' said Hillary. 'For local [companies], we work from 8am to 5pm and take a rest at noon, but the Chinese, they work from 7am to 7pm ... many local [labourers] will be exploited.'

Similarly, Ephrem from Ethiopia also had mixed feelings about CCTV in Africa but from a quite different angle. Although Ephrem did not recognize a clear agenda of CCTV-Africa, he knew that the news video about establishing an industrial park was going to please the local Ethiopian government much more than the other about drought in rural areas.

Admitting himself as one of the middle, even elite classes, in Ethiopia, Ephrem expressed

a favourable attitude in terms of China's relations with his country: 'Ethiopia like[s] Chinese investment very much ... I think it's a really good commission for the country and the people.' Accordingly, Ephrem liked CCTV-Africa far more than the 'Western media': '[CCTV-Africa] is really even not just OK. It's wow! ... I really like it' (26<sup>th</sup> May 2016).

It seems that not only does CCTV-Africa represent Africa in a way that the critical Western journalists never did, but also the Chinese media in Africa in general presents a very different China to African people: '(Ethiopian people) did not have good impressions of China before. They were thinking that China is still as poor as Ethiopia. But when they see [CCTV], they have been shockingly surprised.'

However, this increasing influence of Chinese media on the African continent raised some concerns for Ephrem. He regarded all international media as tools of soft power for different nation-states (which is part of the reason why he did not see the specificity of the ideological agenda of CCTV-Africa), and he felt that the officially promoted publicity about China could mean the rise of a new hegemony: '[China's global expansion] is a good thing. [But] at the same time, for the future, it is scary. Not for now, but for the future when [China] is (fully) developed.'

### **8.2.2 Conclusion**

The above findings display a very complicated and diverse panorama of the African audience's reception of CCTV-Africa news content. As illustrated in previous chapters and sections, the ideological agenda of CCTV-Africa is to promote bilateral economic cooperation between China and the continent of Africa by highlighting the importance of neoliberal economic development and China's involvement in enhancing such development. However, due to the variables of the interviewees, such as nationality, study subject, viewing habits, previous knowledge about China-Africa relations and so on, the communication process employed by CCTV-Africa to deliver such an ideological agenda has prompted a variety of responses amongst the targeted viewing audience, all



from different backgrounds.

As we can see from the seven different reception categories, audiences of similar understanding about CCTV-Africa described their general perceptions about this news channel rather differently. The results of the qualitative interviewing show that the audience's original perceptions of CCTV-Africa as alternatively positive, relatively positive, neutral, relatively negative or negative as indicated in Chart 8.2, and contain diverse and different interpretations of the news content. Figure 8.1 depicts the multi-layered interpretation of African audiences towards CCTV-Africa. Based on the question on whether the audience think CCTV-Africa reports news differently, Figure 8.1 draws out several variations in the African viewing public's general understanding. As shown in Figure 8.1, those who are more or less aware of the agenda of CCTV-Africa are more likely to notice its positive and constructive approach to reporting news in Africa. It is noticeable that amongst the people who sensed the different reporting style of CCTV-Africa, there are indeed several divergent opinions towards what that difference truly stands for. And even for the group who share a similar interpretation on the difference of CCTV-Africa as compared to other foreign media, there exists a different degree of acceptance of the agenda that such a difference implies.

According to the comparison between Chart 8.2 and Figure 8.1, the interviewees' general perceptions of CCTV-Africa do not directly correlate with their views of the ideological agenda of the news channel. Adjectives such as 'positive' or 'negative' are too general and over-simplistic for interviewees to accurately express their feelings. This, again, proves the importance of conducting qualitative research to obtain the complex subjective opinions of a media audience.

There were some other unexpected findings. As shown in Chart 8.3, each category of reception is made up of interviewees from at least two different countries. The differences of nationalities did not play the most significant role in forming the opinions of audiences about CCTV-Africa's news content. Similarly, the different funding sources

of interviewees for their study in China are equally not necessarily a decisive factor (See Chart 8.4).

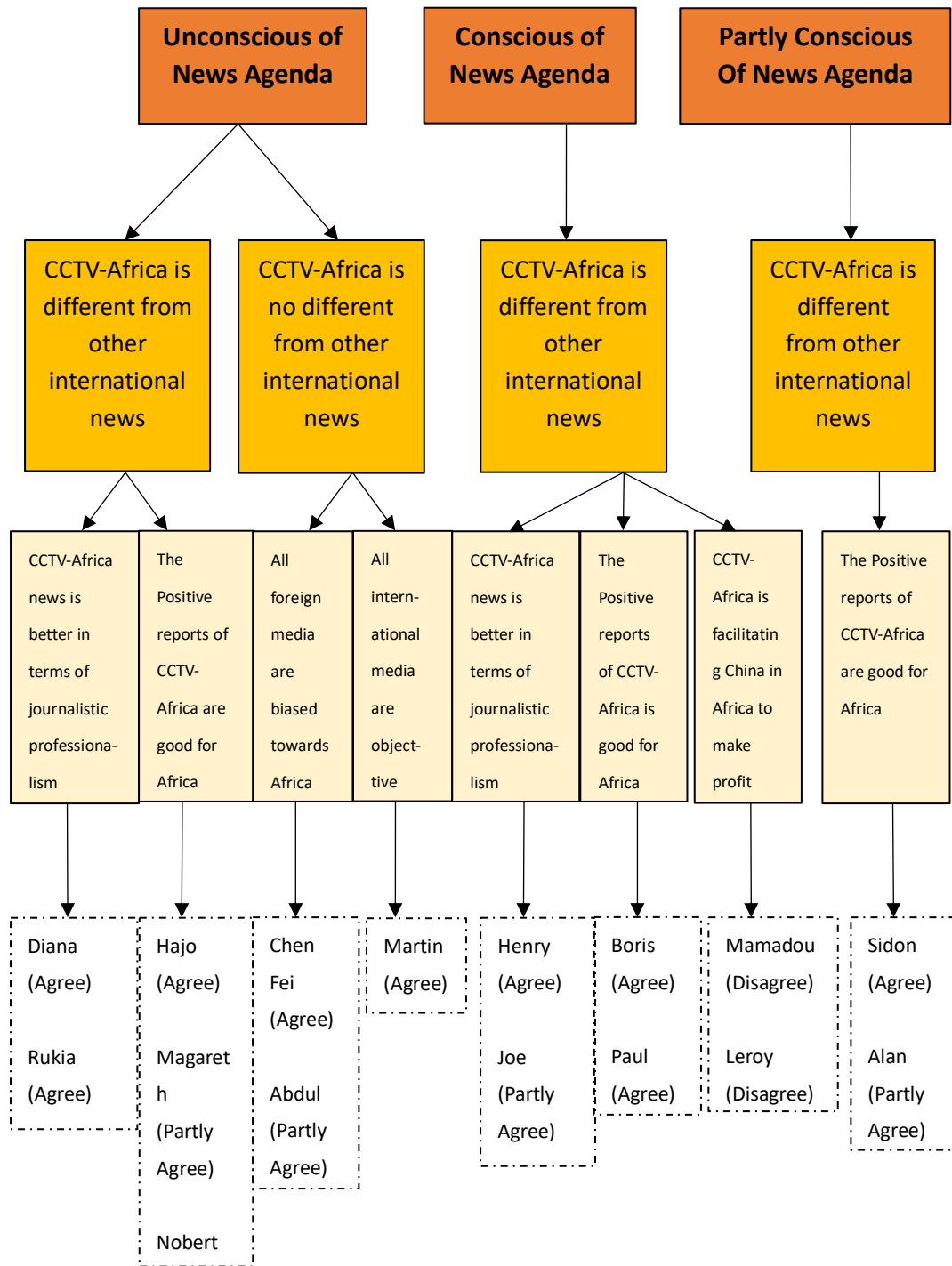


Figure 8.1 African Audience’s Receptions of CCTV-Africa

However, it can be noted from Chart 8.4 that the percentage of self-funded African students is almost on a par with that of students who receive scholarships from the

Chinese government or educational institutions. It is an interesting finding, showing that besides the formal efforts made by the Chinese or African governments to promote the multilateral cultural and economic exchanges, the attractiveness of a Chinese degrees has naturally boomed due to the growing understanding that Chinese companies bring more jobs to local African markets.

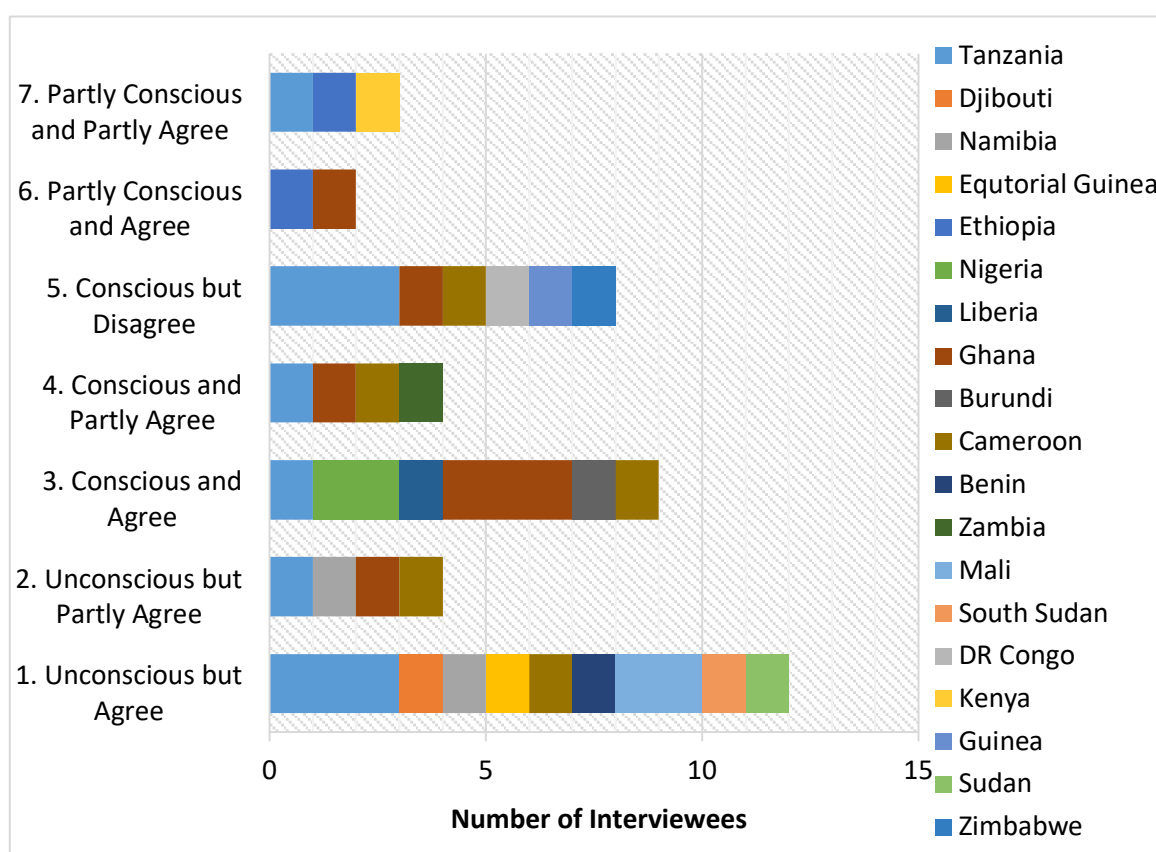


Chart 8.10 The Nationalities and Reception of African Audience

However, there is indeed a pattern that emerges, as shown in Chart 8.5, which indicates that interviewees who watch the news programmes of CCTV-Africa regularly are more likely to have a clearer understanding of the ideological agenda of the news channel. One exception is the reception category 5 whereby the audience is conscious of the agenda but disagrees with it. Compared to other audiences who partly agree with the agenda, interviewees of category 5 showed a relatively strong tendency towards decoding the message in an oppositional position. Similar to the profound favour towards China shown by some viewers who were not very familiar with CCTV-Africa, the

relatively rigorous antipathy is to some extent also a possible result of the ‘strangeness’ of the media product felt by some viewers.

