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MEDIA DIPLOMACY AS A FOREIGN POLICY TOOL IN SETTING
THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA IN MALAWI, ZAMBIA AND
ZIMBABWE.

BY

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Abstract

This research investigated the influence of media on foreign policy agenda-setting and framing of geo-political news, examined the effectiveness of communication media against Western propaganda as a vehicle for power/governance, and interpreted the relationship between global hegemony, propaganda, and agenda-setting on development. This study used the analytical descriptive approach to test hypotheses and investigate how communications media, through their ability to identify and publicize issues, play a pivotal role in shaping the problems that attract attention from governments and international organizations, and direct public opinion towards specific issues. Using the propaganda model as a grounding theory, the research utilized available literature, KAP surveys to inquire quantitatively about Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices by the citizens and local media, and key informant interviews to draw a qualitative analysis of the findings. The results showed that the role of local media is nearly silent in accentuating geopolitical agendas. Insufficient efforts have been made by local media to overcome the lack of understanding regarding the communicative dimension of global relations, and the study populace exhibited a significant dependence on information sourced from international media. It was noted that the work of these media actors did not include representing the national interests on international broadcasting channels and established that journalists and commentators are sometimes censored from fully expressing their independent views by the political leadership. Overall, the agenda-setting power of international media outlets may perpetuate stereotypes, reinforcing existing power imbalances and hindering development efforts in other regions. The study recommended that local media constantly and consistently engage citizens on regional tools and strategies to effectively implement development goals and pursue national and regional interests. There is a need for regionally owned and controlled media broadcasting networks to expand while engaging in strategic public engagement, e.g., partnering with local diplomatic missions, research institutions, policy think tanks, and entities in the digital sphere to influence local people's solidarity. Although several traditional media outlets in the area continue to be influenced by political and economic elites, local media must develop novel approaches to tackle the challenges that undermine its democratic function.

Keywords: propaganda, media, development, diplomacy, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Declaration Page

I declare that this dissertation is my original work except where sources have been cited and acknowledged. The work has never been submitted, nor will it ever be submitted to another university for the award of a degree.

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Copyright

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Dedication

I dedicated this dissertation study to my future self, for working hard and smart to become a global leader changing the narrative and power dynamics for regional development. Every day, it becomes more meaningful to pursue African agency, and this research is among many worldwide milestones.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN	Cable News Network
EU	European Union
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
SADC	Southern Africa Development Committee
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

Definition of Keys Terms

Development:	The process and status of a countries social, economic, political and environmental growth.
Foreign policy:	A government's strategy in dealing with other nations.
Global North:	Rich and powerful global states such as America and Europe.
Global South:	Under-developed African and Asian countries.
Media:	The main means of mass communication (broadcasting, publishing, and the internet) regarded collectively.
Media Diplomacy:	The use of media by political leaders to express interest in negotiation, build confidence, and to mobilize support.
Propaganda:	Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view.
Public perceptions:	Public awareness and knowledge about events or issues.
Soft Power:	The ability to co-opt rather than coerce, also referred to as using appeal and attraction to impact culture, political values, and foreign policies to enact change.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study used the propaganda model, which examined how states use media to foster diplomacy, and examined how dissent is created in the Global South. It verified the assumption that media ownership and control by powerful states determines the narrative. It showed how media is partisan and serves colonial and capitalistic objectives through the propaganda model idea and exposed communication media as a tool to not only advance these interests but also to stifle weak actors, as is the case of these countries. According to the research findings media benefits hegemonic nations, which decide what is true and important and establish limitations on what the general public can accomplish. Media gives the global north power and authority over Africa's agency as an autonomous actor is superseded.

The Propaganda Model hypothesis is used in this study to examine how the media has contributed to the perception of Africa as a "backward, dark, barbaric, underdeveloped continent" plagued by disease, conflict, and corruption and in need of western leadership and intervention. It examines how Africa has been denied a seat at the table of power and prevented from acting on its behalf. The study also draws on the Gramsci school of thought's theoretical framework for hegemony, which identifies the media as one of the strategic diplomatic tools used by Western powers to internalize consent and externalize dissent, drowning the African narrative in Western propaganda and resulting in the subjugation of the continent.