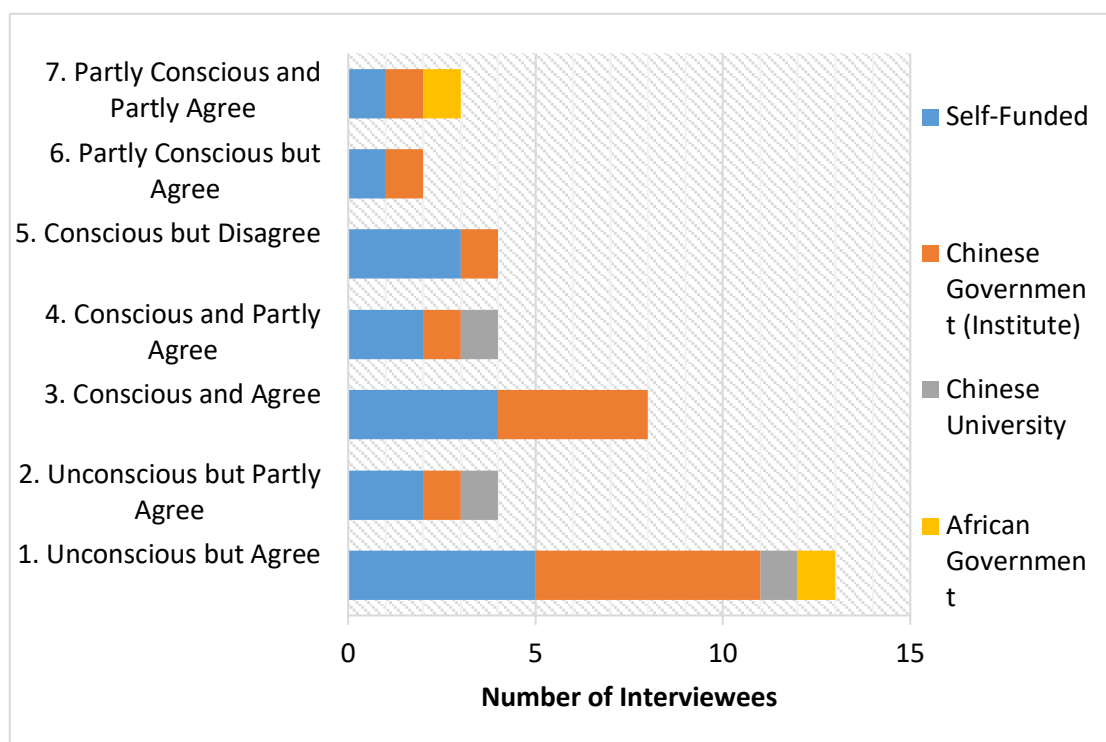


Chart 8.11 The Funding Sources and Reception of African Audience

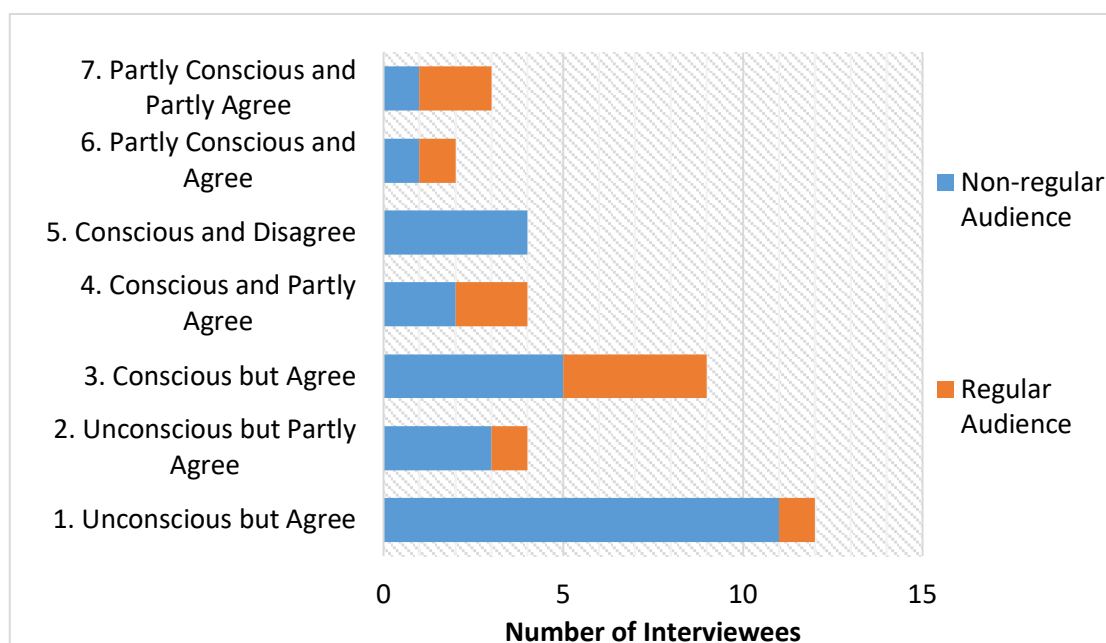


Chart 8.12 The Watching Habit and Reception of African Audience

Despite all the differences indicated in the above findings, almost every interviewee gave an affirmative answer to the question ‘do you think your government would find the news of CCTV-Africa appealing’. The positive reporting style of CCTV-Africa, partially because of the restricted regulations affecting governmental media in China, is welcomed by many African democratic governments. Even though the agenda of CCTV-Africa remains unclear to some interviewees, the agenda of the Chinese and African governments to promote multilateral economic cooperation is quite familiar to both the Chinese and African public. No matter what the interviewees personally think of China-Africa relations and the news about it on CCTV-Africa, it seems common sense to them that their governments are willing to cooperate with Chinese government and accept Chinese investment. The macro political structure, indicated in policies launched by the Chinese government, represents a seemingly unchallengeable authoritative stance which legitimizes the inevitability of integrating into the global system in a variety of ways.

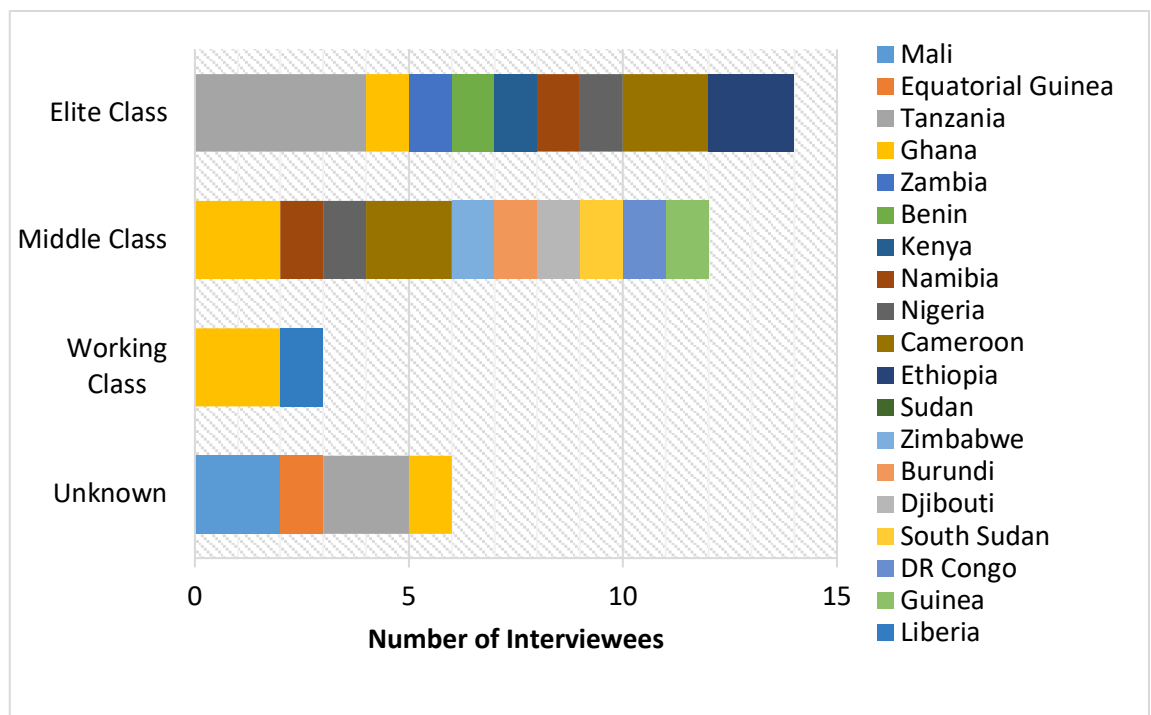


Chart 8.13 The Social Classes of African Audience

Additionally, another element as influential as the macro political structure is the social

status of interviewees in their domestic societies and within the global system. As illustrated in previous chapters, the people of the centre class of peripheral countries, determined by their living conditions, are likely to show support for the maintenance of the global hierarchical structure. And accordingly, international news usually has a positive influence in terms of fostering and reinforcing the ideological consent for the transnational elites. Many of the African interviewees of this research clearly expressed their awareness of being part of an elite class of their societies. As shown in Chart 8.6, according to their own descriptions, there are mainly three categories they use to label themselves: Elite Class, Middle Class and Working Class. Although interviewees have different understandings towards the definitions of these terms (some regard elites as having political influence while others think elite simply means highly educated), it is obvious that a major percentage of the interviewees describe themselves as either the middle class or elite class in their domestic societies. Compared to the ordinary public in Africa who do not have access to all the information resources and are less powerful in deciding the public agenda, highly educated elites, with valuable study experience abroad, benefit more from the enhanced multilateral interactions between China and Africa.

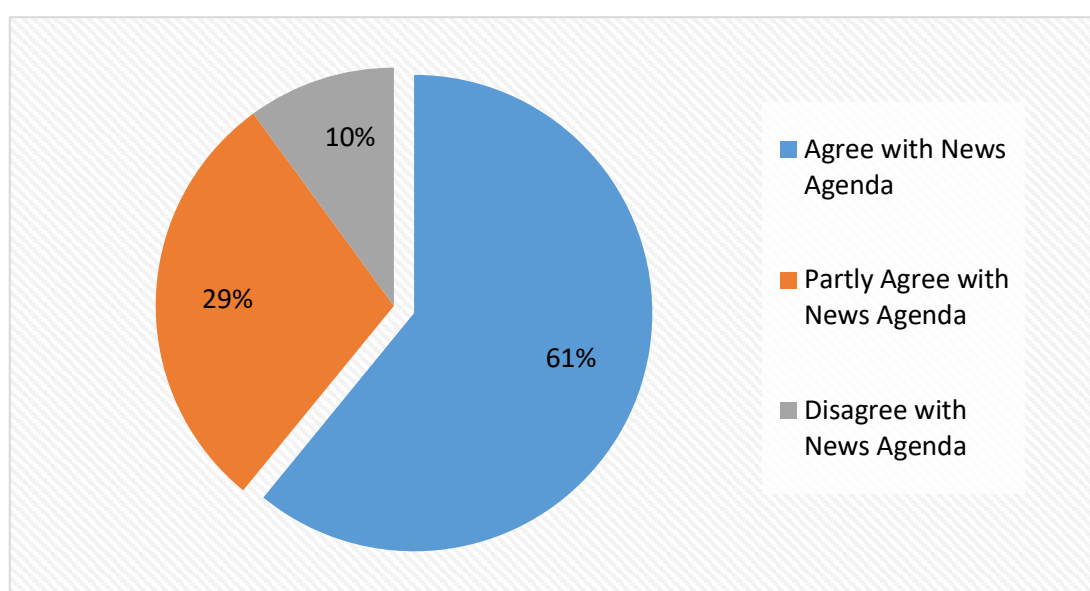


Chart 8.14 Perception of Interviewees on the Ideological Agenda of CCTV-Africa

Therefore, although the diverse opinions about CCTV-Africa among the African students in China provide us a multi-dimensional panorama of the ideological dynamic of the would-be elite African class, conditioned by the macro political structure and micro personal demands interviewees of this research, receiving higher education in China, have expressed a unified attitude towards the necessity of cooperating with China but with different degrees of concerns towards the concrete approaches to implement such cooperation. As indicated in Chart 8.7, the percentage of the interviewees who agree with the agenda (categories 1, 3 and 6) occupies the biggest proportion which is 45%. Viewers who partly agree with the agenda represented 31%, and only 24% of them critically interpret the news of CCTV-Africa taking up an oppositional coda. As we can see from this case study of African students who are viewers of CCTV-Africa in China, most of the interviewees, who are more aligned with Sino-African economic cooperation as they are living and studying in mainland China, have a rather positive understanding of the news content and interpret the message following the dominant code.

The news clips showed to the interviewees are included in the sampling of the content analysis. Therefore, the ideological consistency of the content analysis subject and the news clips for individual interviews is confirmed. The findings of the content analysis have shown that there indeed exists a certain kind of ideological agenda of CCTV-Africa as manifested in its economic news content to promote economic development and political stability. And the qualitative findings indicate that the majority of the target audiences of CCTV-Africa do follow the dominant decoding position to perceive the messages they get from the news. Such agreement with the ideological agenda of CCTV-Africa resonates their knowledge about the China-Africa relations in reality which encouraged their decisions to study in China in the first place.

This main finding responds to the argument made by Hall that 'polysemy must not, however, be confused with pluralism' (2006: 169). People from different cultures and societies would probably have different understanding or misunderstanding of foreign media because of the different dominant orders of their local/domestic 'social life, of

economic and political power and of ideology' (2006: 169). However, in the scenario of Sino-African media flows, where the different societies are gradually synced with each other within the political and economic structure dominated by the global economy of neoliberal capitalism, the African interviewees watching CCTV-Africa, conditioned by their elite position in the structure are more likely to follow hegemonic protocols to decode the messages encrypted in the international news.



## Chapter 9 - Conclusion

The ninth BRICS summit in Xiamen, a coastal city in southern China, was hailed by various media pundits worldwide as the 'largest ever BRICS Business Forum'. (ENCA, 2017). Despite the on-going border 'difficulties' between China and India (Pandey, 2017), the heads of government of the five countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) gathered in Xiamen and spent a significant weekend together. Chinese president Xi Jinping expressed his support for South Africa hosting the next BRICS Summit in 2018 (Zhang, 2017). The increasing importance and rising position of non-Western political entities such as BRICS are drawing considerable global attention. Considered as part of the shaping of a new world order, which some observers see as a challenge to the long standing Western hegemony (Adnan, 2014; Desai, 2013), the development paths of the rising economies of BRICS countries also reflect an undeniable truth about the thorough penetration of global capitalism in the non-Western areas of the world (Bond and Garcia, 2015). Despite the discursive opinions and discussions on the status quo of the global South, the reality of BRICS is focused on developing an economically favourable future for its members. In the case of China-Africa cooperation, the dramatically increased multilateral interactions are bringing about a profound impact on the global system of politics and economics. Although it is indeed too early to assert a prediction about what kind of impact it will truly be, there are numerous circumstances worth closer investigation in order to have a glimpse of the various possibilities that lie ahead. The growing dynamic of the China-Africa media flows is one such possibility.

As reviewed in Chapter 2, the boom in China-Africa studies contributes to the growing interest of global scholars in the field of China-Africa communication and media studies. Though China and many African countries have a long history of political and economic interaction, the encounters between them have usually been limited to political agendas or economic transactions. China studies in Africa and Africa studies in China are both in a relatively primary stage, which explains the under-developed theoretical frameworks for and the under-studied topics of China-Africa communication and media studies.

After generally reviewing the genealogy of audience studies in the field of international communication studies, it seems clear to the researcher that from both the perspective of developing a theoretical paradigm for the new critical agenda of international communication studies and enriching the empirical material on the media of the global South, it is of great importance to explore the dynamics of the China-Africa media flows. As the vital components of any social process, the subjectivities of human beings are always of interest to researchers of sociological studies. Therefore, this researcher chose to conduct an audience research survey on the African viewers of the Chinese media in Africa, in particular focusing on CCTV-Africa.

During the past few years of this doctoral research, on the several academic occasions that the researcher got to present her periodical works, a few questions were raised towards the theoretical approach deployed by this research to study the media reception among diverse audiences. As repeatedly highlighted throughout this thesis, the research adopts the critical political and economic perspective of analysis, although this is not the most conventional way to conduct such audience studies. As reviewed in Chapter 3, most outstanding works of reception studies, or popular culture studies in general, were conducted within the theoretical framework of Cultural Studies. There have always been various debates between the two schools – political economy and Cultural Studies, and particularly where the critical political and economic route overlaps with the cultural angle. But from the literature review of audience studies and of the concept of ‘ideology’ in Chapters 3 and 5, we can see that this research takes a complex stance between these two approaches – adapting relevant parts of both. However, as the last paragraph of Section 4.4 indicates, this research aims to employ a Marxist critique of capitalist ideologies as manifested in media practices. For example, in the concrete case of Chinese media in Africa, the researcher does not want to limit the audience study of CCTV-Africa to the analysis of the media content and expressions of interviewee and ignore the discussion of the political and economic background, which simultaneously conditions the production of such content and expression.

Thus, instead of exclusively emphasizing empirical studies, this thesis recognises the important role of the theoretical framework which underpins the research. Four chapters of literature reviews set out to compare the interlinked connections and divergences between key theories and terminologies. The contributions of this research, therefore, are not limited to the originality of its research subject but also its theoretical reflections on the 'cultural imperialism' paradigm and its efforts to bring in the concept of 'ideology' to remedy the flaws of the paradigm, which are neither applicable in the contemporary era of international communication studies nor in the specific context of this research. Additionally, as set out in Chapter 6, the revision of the 'structural theory of imperialism' introduced by Johan Galtung provides this research with a solid theoretical structure in which to present the arguments on China-Africa international news communication. In Chapter 8, the deployment of the combined typology of audience reception to analyse the complicated processes of African viewers of CCTV-Africa is also another contribution to the renewal of the 'encoding/decoding' model.

The main arguments of this research can be summarized in the following three sections: Section 9.1 briefly examines and concludes the discussion about the theoretical consistency between the three key concepts in this research – imperialism, ideology and reception. In Section 9.2, the discussion moves further to the localization of those concepts in the case of China-Africa media studies from the political and economic perspective. Finally, Section 9.3 concludes how the empirical findings on the reception of the African audiences in China help to answer the two main research questions. The last section of this chapter, Section 9.4, extends this research and the findings and discusses the other questions or observations that emerged during the carrying out of this research.

### **9.1 Imperialism, Ideology and Reception**

The review of 'imperialism' theories in Chapter 4 and that of China-Africa political and economic realities in Chapter 6 have raised an interesting question: Does the dynamic between China and Africa fall into the type of 'the highest stage of capitalism' – to

borrow Lenin's famous phrase? As we see from the discussion on imperialism and related theories in Section 4.3, political-economic interactions between developing countries and underdeveloped countries are not really counted as imperialist expansion and are not fully dissected in the discourse of imperialism studies. They are regarded merely as satellite nations around the superpowers, such as the (former) Soviet Union or United States, acting as 'a buffer zone between core and periphery, and have a mix of the kinds of activities and institutions that exist on them' (Martinez Vela, 2001: 4). However, in Section 6.1.1, a recently revived and more critical term is introduced and deployed to analyze the interactions amongst the emerging economies – 'sub-imperialism' as used to describe the semi-periphery in the world system of Immanuel Wallerstein in Section 4.3.4. That section argued that certain characteristics of China fit the standards of being a semi-imperialist country. This view of the economic nature of China leads to a revision of the 'harmony of interest' model of structural theory of imperialism by Johan Galtung as indicated in Section 6.1.2.1.

As previously reviewed in Section 4.3.3, Galtung's structural theory of imperialism classifies the world into two major components – Core and Periphery. As indicated in Figure 4.1, the dominant hierarchical relation between core and periphery is maintained through the establishment of 'harmony of interest' between the transnational elite class and 'disharmony of interest' between general populations. International news produced by the Core countries is therefore regarded as an ideological apparatus to set an agenda that reinforces and maintains the 'harmony of interest' between global elites: 'Information is transferred to the Southern elite in such a way that primary importance is attached to the same issues the developed world sees as important' (Thussu, 2006: 51). However, the concept of sub-periphery or sub-imperialism naturally adds to the complexity of this binary model. The revised structure, as shown in Figure 6.1, brings in the dynamics of semi-peripheral countries interacting with Centre and Peripheral countries. It is clearly illustrated in Section 6.1.2.1 that the interactive patterns between Semi-periphery and Periphery versus Core and Periphery are very different due to the different political and economic realities of these countries. Although Core, Semi-

periphery and Periphery are all following the rules of the global economic system of capitalism and producing ideologies that promote neo-liberal economic development, the *concreteness* and individuality of each nation makes the manifestation of such ideologies complex and open to multiple interpretations

The literature review in Section 5.2 on the concept of 'ideology' introduces the importance of an economic base in conditioning the superstructure of 'ideology'. As defined in Section 5.2.4, ideology refers to 'the people's consciousness formed by the solidity and firm foundations of the given economic structure which is necessarily produced by the ensemble of productive relations of a specific human society'. Since the political and economic realities of Core, Semi-periphery and Periphery are hugely different, the ideologies disseminated by the multilateral interactions between these nations are therefore various. For example, the harmony of interest between American and African elites and that between Chinese and African elites are not the same, and the ideological consensuses that are manufactured by the international media to reinforce these 'harmony of interests' are naturally different as well. As concluded in Section 5.3, ideological imperialism in this research refers to the international process by which the dominant collective consciousness of one society is being formed by the adaption of its economic transformation impelled by the global capitalist structure. Accordingly, in Section 6.1.2.2, the political and economic dynamics between China and African countries were illustrated in order to explain how the interactions between Semi-peripheral China and Peripheral Africa are conditioned by the global structure of the neoliberalist market economy.