The central thesis of the dissertation posits that the negative connotation associated with African governance by media, as well as the tendency to equate African indigenous knowledge with backwardness, are both erroneous and inadequate in

comprehending the nature and mechanics of development. The dissertation contends that propaganda bears greater resemblance to the conventional notion of public perceptions. The present study investigated the utilization of media as a conduit for the transfer of governance power.

1.2 Background to the Study

The history of the subjugation of Africa can be traced back to the 19th century, where travellers like the Welsh-American explorer and journalist Henry Morton Stanley labelled it the “dark continent” forgoing all previously existing knowledge on African societies (Murray, 2013). Literary works including *Through the Dark Continent* (1878), *In Darkest Africa* (1890), *My Dark Companions* (1893), and Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899) disseminated a distorted portrayal of the African continent as being replete with mediocrity and backwardness. This narrative has persisted in contemporary literature, which tends to view the continent solely through the prism of deficient governance, economic underperformance, and destitution. Deceptive publications provided a basis for Western powers to assert dominance over Africa, resulting in the disruption of the traditional social fabric through an intrusive and exploitative messianic mission that was disguised as “exploration.” During the period of 1884-1885, European powers engaged in the “Scramble for Africa” under the pretext of White supremacy, deeply ingrained anti-Black sentiment, and unchecked power (Coleman, 2019). This resulted in the arbitrary division of the continent into colonies, and the forced subjugation of African peoples, as documented by Coleman (2019).

Certain philosophers, including Hegel, propagated false beliefs by drawing comparisons between the African way of life and the medieval period of Europe

through their written works (Chike & Ifenna, 2019). According to Noujio (2020), the West was influenced to impose their perception of modernity as a universally applicable way of life, which resulted in the justification of slavery and the neglect of its detrimental impact on African development. Despite the objections of numerous academic scholars, Western governments persist in perpetuating a system of subjugation that reinforces their perceived dominance and control over Africa. The cessation of the slave trade was a transitory achievement, promptly succeeded by the race to acquire and divide Africa. Consequently, regions of the continent that had not been previously impacted or had a minimal impact were equally susceptible, resulting in Southern Africa succumbing to the constraints of British imperialism (Grant, 2014).

International governance organizations with a Western-centric perspective have reinforced the notion that Africa is a continent that is dependent, underdeveloped, and lacking agency, requiring interventions from the global North for modernization, poverty reduction, democratic intervention, and political conflict resolution (Chike & Ifenna, 2019). The Rudd Concession and similar agreements were made with the intention of making decisions on behalf of Southern Africa, while simultaneously exploiting its natural resources (Mabula, 2017). The media has been instrumental in propagating the notion that African nations are obligated to adhere to democratic principles and comply with international governance laws (Yusuf, 2014). African leaders perceive themselves as being bound by agreements that were established through acts of deception, coercion, and colonization. The invasion was not limited to physical land but extended into the local administration, social fabric, education, and belief systems (Yusuf, 2014).

The preference for Western media resulted in the stigmatization of traditional mediums, which contributed to the perpetuation of colonial narratives through a selective interpretation of information (Mhango, 2018). The traditional mode of imparting knowledge through oral communication has been gradually replaced by the dissemination of information through various mediums such as books, newspapers, radio, television, and social media platforms in the era of the Internet of Things (Mhango, 2018). The categorization of Indigenous knowledge as primitive and traditional, coupled with the advent of new media, has had a detrimental impact on the socioeconomic and geo-political agency of Southern Africa. The aforementioned phenomenon engendered a reliance on Western news outlets, which were then camouflaged as contemporary enlightenment and presently as dependable, trustworthy, and credible sources.

In contrast to the utilization of media for the purpose of promoting capitalism within their respective nations, media is employed in Africa to generate dissent, thereby fostering a climate of opposition against the prevailing norms and models of African leadership and governance (Mbah & Falola, 2018). The ongoing divide-and-conquer invasion model between the populace and the governing authorities is impeding the progress of the continent toward a unified direction (Mbah & Falola, 2018). This has led to the inclination of African leaders to act as proxies of neo-colonialism, thereby exhibiting Western-centric power and influence. Consequently, this has hindered them from fulfilling their responsibilities of serving the collective interests of the black community. Conversely, the categorization of individuals based on their social class, political orientation, level of Western education, and degree of modernity is becoming increasingly prevalent.

The central thesis of the dissertation posits that the negative connotation associated with African governance by media, as well as the tendency to equate African indigenous knowledge with backwardness, are both erroneous and inadequate in comprehending the nature and mechanics of development. The dissertation contends that propaganda bears more remarkable resemblance to the conventional notion of public perceptions. The present study investigated the utilization of media as a conduit for the transfer of governance power.

Despite the fact that a lot of previous research has been conducted in this field, much of the literature and discussions about globalization and media are optimistic, with many political analysts entirely leaving out Africa's contributions to the current world order. The primary objective of this study was therefore to conduct a thorough examination of media practices, with a specific focus on the impact of Western propaganda on the underdevelopment of Southern Africa.

It investigated western news and processes that stifle Afrocentric information and knowledge favoring north-centric neo-colonial and neo-capitalist interests. The study examined the utilization of media by Western governments to generate misleading accounts concerning African leadership, development, and governance. The inquiry also pertained to the ownership of media in the northern hemisphere, which indirectly led to the disenfranchisement of Africa in terms of possessing and regulating its narrative.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Members of the government or the media have often attempted to manipulate the public's perceptions of foreign policy issue (Williams, 2022). The media, like governments often become victims of their attempt to shape the public's image of foreign policy issues (Karl, 1982) with a reciprocal relationship of the media acting as both an agent and subject of global dominance and hegemony. As such, Africa has been trapped in false identification propagated by Western explorers motivated by imperialistic greed (Mahadeo & McKinney, 2007; Mbah & Falola, 2018). While some previous researchers and theorists conducted similar research within the field of media diplomacy and subjugation, the majority of these researchers were Western-centric, Euro-centric, and Asian-centric (Mhango, 2018). As such, little is known within the Southern Africa region nor based on local perspectives hence the need to fill this gap. On the other hand, Southern African leaders have not proactively challenged dissent by applying media as a tool for diplomacy. Instead, it has been used as an outlet for bitterness failing at addressing social coercion or spreading Africa's agency as a rational autonomous global actor (Bute, 2017). There is therefore a need to investigate how Africa can use media diplomacy as a soft power to keep countries connected and informed about the actual realities on the ground. Apart from that, the majority of these previous researches were either qualitative or quantitative in nature in which each approach has its own loopholes. This research therefore made use of both qualitative and quantitative research to cement the loopholes for each approach.

1.4 Research objectives

The following research objectives guided this research study:

- 1.4.1** To investigate the influence of media on public perceptions in foreign policy agenda setting and framing of geo-political news.

1.4.2 To examine the effectiveness of local media against western propaganda as a vehicle for power/governance in Southern Africa.

1.4.3 To interpret the relationship between global hegemony, propaganda and development.

1.5 Research questions

Based on the above-mentioned objectives the following research questions were derived.