Based on the literature reviews in Section 5.2.2 of Stuart Hall's ideology of general theories and Section 3.3 on the 'encoding/decoding' model, we can understand how in this research the process of mass media communication is related to the dissemination of certain dominant ideologies or in other words 'mainstream opinions'. The 'encoding/decoding' model as espoused by Stuart Hall explores how 'meaning' is constructed through encoding the media message by media practitioners and how

'(mis)understanding' is achieved through the audience's decoding of the message. Consistent with his stance on highlighting the importance of contingencies within articulation of meaning, Hall not only argues that there is no guarantee for ideological dominance but also points out the possibility of an audience able to interpret the media message freely. It is understandable that Hall's proposal was to enhance the autonomy of the general public, downplaying the overwhelming power of the political and economic structure of society. However, as the final conclusion of Chapter 5 indicates, this research is not about exploring the alternative social ideas the audience can actively acquire from media content but to mainly focus on how the dominant decoding works in the case of the Chinese media in Africa; hence the definition of ideology in this research restricts itself to the critical theories of Marxism.

As the typology of Table 8.4 indicated, the decoding positions have evolved into a complex set of segmented differentiations of an audience's reception of media content. According to Table 8.4, there are nine types of audience reception. As far as this research is concerned, seven of them appeared in the case of African audiences of CCTV-Africa. As discussed in the beginning of Section 8.2.1, the renewed typology of reception positions extends the 'encoding/decoding' model of Hall to the aspect of unconscious interpretation of the ideological agenda of media content. Section 5.2.3 introduces the post-modernist approach of ideological studies which largely involves the discussion on the 'unconsciousness' of the human mind, seemingly unaware of the influences of the media. Interestingly, 'being unconscious of the ideology' is the essential premise for implementing the function of ideology, as Marx put it 'they do not know it, but they are doing it.' However, to Žižek, ideology means 'they know that, in their activity, they are following an illusion but still, they are doing it'. Therefore, as we can see from the typologies of Table 8.4, the fact that the reception of audiences is mixed will be reflected at all levels of decoding positions.

To conclude, the subject of the reception studies of this research is the ideological agenda of the Chinese media in Africa, which is conditioned and shaped by the political

and economic realities these countries are embedded in, and such realities are also the manifestations of the global system of capitalism.

## **9.2 Sinicization, Harmony of Interest and CCTV-Africa**

The term Sinicization is deployed in this research to summarize the ideological homogenization of the China-African elite class through the establishment of a 'harmony of interest'. As explained in the beginning of Section 6.1, Sinicization refers to a comprehensive intra-national process of political and economic interactions between China and other countries, especially those less developed ones, and the dissemination of the specific ideology created during the process. According to the theories of Mathias Luce on sub-imperialism, Section 6.1.1 illustrates the five features of China being a semi-imperialist nation:

1. 'A dependent country's accession to regional sub-centre status in response to global accumulation patterns through its transformation into a sub-centre of heavy industry with a particular domestic level of production and capitalist financial operation;
2. Bourgeois unity through displacing internal contradictions;
3. The formulation of a national sub-imperialist plan;
4. Formation of national capitalist trusts that tie the dependent economy to imperialism via state intermediation;
5. The dependent economic condition that not only transfers value into imperialist economies but also appropriates the surplus value of weaker nations' (Luce, 2015: 34).

The economic realities faced by China impel it to develop a series of strategies and policies to survive and thrive in the global system of capitalism. The economic transformation in the domestic market and the 'going out' policy of Chinese government are the manifestations of such realities. It is inevitable for China to enhance both its hard power and soft power in the global system to assert its ascendance. Under such

circumstances, the phenomenon of Sinicization can be understood as the one of the consequences of the thorough penetration of neo-liberal capitalism into the global South.

As illustrated in Section 6.1.2.2, there exists a mutually dependent relationship between China and certain African countries. On the one hand, China, as a semi-peripheral country, is eager to squeeze into the ranking of 'central' countries of the global system by exporting value-added products to, importing cheap natural resources from, and recruiting cheap labour in under-developed countries. On the other hand, peripheral countries in Africa want to transform into semi-peripheral countries by changing their labour-intensive industries to capital-intensive industries, which need capital and technological investment from richer countries. The bond between China and many African countries is therefore set in line with their different demands and needs that can be met from each other. Marxist political and economic critique has taught us that the ruling class and the elites benefit the most from the rapid development of capitalist societies. Accordingly, they are more likely to align with each other by the 'harmony of interest' of maintaining their dominant status and bettering their superior living conditions. There are numerous approaches for multilateral governments and transnational financial institutions to constantly solidify and promote such 'harmony of interest' in the aspects of foreign diplomacy and economic cooperation. However, the publicity of such efforts is also of vital importance as the superstructure is not the derivation of an economic base but rather a symbiotic existence. Efforts to maintain the 'harmony of interest' need to be packaged and branded to demonstrate the shared goals of benefits for both the elites and the public. In the words of Althusser, ideological apparatuses function as the reproduction of the 'submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and ... the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology ... for the agents of exploitation and repression, [and to] provide for the domination of the ruling class' (Althusser, 1971: 5). State-run media, such as China Central Television in Africa, are the tools deployed by the governments to reinforce the ideological consensus between China and Africa and to disseminate the ideology of Sinicism to a broader range of



receivers globally.

As set out in the thesis, CCTV-Africa was established in Nairobi in Kenya in 2012 as the key strategy adopted by the Chinese government to promote its discourse and soft power across the vast continent of Africa. There have been discussions recently in the field of journalism studies about the journalistic approach of the Chinese media in Africa. As introduced in Section 2.4, Chinese scholar Zhang Yanqiu argues that the Chinese media in Africa such as CCTV-Africa and *China Daily* (the English language state run newspaper that is headquartered in Johannesburg in South Africa) are deploying an innovative journalistic framework called 'constructive journalism' to report issues in the continent of Africa. Zhang argues that this is an alternative approach to reporting social phenomenon from a more constructive perspective and positive tone instead of constantly criticizing governments and focusing exclusively on the negative side of the story. Indeed, in August 2017, Guo Weimin, vice-minister of China's State Council Information Office, said during the China-Africa Media Forum in Johannesburg, that media from China and Africa should become recorders and disseminators of China-Africa friendship and the witnesses and promoters of Sino-African cooperation (Pan and Liu, 2017).

This positive and encouraging spirit is also outlined in the findings of Chapter 8 on the media content of CCTV-Africa's business programme *Global Business (Africa)*. However, this researcher is somewhat sceptical about the nature of such encouragement for economic development presented by a state-run media organisation. As the conclusion of Section 8.1.4 indicates, the concrete ideological Sinicization represented by CCTV-Africa is to promote sustainable economic development in African societies by advocating a positive and harmonious image about the local political and economic environment. Therefore, in the opinion of the researcher, it is not suitable to frame such a journalistic approach as constructive journalism.

However, no matter what kind of journalistic practices are deployed by CCTV-Africa, it

remains as one of the most important ideological tools for China to export its political and economic consensus with other countries, as indicated by Guo Weimin earlier. The Ideological agenda of CCTV-Africa, which is regarded as the manifestation of Sinicism, can be summarized as ‘advocating China-Africa cooperation’, ‘encouraging economic development’ by ‘highlighting the good side of the story’. The reception of such an ideological agenda by the group of African students in China is the key to reveal the real mechanism of the process involved in China-Africa mass communication flow.

### **9.3 Reception of African Audiences in China: Answers to Research Questions**

The two main research questions introduced in Section 7.2.1 were as follows: 1. How do the African students studying in China (as the potential elite opinion leaders of their local societies) understand the (ideological) message delivered by the news produced by CCTV-Africa? 2. How does the reality of the enhanced Sino-African political and economic interaction contribute to the way that African students understand the media content of CCTV-Africa? This section is aimed at summarizing the answers to these questions found in the process of conducting this research.

#### **9.3.1 First question**

The media reception of African students in China is relatively complicated as indicated in Section 8.2. One key finding was that a majority of African students studying in China had a positive perception about CCTV-Africa. As shown in Chart 8.2, 63% of the interviewees spoke well of it. Only 13% of them held negative or relatively negative opinions. And the results of the individual interviews show that 61% of the students agreed with the agenda of CCTV-Africa, and 10% of them did not (Chart 8.7). It can be concluded that at least in the group of African students who are receiving higher education in China, the dissemination and reception of the ideological agenda of CCTV-Africa are relatively successful. However, as summarized in Figure 8.1, there are underlying differences beneath such positive reception. The reception of African students in China in this research can be generally categorized in three types according to their awareness of the agenda of the news: 1) Unconscious of News Agenda; 2)

### Conscious of News Agenda and 3) Partly Conscious of News Agenda.

As we can see in Figure 8.1, most of the audiences of the first type agreed with the agenda of CCTV-Africa, although they were initially unaware of the existence of such an agenda. For those who were conscious of the fact that CCTV-Africa is reporting news in a different way from Western media in Africa, it was more likely for them to agree with such an agenda. There is an interesting point about such awareness; as shown in the interviews of Section 8.2, African students representing the highly-educated group of their societies expressed their urgent wishes for change. Indeed, there are concerns about the involvement of China in African affairs, but they agree that China-Africa cooperation is bringing new opportunities that have never been offered to them before. Even for those who are not aware of the different approach of CCTV-Africa, they sense that the media content about the development of their countries as depicted on CCTV-Africa means the station is showing a good image of Africa and telling a positive story about social developments.

For the audiences of the second type, not only are they aware of the different reporting style of CCTV-Africa, they are also conscious of what kind of agenda that CCTV-Africa is trying to advance. Obvious divergence is therefore noticed in this type of reception. Although a majority of this type admit and agree with the ideological agenda that CCTV-Africa is trying to deliver, a few interviewees expressed their disagreement with such a journalistic approach and the motivations behind it. For the ones who disagree, CCTV-Africa is facilitating China in Africa to profit only the elite class of people. It is a difficult reality for them to come to terms with. However, as the conversation with Mamadou shows, such agreement is probably a concern about the nature of elites in many African countries. Audiences of this kind of reception, however, also show a certain degree of appreciation about China's aid and investment in Africa.