1.5.1 What is the role of communication media in determining public knowledge and understanding of geopolitics?

1.5.2 How can local media establish its position and role in accentuating geopolitical agendas?

1.5.3 What is the impact of global hegemony on societies and leadership in Southern Africa?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The research analyzed the quality and substance of media concerning the agency of local leadership and governance. It separated international from regional news sources, analysed current practices in the media industry and reviewed their relevance in influencing public opinion. Through this research, regional media informants went through a self-evaluation process uncovering critical areas on how they have not been able to widely contribute toward the development of Southern Africa using Afrocentric, local narratives that benefit the global understanding of regional leadership and governance. This was juxtaposed to the public perceptions of general

citizens in the 3 countries. The findings of this research provide a region-specific overview of the hegemonic stratification within the media itself, making it useful for government agencies in information and publicity to deconstruct political dissent within the international governance discourse.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The research focused on the media industry but more toward the centrality of international news networks in determining regional news in Southern Africa. It juxtaposed the role of International media versus regional media in influencing knowledge and perceptions of domestic and foreign policies and strategies among Malawian, Zambian, and Zimbabwean citizens. The research concentrated on urban populations over 18 years, i.e., with access to digital media as informants to the KAP surveys while targeting respondents from media organizations, civil society, and independent practitioners working in the three countries.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The research focused on a small sample size in only 3 of the SADC countries. Its targeted responses from independent informants on a voluntary basis with ethical considerations that prevent the identification of these sources. The public perceptions used to inform this research are those of the specific respondents and not of all the SADC citizens leaving room for wider research given the resources and authority to do so.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of a literature review is to gain an understanding of the existing research and debates relevant to a particular topic or area of study, and to present this knowledge in a written format. This chapter covered the theoretical framework which covered the theories underpinning this research study. Apart from that, it is in this chapter where the literature related to research objectives was discussed.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This study cautiously explored the most discussed theoretical frameworks in literature. This research was underpinned by the use of media theories to showcase the impact of media in conveying propaganda as well as vehicle to obtain power. The main theory underpinning this research is the Propaganda Model.

I. The propaganda Model

In the 1988 book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media*, Chomsky, and Herman explicitly interrogate the structural inequalities of media as caused by political hegemony and capitalist interests describing how corporate media serve as conduits for business and government propaganda (Robinson, 2018). These authors' perspective of media is one that positions it as a propaganda vehicle running a much broader goal of structural hegemony that communicates political interests and ideologies of dominant powers (Daniel Broudy, 2018). The propaganda model looks into information as biased and misleading to serve political interests, and strategies, to disempower "the enemy" through the following methods.

a. Ownership

This component interrogates how news corporation media such as broadcasting networks and cable television are dominated by large businesses, controlled by wealthy people who are subject to profit-oriented forces (Robinson, 2018). The authors analyzed how the efforts to repress the working-class media by libel laws and prosecution necessitated an expensive security bond as a condition for publication, leading to the imposition of various taxes designed to drive out radical media through raising costs (Daniel Broudy, 2018). This subsequently resulted in media autonomy by governments and large corporates. The effective concentration in news manufacture is, therefore, structural and tiered, with the top-tier i.e., governments and wire companies measured by prestige, resources, and outreach (Daniel Broudy, 2018). This class determines the news agenda and are key sources of both national and international news to the lower tiers who are the general public.

This aspect also includes ownership of the media by non-media actors such as family control. "...these control groups obviously have a special stake in the status quo by virtue of their wealth and their strategic position in one of the great institutions of society. And they exercise the power of this strategic position if only by establishing the general aims of the company and choosing its top management." (Durham & Kellner, 2012) Similarly, the same media companies are represented by elitist board members e.g. corporate and banking executives. In this case, allowing multinational corporations especially those with extensive foreign investments and business activities to control a major media outlet compromises the independence of news coverage, especially that of political events in countries where the control groups have

interests (Robinson, 2018). Simply, non-media actors and interests can compromise the quality of media.

b. Advertising

This component of the propaganda model reviews how the media promotes excessive commercialism. In addition, these advertisers discriminate against unpopular media, selectively airing programs that support their principles of capitalism and colonialism (Daniel Broudy, 2018). In other cases, these principles are extended to cultural and political principles.

Through advertising, media production costs are catered to reduce the financial burden on the industry. For this reason, advertising-based systems are empowered to dismiss marginal media whose revenue depends on sales (Durham & Kellner, 2012). This component of propaganda disrupts the free market model, creating biased systems where advertisers have a strong influence on media prosperity and public opinion. This approach complements ownership where again weaker narratives are weakened through capital-driven models. It can be summarized that, the mass media are interested in drawing in affluent audiences as these poses buying power (Gerbner, 2016).