The third type of reception is somewhere in between. The viewers realized that CCTV-Africa is trying to convince them about something and they are very clear what the

ideological agenda really is about. However, when they are asked about what they think of the news put out by CCTV-Africa and in what way does such news contribute to the social development of Africa, they were certain that the influence of CCTV-Africa was for the good of China-Africa cooperation. Not all of those who are only partly conscious of the agenda absolutely agree with it. Some are also a bit worried about how such multilateral cooperation is really contributing to the development of their countries. Most of them also understand that the difficulties brought about by China-Africa interactions are inevitable and will be solved eventually.

Of course, the reception of African audiences is also influenced by other factors, such as their ages, viewing habits, the differences in their subjects of study and perhaps different ways of understanding issues because of previously acquired and preconditioned knowledge. As the findings of Section 8.2 show, older people tend to have a realistic and a more pragmatic perspective of China-Africa relations and they are more willing to analyse the news of CCTV-Africa from the angle of cooperation and business. Younger interviewees are more sympathetic about the social crises such as poverty, environmental pollution and natural disasters. Regular viewers are more likely to grasp the reality of the agenda of CCTV-Africa and to have a deeper understanding about the media content of the news. Students studying medicine are more likely to consider China-Africa relations from a humanistic perspective, while those studying business or international relations are more likely to understand things from the angle of political and economic benefits. One can also surmise that the higher the degree that the students are studying for, the better and more thorough interpretation of the complex realities of China-Africa interactions.

### **9.3.2 Second question**

The result of the enhanced China-Africa cooperation is manifested in the identities of these African students studying in China. As many of the interviewees have told this researcher, the original reason they chose to come to China for a higher education degree is because Chinese companies are flooding into the African market. Thus, with

the experience of studying in China or even the ability to speak fluent Chinese, they have a better chance than other African students to get a job in those Chinese companies or the African companies that are doing business with the Chinese companies. Notwithstanding their concerns about China-Africa enhanced cooperation, their decision to choose to study in China shows their willingness to accept the reality and admit the advantages of China's economic power.

For most of the interviewees, their choices of China as the destination for a foreign qualification are the direct results of China's promotional discourse in Africa. In addition to better job opportunities, there are many other reasons that these students chose China. Chen Fei from Tanzania, who insisted on being called his Chinese name instead of his Tanzanian name, told the researcher that, before he came to China, he was studying at the Confucius Institute in his local university, and there were scholarships for excellent students to come to China for further educational and for cultural exchanges. As reviewed in Section 2.3, the educational training and the establishment of Confucius Institutes in Africa have increased dramatically in the past few years. As shown in Chart 8.4, there is a considerable number of African students interviewed for this research who are funded by the Chinese government or related scholarships. This is also the reality of the general situation of African students in China. Although the number of self-funded students is increasing rapidly as well, Chinese government-led educational projects are still the most significant component of China-Africa educational cooperation. Scholarships are the vital channels for African people to know China better and to learn the knowledge about China and apply this to their own societies. As far as the findings of this research are concerned, the governmental nature of these scholarship projects does not necessarily have a direct influence on the audience's reception of CCTV-Africa. Instead, it seems that the enhanced chances for these students to live in China and experience Chinese life play a more important role in shaping their opinions about China and about the evolving China-Africa relations.

However, there are two groups of statistics as displayed in Chart 8.4 worth attention and

further discussion. One is the comparison between the proportion of self-funded and scholarship students in the 'Unconscious but Agree' type of reception. The other is the comparison of such in the 'Conscious but Disagree' type of reception. These two types of reception modes are the most extreme and denote typical decoding positions of dominant and oppositional variety. The former stands for the absolute success of ideological manipulation – 'do not know but still do it', and the latter refers to the absolute autonomy of audiences – 'do know and oppose it'. As we can see from Chart 8.4, the former audience reception of the dominant decoding position has more students of China-African scholarships than self-funded students. On the contrary, the latter audience reception of oppositional decoding position has much more self-funded students than those with scholarships. Although no interviewee in this research spoke bluntly about how their ideas are influenced by the scholarships they receive from Chinese government or universities (a few even complained heavily about them), it is important to consider the potential impact of the funding context.

Excepting educational enhancement, African students in this research are very impressed by the development of Chinese society. As many of them have expressed in the interviews, the economic growth of China sets a good example for African countries to follow. Benjamin from Cameroon believes that since China can do it, Cameroon can do that too, as long as the Cameroonian government is as determined as the Chinese government. In some cases, even though interviewees are sceptical about the journalistic practices of CCTV-Africa and are not very convinced by the veracity of Chinese news, they still have a faith in the development pattern of Chinese society. Sometimes such faith can influence their perception of Chinese media as well. As Alan from Tanzania told this researcher, he thought the 'censorship' of the Chinese media was necessary and was also required in his own country. Paul from Cameroon liked the positive reporting style of CCTV-Africa and he believed that it was important for the public to have confidence in their countries and their governments.

The growing China-Africa cooperation is making significant changes to the continent. As

reviewed in Section 3.1 on the modernization paradigm of international communication studies, the process of a certain kind of ideological hegemony delivered from one developed country to less developed ones is always top-bottom and underpinned by the political and economic realities of these countries. In the case of this research, though China and African countries are both developing countries, there exists a certain area of difference that is reflected as semi-periphery and periphery. Therefore, when China is trying to introduce its 'China Model' to Africa, the people of Africa are not only just receiving this information from the mass media but also from their daily experiences of various social changes. This is also why this research does not exclusively focus on the news content of CCTV-Africa, but emphasizes the wider background of China-Africa political and economic interactions. From the results of the research, it seems appropriate to conclude that the reception of CCTV-Africa by African students in China, as the relatively direct beneficiaries of multilateral economic cooperation, is largely influenced by these China-Africa interactions. The African audiences with higher education backgrounds in China tend to generally agree with messages delivered by the Chinese media in Africa.

#### **9.4 Discussion**

This thesis has covered many theories and topics to underpin this research presented, such as the revision of the cultural imperialism paradigm and structural theory of imperialism, the redefinitions of 'ideology' and 'Sinicization' and the renewal of the 'encoding/decoding' model. Although the researcher has made great efforts to fully explore all relevant aspects of the theoretical framework of this research, there are certain observations of the researcher on China-Africa media dynamics which cannot be included due to the limits of the dissertation. This researcher believes that China-Africa media studies are of great importance to the future development of international communication studies; and the process of China's media integration in the African continent has been noteworthy in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as it can be regarded as a trail-blazing' template for how China might deliver its political and cultural agenda across a wider spectrum in coming decades. Therefore, this section is placed here to

extend the discussion of this research a little further and to discuss how these developments in China-Africa and China-global relations could be further studied and analysed.

#### **9.4.1 From 'Sub-imperialism' to 'De-imperialism'**

One area of discussion is on the nature of the sub-imperialist countries as the subsidiaries of the pre-existing imperialist nations and the possibility of cultivating the ground for 'de-imperialism' studies based on this argument. As far as this research is concerned, China as a semi-peripheral or semi-imperialist country, compelled by global capitalism, is implementing a series of economic strategies to solve its own financial dilemma in the domestic market. In the case of China-Africa economic cooperation, the huge amount of investment by the Chinese government and the large-scale projects undertaken by Chinese state corporations in Africa are the manifestation of China undertaking a 'spatial fix' to solve the economic dilemma as introduced in Section 4.3.5 of David Harvey's theories on 'new imperialism'. It is a common fate that the development of sub-imperialist countries tends to emulate the pattern of imperialist countries in seeking new territory to disperse over-accumulated capital and boost under-consumption in their domestic markets.

As indicated in the case of China, integrating into the world system via implementing the Open and Reform policy in 1978 and joining the World Trade Organization in 2001, the road to independence and self-reliance is inevitably intertwined with realistic considerations. The development model of China and also those of the so called 'Four Asian Tigers' have distinctive characteristics of sub-imperialist expansion. According to the definition provided by Mathias Luce (2015), sub-imperialist countries 'do not just transfer surplus value to imperialist centres but also succeed in appropriating weaker countries surplus value by displacing some of the contradictions specific to dependent capitalism.' In the words of Lin Yifu (2016), the former chief economist of the World Bank, in the decades after the 1980s, China changed its strategy from focusing on labour-intensive industries that had driven the economy in the 1950s to capital-intensive



industries, and nowadays China is transforming its economy into capital-intensive industries by exporting labour-intensive industries to less-developed countries such as Ethiopia. Such transformations were also observed in the Asian countries of South Korea and Singapore, in the 1960s, and within territories such as the then British-governed Hong Kong, and Taiwan, which China has always insisted is its integral part. However, the vast demographic scale and growing status of China on the world stage has made the transformation this time much more significant.

As Chen Kuan-Hsing stated in his book *Asia as Method* (2010), the sub-imperialist development of Asian countries itself is also the manifestation and consequence of the imperialist proliferation of West-centred expansion. The hierarchical global system that the semi-peripheral and peripheral Asian, African and Latin American countries are embedded in is a dominant structure prioritizing the interests of the Core Western countries. The regional hegemony noted between semi-peripheral and peripheral countries in the global South, which is interpreted by some as a new phenomenon of globalization, is nothing else but the derivation of such dominant structures. In order to construct an alternative approach of de-imperialism, it is of vital importance to confront the fact that the discourse of China in Africa, and also other developing areas of world, is underpinned by sub-imperialist economic logic. Only based on such a consensus can the discussion on developing de-imperialism studies be possible.

In the field of China-Africa studies, one point considered by the researcher as an opportunity to develop the discussions on de-imperialism studies is the collectivism of the 'Beijing Consensus' or 'China Model' demonstrated by the activities of Chinese state corporations in Africa. However, whether such collectivism really responds to the pursuit of the theoretical framework of de-imperialism is an important question which needs to be further studied.

#### **9.4.2 'Unprojectable' Oppositional Decoding**

Another extended discussion is also about an alternative approach to dominance but

from the perspective of the audience reception of media content. This researcher was inspired by a short live performance by Tony Conrad, the American pioneer of structural film, at Tate Modern in 2008, entitled 'Unprojectable: Protection and Perspective'. In this piece, 'musicians and their unorthodox instruments are visible to the audience only as projections cast onto giant screens' (YouTube, 2008). This experimental performance in one single idea captured the author's imagination – 'unprojectable'. Behind the moving shadows on the screens and the 'high-octane sonic assault' (ibid) saturating people's ears, something was held back. Some part of the qualities of the performers and their musical instruments were filtered and could not be projected onto the screens. This short live performance reminded the researcher of the oppositional interpretation some of the African students had towards the news content of CCTV-Africa. As the Category 5 of audience reception in Section 8.2.1 has shown, there were four interviewees who disagreed with the ideological agenda they sensed from the news content of CCTV-Africa. The autonomy of the audience is therefore confirmed, and the contingencies of alternative ideas should accordingly be produced. However, the critical attitudes of these viewers towards the agenda of CCTV-Africa do not further persuade the audience overall to embrace views that defy the orthodoxy. Instead, while the audiences are complaining about the failure of their respective national governments and the agenda of CCTV-Africa and the Chinese government to acquire profits from Africa, they still approve of the development pattern adopted by China in the past 40 years. There exists a contradictory consciousness of the audience who decode the news of CCTV-Africa in an oppositional position. Within the layers of such contradiction lies the critical question of how the autonomy of an active audience and the contingency of alternative interpretation are filtered out from the oppositional decoding. The substantial pursuit of audience for an alternative discourse or agenda, therefore, cannot be projected onto the existing realities that they live in.