The propaganda model established the causative effect of advertising on political discrimination. Such structured advertising is modelled to attract people with money to buy in, patronizing non-consenting ideologies and interests (Hallin D. C., 2020; Robinson, 2018). Additionally, the cultures and principles of the media companies also affects the framing of the media, selectively choosing to ignore the damaging impact of the top-tier class on society, the environment and political order (Hallin D. C., 2020). As can be expected, advertisers will only prefer want, programs that avoid

serious complexities and disturbing controversies that may in turn interfere with the "buying mood." Such advertisers seek programs that are more entertaining while fitting within the spirit of the capitalistic primary purpose of program-the dissemination of a selling message (Daniel Broudy, 2018).

c. Sourcing

There is a symbiotic relationship between mass media and powerful sources of information determined by economic needs and reciprocation of interest. For media to successfully operate on a day-to-day basis, it depends on necessary resources. The relationship between power and sourcing can be established in relation to structured bias (Durham & Kellner, 2012). Expert knowledge and information sources are skewed to the suitability of state and political actors as well as of the market.

In other words, the flow of news and regular maintenance of production schedules require global human and financial capital in selected stations where news could break out. Such stations include places where the regular press is held, targeting "newsworthy" stories that resonate with business corporations and trade groups (Daniel Broudy, 2018). This influence contributes to the principle of bureaucratic affinity by Mark Fishman which implies that "only other bureaucracies have the ability to satisfy the input needs of a news bureaucracy (Anderson, Bell, & Shirky, 2015). Fishman suggests that governments and corporates are treated as factual authorities in society and the media is structured to uphold their position as knowledgeable, credible, and accurate sources (Robinson, 2018). As expected, these officials, therefore, produce "facts" true to their interests and strategies. In order for governments and businesses or any other social elites to make a concrete position as sources, they reach extreme ends to simplify procedures for news organizations (Daniel Broudy, 2018). The 5

filters of media note that the media organizations are provided with opportunities in which to gather information; journalists are given copies of speeches and forthcoming reports in advance; press conferences are scheduled at hours well-gearred and within time of news deadlines; press releases are written in usable language; and finally press conferences and "photo opportunity" sessions are carefully organized.

On the other hand, the media purports itself a neutral objective actor, excluding itself from criticism and posing rather as information gatekeepers. This position allows them to enjoy benefits from the bureaucrats which compromises their ability to question these sources. The media may feel obligated, in other cases, to carry extremely misinforming or "disinforming" stories or to mute criticism so that they do not offend sources or disturb a close relationship. Finally, sourcing discusses the role of "imposed" subject experts who further provide the media with biased and misleading information that serves the bureaucratic agenda. These experts influence the public toward the "correct agenda."

d. Flaking

Flaking, a response to media primarily for the reasons of dismissing news or accusations comprises the five filters and is greatly exercised by power holders (Robinson, 2018). The effects on media include negative publicity and extend to having legal and financial implications, often leading to media blacklisting. Flaking can be directly exercised by the power holders or indirectly shared through contesting media that support and defend the position of those in power (Gerbner, 2016). Chomsky documents that the major producer of flak is the government which is on a regular basis assailing, threatening through both soft and hard power, and "reprimanding" the media, in its attempt to contain any forms of deviation from their

established line (Daniel Broudy, 2018). After the governments, news management and institutions themselves are then designed to produce flak.

e. Anti-Communism Ideology

The final filter is one that ensures stratification by class and superiority-subjugation. This school of thought assists in the mobilization of the populace against an enemy or a cause, and because the process is indirect it is used against anyone who advocates for policies that are thought to threaten property interests or support accommodation with Communist states and radicalism (Robinson, 2018). To be precise, this ideology serves as a political control mechanism that fragments the public and influence media toward a hegemonic doctrine.