One assumption could be that the audience is conditioned by the political and economic reality and is not aware of any other options besides following the 'China Model'. As many interviewees have expressed, the Western companies following the 'Washington

Consensus' certainly did not bring good fortune to Africa. Therefore, although China-Africa cooperation is not perfect, it is still regarded as a new option for the development of African countries. Such assumptions lead back to the discussion on semi-imperialism and de-imperialism. Are there alternative approaches in semi-imperialist or semi-peripheral countries to develop a de-imperialist political and economic structure? The findings of this research on the reception attitudes of the African audiences of CCTV-Africa do not provide clear and precise answers to that question, raising the issue how the 'big question' about the way CCTV-Africa is perceived and understood by its African viewers can be satisfactorily answered. Certainly, the elements of confusion about the delivery and ultimate destination in terms of audience comprehension of the media message might, for the Chinese government, be both perplexing and challenging at this time. And yet it is a forward-thinking political, economic and even philosophical policy, embracing the current transnational role that China is keen to pursue, in terms of President Xi Jinping's development programme - that can only be perfected by practice. Therefore, it is a clear and an imminent intellectual imperative that further studies on exploring the substance of China-Africa cooperation need to be carried out in order to cast more light on the potential of developing a de-imperialist global structure.

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## Appendix 1 – 2014 Questionnaire

### Impression on China's Foreign Media



Thank you very much for participating in this survey. My name is Yu Xiang. I am a second-year PhD candidate from University of Westminster in London, and my name is Yu Xiang. This survey is part of the research I am doing about the influence of China's foreign focused media on the foreign audience. I am grateful to you for participating in this survey.

If you have any further questions about the survey or the research, you are sincerely welcome to email me through [yu.xiang@my.westminster.ac.uk](mailto:yu.xiang@my.westminster.ac.uk).

Questions	Options (Choices and Open Answers)
1. Personal Information (Multi-choice, compulsory)	Location in China _____ Nationality _____ Profession _____ Gender _____ Age _____
2. How long have you been in China (in total)? (Single-choice, compulsory)	<input type="radio"/> less than 1 year <input type="radio"/> 1-3 years <input type="radio"/> 3-5 years <input type="radio"/> 5-10 years <input type="radio"/> More than 10 years

3. When is the first time that you started to know about China's media? And What is the name of the media? (Compulsory)	
4. How frequent do you read or watch China's foreign media before you came to China? (Single-choice, compulsory)	<input type="radio"/> Never <input type="radio"/> Few times a year <input type="radio"/> Few times a month <input type="radio"/> Few times a week <input type="radio"/> Almost every day
5. Which or what kind of China's media, according to your knowledge, is available in your hometown? (please write down the full name of the media if you can.) (compulsory)	
6. What is the name of the media do you use most frequently to get information about China in your own country if it is not China's foreign-focused media? (compulsory)	
7. How frequent do you read or watch China's foreign-focused media when you are in China? (Single-choice, compulsory)	<input type="radio"/> Never <input type="radio"/> Few times a year <input type="radio"/> Few times a month <input type="radio"/> Few times a week <input type="radio"/> Almost every day
8. What is name of the China's foreign media that you use most frequently when you are in China if there is any? (compulsory)	
9. Do you prefer to get information about China from other countries' media	<input type="radio"/> All the time <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Occasionally

instead of China's media? (Single-choice, compulsory)	<input type="radio"/> Seldom <input type="radio"/> Never
10. [Multiple Choice] What kind of media content of China Central Television do you personally like the most? (Multi-choice, compulsory)	<input type="checkbox"/> Politics and Law <input type="checkbox"/> Technology, Education, Culture and Public Health <input type="checkbox"/> Economics <input type="checkbox"/> Social News <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Military Info. <input type="checkbox"/> International Affairs
11. Degree of satisfaction with China Central Television (from 1 the least to 5 the most). (compulsory)	Appeal of the Content _____ Journalistic Professionalism _____ Accessibility _____
12. What is your overall impression on the development of China Central Television? (Single-choice, compulsory)	<input type="radio"/> Very Positive <input type="radio"/> Positive <input type="radio"/> No Impression <input type="radio"/> Negative <input type="radio"/> Very Negative
13. What is your personal impression on the image of China represented by the CCTV-News? (Single-choice, compulsory)	<input type="radio"/> Very Positive <input type="radio"/> Positive <input type="radio"/> No Impression <input type="radio"/> Negative <input type="radio"/> Very Negative

**Appendix 2 – 2014 Questionnaire Participants**

<b>Location in China</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>How long have you been in China (in total)?</b>	<b>How frequently did you read or watch China's foreign focused media before you came to China?</b>
Shenyang, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Female	27	less than 1 year	Almost every day
Shenyang, Liaoning	Sierra Leone	Student	Male	30	1-3 years	Few times a year
Jilin, Jilin	Papua New Guinea	Undergraduate Student	Female	23	1-3 years	Almost every day
Dalian, Liaoning	Uganda	Student	Male	27	5-10 years	Never
Unknown	Unknown	student	Male	24	3-5 years	Few times a year
Jilin, Jilin	Uganda	Lab Tech	Female	25	1-3 years	Few times a week
Jilin, Jilin	Kenya	Student	Male	25	3-5 years	Never
Jilin, Jilin	Somalia	Student	Male	27	1-3 years	Never
Harbin, Heilongjiang	Russia	Student	Male	22	5-10 years	Never
Harbin, Heilongjiang	Britain	Student	Female	23	1-3 years	Never



Jilin, Jilin	Somalia	Doctoral Student	Female	24	1-3 years	Few times a week
Jilin, Jilin	Somalia	Student	Male	21	3-5 years	Never
Jilin, Jilin	Somalia	Student	Male	24	5-10 years	Never
Jilin, Jilin	USA	Doctor/Teacher/Trainer	Male	21	3-5 years	Never
Jilin	Somalia	Doctoral Student	Female	23	1-3 years	Few times a year
Hefei, Anhui	Indonesia	Undergraduate Student	Female	23	1-3 years	Few times a year
Tonghua, Jilin	USA	English Instructor	Female	23	1-3 years	Few times a year
Jilin, Jilin	USA	Student	Male	22	1-3 years	Never
Hefei, Anhui	South Africa	Student	Male	27	1-3 years	Few times a year
Hefei, Anhui	South Africa	Student	Male	20+	1-3 years	Never
Hefei, Anhui	South Africa	Student	Female	20	1-3 years	Few times a month
Hong Kong	China	Student	Female	22	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Jilin, Jilin	Somalia	Student	Female	23	1-3 years	Few times a year
Hefei, Anhui	South Africa	Student	Female	20	1-3 years	Never
Hefei, Anhui	India	Student	Male	19	3-5 years	Few times a month
Kunming, Yunnan	USA	Student	Female	22	1-3 years	Never

Shanghai	USA	Student	Male	22	less than 1 year	Never
Tianjin	Thailand	Student	Female	24	less than 1 year	Never
Shanghai	South Korea	Student	Male	26	1-3 years	Few times a month
Shanghai	Unknown	Unknown	Unclear	20	1-3 years	Few times a month
Shanghai	Philippines	Student	Female	24	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Shanghai	Belgium	Student	Male	25	1-3 years	Never
Shanghai	Bulgaria	Student	Female	17	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Yanji, Jilin	Korea	Student	Male	27	1-3 years	Few times a week
Tianjin	Kenya	Student	Male	24	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Jilin	Nepal	Student	Female	23	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Tianjin	Kenya	Student	Female	23	less than 1 year	Few times a week
Tianjin	Kenya	Student	Male	26	less than 1 year	Few times a week
Tianjin	Turkey	Student of Chinese literature	Male	21	less than 1 year	Never
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student of International economy	Male	22	1-3 years	Never
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Congo	Student	Male	22	less than 1 year	Never
Tianjin	Czech Republic	Student	Man	21	less than 1 year	Few times a month

Liaoning, Jinzhou	Russia	Master's-student	Male	22	less than 1 year	Never
Jilin	Russia	Student of economic management	Female	21	1-3 years	Few times a year
Yanji, Jilin	Korea	Student	Female	25	less than 1 year	Few times a week
Shanghai	Germany	Student	Female	23	1-3 years	Never
Shanghai	Britain	Student	Male	23	1-3 years	Few times a year
Shandong	Britain	Student	Female	23	1-3 years	Never
Yanji, Jilin	Japan	Student	Male	28	1-3 years	Few times a week
Jilin	Korea	Student	Female	25	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Yanji	Japan	Student	Female	28	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Harbin, Heilongjiang	USA	Student	Male	26	less than 1 year	Almost every day
Beijing	Italy	Student	Male	27	1-3 years	Few times a year
Tianjin	Korea	Student	Male	36	5-10 years	Few times a year
Tianjin	Indonesia	Student	Female	23	less than 1 year	Never
Tianjin	Thailand	Student for Master's Degree	Male	26	3-5 years	Few times a month
Tianjin	Korea	Student	Male	28	1-3 years	Never

Yanbian, Jilin	South Korea	Graduate Student	Male	26	1-3 years	Few times a month
Jilin	Japan	Undergraduate Student	Female	23	less than 1 year	Never
Tianjin	Korea	Student	Male	21	less than 1 year	Never
Jilin	South Korea	Student	Male	22	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Yanji, Jilin	Russia	Student	Male	22	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Tianjin	Indonesia	Student	Female	23	1-3 years	Few times a month
Yanbian, Jilin	Russia	Student	Male	23	1-3 years	Few times a year
Changchun, Jilin	Korea	Student	Female	20	1-3 years	Few times a month
Jilin, Jilin	Britain	Student	Male	22	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Yanji, Jilin	Korea	Student	Male	20	1-3 years	Few times a month
Jinlin	South Korea	Graduate Student	Female	24	1-3 years	Few times a year
Tianjin	Britain	Student	Male	24	1-3 years	Never
Tianjin	Korea	Student	Male	23	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Tianjin	Thailand	Student	Unclear	40	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Changchun, Jilin	Sierra Leone	Student of Pharmacy	Male	30	5-10 years	Few times a year
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	18	less than 1 year	Few times a week

Jinzhou, Liaoning	Ghana	Student	Male	20	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Jinzhou-liaoning	Rwanda	Student	Female	21	1-3 years	Never
Hangzhou	Rwanda	Student	Female	21	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Zhejiang	Zambia	Student	Female	23	1-3 years	Few times a year
Jinzhou	Namibia	Student of Civil Engineering	Male	18	less than 1 year	Few times a week
Jinzhou Liaoning	Kenya	Student	Male	31	1-3 years	Few times a week
Jinzhou guta liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	23	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	19	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Jinzhou	Zambia	Student of Computer Science	Male	30	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Jinzhou	Congo	Student	Male	31	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	18	less than 1 year	Few times a week
Jinzhou Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	22	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	23	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	23	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	20	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Jinzhou	Nigeria	Student	Male	23	less than 1 year	Few times a month

Jinzhou	Uganda	Student	Male	21	1-3 years	Few times a year
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	25	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	21	less than 1 year	Never
Jinzhou, China	Uganda	Student	Male	22	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	22	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	27	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	25	less than 1 year	Never
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	19	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Jinzhou	Namibia	Student	Male	32	1-3 years	Few times a year
Yanji, Jilin	Korea	Student	Female	25	1-3 years	Few times a week
Yanji, Jilin	Korea	Student	Male	29	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Yanji, Jilin	Mauritius	Student	Male	27	1-3 years	Almost every day
Yanji, Jilin	Korea	Student	Male	27	less than 1 year	Few times a week
Yanji, Jilin	Korea	Student	Male	30	1-3 years	Few times a month
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	18	less than 1 year	Few times a week
Dalian, Liaoning	Zambia	Student	Male	20	1-3 years	Never

Jinzhou, Liaoning	Kenya	Student	Female	22	3-5 years	Few times a year
Xi'an, Shaan Xi	Lithuania	Student	Female	23	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Dalian, Liaoning	Sudan	Student of Medicine	Male	20	1-3 years	Few times a month
Unknown	Italy	Student	Female	22	less than 1 year	Never
Yanji, Jilin	Korea	Student	Male	30	1-3 years	Few times a week
Yanji, Jilin	Japan	Student	Female	28	less than 1 year	Few times a month
Yanji, Jilin	Japan	Student	Male	31	3-5 years	Almost every day
Yanji, Jilin	Korea	Student	Male	30	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Yanji, Jilin	Malaysia	Student	Male	28	less than 1 year	Few times a week
Unknown	Russia	Student	Male	18	less than 1 year	Never
Ningbo, Zhejiang	Panama	Student	Male	20	1-3 years	Never
Ningbo, Zhejiang	Italy	Student of Master's Degree	Male	27	1-3 years	Few times a month
Yanji, Jilin	Korea	Student	Male	21	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Ningbo, Zhejiang	Indonesia	Student	Female	19	1-3 years	Few times a month
Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unclear	18	1-3 years	Few times a year
Xiamen, Fujian	Thailand	Student	Male	20	1-3 years	Never

Xiamen, Fujian	Thailand	Student	Male	20	1-3 years	Never
Changsha	Cote d'Ivoire	Student	Male	29	1-3 years	Almost every day
Ningbo	Kazakhstan	Student	Male	20	3-5 years	Almost every day
Xiamen, Fujian	Thailand	Student	Male	19	1-3 years	Never
Xiamen, Fujian	Thailand	Student	Male	19	1-3 years	Never
Weifang	India	Student	Female	20	1-3 years	Few times a year
Weifang	India	Student	Female	20	1-3 years	Never
Weifang	India	Student	Female	19	1-3 years	Few times a year
Weifang	India	Student	Female	18	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Unknown	India	Student	Male	20	3-5 years	Few times a week
Shanghai	Japan	Student	Female	19	less than 1 year	Few times a year
Weifang	Kenya	Student	Female	21	1-3 years	Few times a month
Weifang	India	Student	Female	20	1-3 years	Few times a month
Weifang	India	Student	Female	18	1-3 years	Few times a week
Guangzhou	India	Student	Female	17	less than 1 year	Never
Xiamen, Fujian	Thailand	Student	Male	20	1-3 years	Never



Unknown	Thailand	Student	Male	20	1-3 years	Never
Xiamen, Fujian	Thailand	Student	Female	19	less than 1 year	Never
Weifang	India	Student	Female	19	1-3 years	Few times a week
Xiamen, Fujian	Thailand	Student	Female	19	less than 1 year	Never
Xiamen, Fujian	Thailand	Student	Female	20	1-3 years	Never
Xiamen, Fujian	Thailand	Student	Female	20	1-3 years	Never
Xiamen, Fujian	Thailand	Student	Female	20	1-3 years	Never
Xiamen, Fujian	Thailand	Student	Female	20	1-3 years	Never
Weifang	India	Student	Female	19	1-3 years	Few times a year
Beijing	Japan	Student	Female	31	3-5 years	Few times a year
Jinzhou, Liaoning	Nigeria	Student	Male	25	3-5 years	Almost every day
Shenyang, Liaoning	Ghana	Student	Male	25	3-5 years	Few times a week
Xiamen, Fujian	Thailand	Student	Female	20	1-3 years	Never
Xiamen, Fujian	Thailand	Student	Female	18	less than 1 year	Never
Dongying, Shandong	Korea	Student	Female	20	1-3 years	Few times a year
Changchun, Jilin	North Korea	Doctoral Student	Male	30	3-5 years	Few times a year

Nanjing, Jiangsu	India	Student	Male	20	1-3 years	Few times a month
Unknown	USA	Student of Urban Planning	Female	31	3-5 years	Few times a year

## Appendix 3 – 2016 Questionnaire

### Pre-Screening Survey for Individual Interviewing (African Participants Only)



My name is Yu Xiang, and I am currently a third-year PhD student of international communication at University of Westminster in London, UK. This preliminary questionnaire is designed and conducted in order to pre-screen the interviewees for individual interviews which are part of my PhD field research on audience's reception of CCTV-Africa (China Central Television's English News channel with Africa-focused programs).

My PhD research is purely academic, non-profitable and non-governmental and all information of yours is confidential and will not appear in any publication without your consent.

Thank you very much for your time and help. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via this email address: [yu.xiang@my.westminster.ac.uk](mailto:yu.xiang@my.westminster.ac.uk)

Questions	Options
1.Name	
2.Email Address	
3.Phone No.	
4.Nationality	
5.Age	
6.Gender	Female

	Male Other
7.Are you a regular viewer of CCTV-Africa?	Yes No
8.Which of the following programs are produced by CCTV-Africa	Africa Live Global Business Talk Africa African Start-Up Faces of Africa Focus on Africa Match Point Inside Story
9.When did you first come to China?	
10.In which city and province of China are you currently living?	
11.What was your job before coming to China?	
12.What is your highest education?	High School Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree
13.For which degree are you studying in China?	Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree PhD Degree
14.How is your study funded?	Chinese government/institutes African government/institutes Self-funded
15.Are you obliged to return to your country after finishing	Yes

your course (e.g. required by your sponsor or your contract)?	No
16.Are you are planning to return to your country in Africa after you finish your study in China?	Yes No It depends
17.What is your general impression of CCTV-Africa?	Positive Relatively Positive Neutral Relatively Negative Negative
18.Why do you watch CCTV-Africa?	
19.Are you willing to be further interviewed individually for this research (with payment: for further information please see above)?	Yes No
20.When are you available for further individual interview (which month and weeks in 2016)?	

#### Appendix 4 – News Clips of CCTV-Africa for Interviews

Country	News Title	mins	Country	News Title	mins
Benin	<i>'Benin's Exemplary Democracy: Boni Yayi gracefully steps down after expiry of his two terms'</i> (2016-03-23)	1'59''	Mali	<i>'Mali Attack: Gunmen open fire on EU military training base in Bamako'</i> (2016-03-23)	2'07''
	<i>'Burkinabe cyclist Mathias Sorgo retains Benin Cycling tour title'</i> (2016-05-17)	1'22''		<i>'Mali's Fatouvata Diawara: Afro-pop artist speaks about her life and music'</i> (2016-05-13)	2'50''
Burundi	<i>'Burundi Political Crisis: Rights group says both gov't and opposition involved in killings'</i> (2016-05-23)	2'24''	Namibia	<i>'Namibia Cheetah Conservation: Initiative moves in to save dwindling number of cheetahs'</i> (2016-03-11)	2'26''
	<i>'Burundi Economy: 12-month crisis causes economic contraction'</i> (2016-04-29)	2'28''		<i>'Wang Yi's Africa Visit: Foreign Minister Wang Yi to wrap up tour in Namibia'</i> (2016-05-23)	2'12''
Cameroon	<i>'Cameroon Storms: Heavy rains cause flooding in Douala'</i>	1'33''	Nigeria	<i>'Nigeria Unemployment: Government to use</i>	2'40''

	(2016-06-29)			<i>technology to create jobs'</i>	
	<i>'Cameroon Innovation: Youth pushing use of technology to curve opportunities'</i>	3'00"		<i>'Nigeria Oil Infrastructure: Nigeria signs deals worth \$80 billion with China'</i>	0'40"
	(2016-06-08)			(2016-07-01)	
Djibouti	<i>'Djibouti Economy: Government cuts electricity to bolster growth'</i>	2'57"	South Sudan	<i>'South Sudan Films: Group of young South Sudanese seek to launch industry'</i>	3'04"
	(2016-04-16)			(2016-05-18)	
	<i>'Djibouti Lake Assail: Local tribe concerned over future prospects'</i>	2'25"		<i>'South Sudan Food Crisis: More than 5 million people in need of aid'</i>	2'08"
Ethiopia	<i>'Ethiopia Drought: Flash floods worsen food crisis in the country'</i>	2'05"	Sudan	<i>'Sudan Unemployment: Thousands hunt for jobs amid flagging economy'</i>	2'09"
	(2016-05-04)			(2016-06-10)	
	<i>'Ethiopia Industrial Park: Global firms jostle for space, 50,000 jobs to be created'</i>	3'24"		<i>'Sudan's 'Boat of Death': Play highlights the perils of the wave of migrant sea</i>	1'52"

	(2016-05-19)			<i>crossings'</i> (2016-06-10)	
Ghana	<i>'Ghana benefiting from a joint Aviation venture with China'</i> (2016-05-03)	4'45"	Tanzania	<i>'Tanzania Infrastructure Plans: Parliament approves \$2 bn for railway and roads construction'</i> (2016-05-20)	0'56"
	<i>'Ghana Economy: Economic concerns to determine vote in November election'</i> (2015-05-20)	3'13"		<i>'Tanzania Public Transport: 'Rapid buses' introduced to ease traffic in Dar-es-Salaam'</i> (2015-05-13)	2'18"
Guinea	<i>'Teodoro Nguema Inauguration: Equatorial Guinea's President sworn-in for another 7-year term'</i> (2016-05-21)	0'41"	Zambia	<i>'Zambia Copper Output: Mining forms set to increase production'</i> (2016-06-24)	0'53"
	<i>'China-Equatorial Guinea Ties: Equatoguinean President welcomes investment from China'</i> (2016-05-24)	1'16"		<i>'Sino-Africa Ties: Paying respects to Chinese relatives who dies in Zambia'</i> (2016-05-24)	3'47"
Kenya	<i>'Kenya Doping</i>	1'01"	Zimbabwe	<i>'International Labor</i>	1'32"



	<i>Crisis: Athletics agent Federico Rosa charged for doping'</i> (2016-07-07)			<i>Day: Zimbabwe's gov't orders disbursement of \$5 million to fired workers</i> (2016-05-03)	
	<i>'Kenya Safe City Project: Police: Crime drops thanks to tech firms' collaboration'</i> (2016-07-05)	1'18"		<i>'Zimbabwe Diamond Mining: Anjin investments denies smuggling diamonds to China'</i> (2015-05-20)	1'35"
Liberia	<i>'Liberia cookshop app: first online platform allows users to order food via the internet'</i> (2016-05-18)	2'32"	DR Congo	<i>'DR Congo Unrest: Protesters clash with police over likely delay of November vote'</i> (2016-05-28)	1'44"
	<i>'Liberia Visual Arts Academy: Artist's homecoming to help develop artists'</i> (2016-05-17)	3'15"		<i>'DR Congo Girl-Child Protection: Activist gives shelter and education to abandoned street girls'</i> (2016-03-04)	3'23"

**Appendix 5 – Field Schedule**

<b>Name</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Habit</b>	<b>Diploma</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Interview Location</b>
Henry T. Weah Jr. (Relatively Positive)	Harbin Institute of Technology	Libya	29	Male	Regular	Master's Degree	Applied Economy	Chinese Government	23 <sup>rd</sup> May	Study Room at JinYuan Hotel
Isaac Demuyakor (Relatively Negative)	Harbin Institute of Technology	Ghana	28	Male	Regular	Master's Degree	International Trade	Chinese government	23 <sup>rd</sup> May	International Student Cener of H.I.T
Lubari John Yata Raymond (Positive)	Harbin Institute of Technology	South Sudan	28	Male	Not Regular	Master's Degree	Management Science and Engineering	Chinese government	24 <sup>th</sup> May	Dining Hall at HaiYun Hotel

Johnny Osei Gysai (Neutral)	Harbin Institute of Technology	Ghana	34	Male	Not Regular	Master's Degree	Public Administration	Chinese government	24 <sup>th</sup> May	International Student Cener of H.I.T.
Wendy Mapramm (Neutral)	Harbin Institute of Technology	Ghana	26	Female	Not Regular	Master's Degree	Public Administration	Chinese government	25 <sup>th</sup> May	Second Floor of Dormitory A13 at H.I.T.
Yorgri Eunice (Relatively Negative)	Harbin Institute of Technology	Ghana	35	Female	Not Regular	PhD Degree	Urban Planning	Chinese government	25 <sup>th</sup> May	Second Floor of Dormitory A13 at H.I.T
Margareth (Relatively Negative)	Harbin Institute of Technology	Namibia	32	Female	Not Regular	Master's Degree	Public Administration	Chinese government	25 <sup>th</sup> May	Study Room at JinYuan Hotel

Chen Fei (Neutral)	Harbin Normal University	Tanzania	27	Male	Not Regular	Bachelor's Degree	Chinese Language	Chinese government	25 <sup>th</sup> May	Park at HNU campus
Jia La (Positive)	Jilin University	Mali	28	Male	Not Regular	Master's Degree	International Relations	Chinese government	26 <sup>th</sup> May	Study Room at 7 <sup>th</sup> Floor YouYi Hotel
Ephrem (Positive)	Jilin University	Ethiopia	20+	Male	Regular	Bachelor's Degree	Medicine	Ethiopian government	26 <sup>th</sup> May	Study Room at 7 <sup>th</sup> Floor YouYi Hotel
Ibrahim Kone (Neutral)	Jilin University	Mali	20+	Male	Not Regular	Master's Degree	International Relations	Chinese and Malian government	26 <sup>th</sup> May	Study Room at 7 <sup>th</sup> Floor YouYi Hotel
Deborah (Neutral)	Harbin Institute of Technology	Benin	25	Female	Not Regular	Bachelor's Degree	Computer Science	Self-funded	27 <sup>th</sup> May	Second Floor of Dormitory A13 at H.I.T.

Benjamin (Relatively Negative)	Northeast Agriculture University	Ghana	27	Male	Regular	Master's Degree	Olericulture	Chinese government	27 <sup>th</sup> May	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Library of NAU campus
Mamadou (Neutral)	Harbin Institute of Technology	Guinea	26	Male	Not Regular	Master's Degree	Management and Engineering Science	Chinese institute	27 <sup>th</sup> May	Café next to International Student Center of H.I.T
Vanessa Kunda (Neutral)	Tianjin Medical University	Congo	21	Female	Not Regular	Bachelor's Degree	Medicine (MBBS)	Self-Funded	30 <sup>th</sup> May	Starbuck at JinHui Square
Leroy Sosai John Mbona (Relatively	Tianjin Medical University	Zimbabwe	23	Male	Not Regular	Bachelor's Degree	Medicine (MBBS)	Self-Funded	30 <sup>th</sup> May	Starbuck at JinHui Square

Positive)										
Leroy's Friend (Relatively Positive)			20+	Female	Not Regular	Bachelor's Degree	Business	Self-Funded	30 <sup>th</sup> May	Starbucks at JinHui Square
Abdul-Latif Mohammed (Relatively Positive)	Zhejiang Normal University	Ghana	25	Male	Not Regular	Master's Degree	MBA	Self-Funded	3 <sup>th</sup> July	2046 Café near North Gate of ZNU campus
Mamudu Haruna Labjar (Relatively Positive)	Zhejiang Normal University	Zambia	24	Male	Regular	Bachelor's Degree	Manufacture	Partially funded by ZNU	3 <sup>th</sup> July	2046 Café near North Gate of ZNU campus
Japhet	Zhejiang	Tanzania	20+	Male	Not	Master's	MBA	Partially	3 <sup>th</sup>	2046 Café

Jackson Kaltunga (Neutral)	Normal University				Regular	Degree		funded by ZNU	July	near North Gate of ZNU campus
Paul Mekolle (Positive)	Ningbo University	Cameroon	30	Male	Not Regular	Master's Degree	MBA	Self-funded	4 <sup>th</sup> July	Third Floor of Ningbo International Student Hostel
Boris (Positive)	Ningbo University	Burundi	21	Male	Not Regular	Bachelor's Degree	Logistic management	Self-funded	4 <sup>th</sup> July	Third Floor of Ningbo International Student Hostel
Martin (Positive)	Ningbo University	Cameroon	31	Male	Not Regular	Bachelor graduate Master's	Mechanic Engineering	Self-funded	4 <sup>th</sup> July	Third Floor of Ningbo International

						Degree due soon				Student Hostel
Lawrens (Neutral)	Ningbo University	Equatorial Guinea	28	Male	Regular	Bachelor Graduate Master's degree due soon	Mechanic Engineering	Scholarship from Ningbo University	5 <sup>th</sup> July	Third Floor of Ningbo International Student Hostel
Nobert (Relatively Positive)	Ningbo University	Cameroon	28	Male	Not Regular	Bachelor's Degree	International Business	Self-funded	5 <sup>th</sup> July	Third Floor of Ningbo International Student Hostel
Sidon (Neutral)	Ningbo University	Ethiopia	20	Female	Not Regular	Bachelor's Degree	International Business and Trade	Self-funded	5 <sup>th</sup> July	Third Floor of Ningbo International



										Student Hostel
Alan (Positive)	Donghua University	Tanzania	24	Male	Regular	Bachelor' s Degree	International Trade and Economics	Self-funded	6 <sup>th</sup> July	Café inside the International Student Dormitory
Hajo Yagoub (Positive)	Donghua University	Sudan	37	Male	Not Regular	PhD Degree	Material Science	Scholarship of CSC (Chinese government)	7 <sup>th</sup> July	Second floor of a bread shop near the C gate of WenHui Road 300
Hillary (Relatively Positive)	Donghua University	Kenya	29	Male	Not Regular	Master's Degree	Material Science	Scholarship of CSC (Chinese government)	7 <sup>th</sup> July	Second floor of a bread shop near the

										C gate of WenHui Road 300
Abduhali moumin awale (Positive)	Donghua University	Djibouti	26	Male	Not Regular	Master's Degree	Telecommunication Engineering	Chinese Government	7 <sup>th</sup> July	Second floor of a bread shop near the C gate of WenHui Road 300
Laina Mutota (Positive)	JInZhou Medical University	Namibia	28	Female	Not Regular	Bachelor's Degree	MBBS	Self-funded	20 <sup>th</sup> July	Online
Kosy Ugwumadu (Positive)	JInZhou Medical University	Nigeria	22	Male	Regular	Bachelor's Degree	Medicine and Surgery	Self-funded	21 <sup>st</sup> July	Online
Martina Aiki	JInZhou	Nigeria	19	Female	Not	Bachelor's	Medicine	Self-funded	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Online

(relatively positive)	Medical University				Regular	s Degree			July	
Nmanka Godfrey (relatively positive)	Beijing Foreign Studies University	Tanzania	24	Female	Not Regular	Bachelor's Degree	International Business	Self-funded	24 <sup>th</sup> July	Online
Diane Alex (relatively positive)	University of International Business and Economics	Tanzania	23	Female	Regular	Bachelor's Degree	International Politics	Self-funded	24 <sup>th</sup> July	Online
Rukia Musa Ally (relatively positive)	University of International Business and Economics	Tanzania	22	Female	Not Regular	Bachelor's Degree	International Politics	Self-funded	25 <sup>th</sup> July	Online
Judith Sichone	University of International	Tanzania	20	Female	Regular	Bachelor's Degree	International Finance	Self-funded	26 <sup>th</sup> July	Online

(Positive)	Business and Economics									
Joe Wilfried Fokoua Tagne (Neutral)	University of International Business and Economics	Cameroon	22	Male	Regular	Bachelor's Degree	International Finance	Self-funded	26 <sup>th</sup> July	Online

## Appendix 6 – 2016 Interview Questions



1. What foreign news networks do you regularly watch and why?
2. Is CCTV-Africa popular in your country?
3. How often do you watch CCTV-Africa and where do you watch it – on TV, on-line, on mobile devices?
4. Would you please tell me how you generally feel about CCTV-Africa? What kind of network you think it is and how do you find its programmes?
5. What do you think of the video you just watched? What is it about? Does it concern you that the CCTV-Africa is a part of a state-managed media system?
6. Do you think the content of the news conveys a certain kind of agenda or ideology? If yes, what do you think it is?
7. Do you agree with the agenda or ideology espoused by CCTV-Africa? If yes, why? If not, why not?
8. Can you think of an example from your own viewing experience which supports this agenda or ideology or indeed opposes it?
9. Do you think the news produced by CCTV-Africa is appealing to your government?
10. What is the attitude of your government towards China? Is the relationship with Beijing a cooperative one? Do you support your government's opinion of cooperating with the Chinese government?
11. Do you think the general viewers in your country are supportive or against this agenda or ideology? If yes, why; if not, why not?
12. Do you think the news proceeded by CCTV-Africa is appealing to the public of your country?

13. Do you think the public and the elites have different opinions on cooperating with the Chinese government? If you do, what do you think is the reason for this?
14. Would you describe yourself as part of the African elite?
15. Does regularly watching Chinese news on African affairs influence the way you think about China?
16. Is CCTV-Africa's approach to covering African issues different from those of mainstream Western news networks such as CNN and BBC?
17. Are you at all concerned that rather than a Western discourse about the world at large, African viewers are now being exposed to a Chinese perspective on African affairs?
18. What do you say to critics who suggest that a Chinese version of cultural imperialism is replacing Western media and cultural imperialism?