The structured use of media to dismiss any other ideologies has gone beyond communism, but extends to other forms of cultural beliefs and preferences that conflict with liberal interests (Durham & Kellner, 2012). Communism posed a great threat to capitalism as it empowered the working class to mobilize and demand fair compensation and better working conditions. Today, African doctrines of leadership, such as Pan-Africanism and are unpopular as they push back against neo-colonialist and neo-capitalist interests of free open trade (Bute, 2017). A united, well governed Afrocentric economic model threatens the interference of western corporates and governments with local resources and raw materials. The threat of a mobilized Africa that demands fair compensation and equal treatment is one that must, like the “anti-communist ideology”, remain defeated (Daniel Broudy, 2018; Hallin D. C., 2020). The media, therefore, acts as a catalyst in the process of exterminating African Consciousness.

2.3 The role of media in influencing public opinion

Broadcasting has been recognized as the most influential form of mass communication on a global scale, with the capacity to considerably influence the social and political perspectives of individuals, either positively or negatively (Edafejirhaye, 2016). Due to radio and television's accessibility, immediacy, and intrusiveness, beliefs about the power of broadcasting have emerged (Zinreich, 2023). Globally, politicians have demonstrated a growing awareness of the significant impact of broadcasting, which includes the facilitation of extensive political discourse and the provision of a forum for the expression of diverse viewpoints (Rawnsley, 2016). The exchange and unrestricted dissemination of information, the provision of equitable access to information sources, and equal opportunities for citizens to participate in political discourse have therefore been widely acknowledged as fundamental components of a democratic system (Edafejirhaye, 2016).

Gramsci thought extensively on the role of intellectuals and media in society. He argued that although all men are intellectuals, not all men have the liberty of the social function of intellectuals (Böhm, 2018). Rather this privilege resides among those who produced hegemony such as media and educators. In line with Gramsci's theory of hegemonic power, he further argued that by building a counter-hegemony, capitalist power needed to be challenged (Böhm, 2018). In other words, there is need to acknowledged the importance of alternative ideologies in contrast to hegemonic power, "to renovate the existing intellectual activity of the masses and make it natively critical of the status quo."

Gramsci's theory of hegemony narrows down to a capitalist state of narrow governance. His understanding was that there is a distinction between the political

society, i.e., the legal system, including the police and army, then the civil society, which encompasses media, family and education (Therborn, 2016). He established that the political society rules with coercion while the civil society with cohesion, and for Gramsci, the complex nature of modern civil society meant that a war of position was merely administered by a successful ideology revolution without danger of a counter-revolution or degeneration as would a political society (Therborn, 2016; Böhm, 2018). States are therefore held together through a “robust structure of civil society,” which includes all discourses and institutions from schools, private organizations, the associations of the economy, the trade unions, parents, consumers, a thick web of institutions of hegemonic apparatuses, as Gramsci calls them, who, in public quarrel struggle for a consensus on what is socially acceptable (Böhm, 2018).

In uncounted discourses by teachers, judges, psychiatrists, journalists, scientists, etc., specific knowledge is produced that defines and norms which discourses are legitimate and which are not. ‘What is called “public opinion” is tightly connected to political hegemony; in other words, it is the point of contact between “civil society” and “political society”, between consent and force’ (Sevignani, 2022)

Africa has suffered great identity deformation through Western media (Paterson, Bunce, & Franks, 2016), and political leaders in Southern Africa contest the use of dissenting voices by Western leaders to cause public unrest and under develop the continent (Paterson, Bunce, & Franks, 2016; OGAZI, 2010). Those who own the media are in a position to determine who is empowered to disseminate dissenting views to the mass public (Daniel Broudy, 2018). The basic argument about political dissent then becomes whether media owners have the right to suppress or induce fundamental dissent regardless of the implications for growth and development.

One of the obvious illustrations of the deliberate, heavily invested, and highly sponsored ignorance towards Africa is through the Hollywood filming industry. While these blockbusters are mainly for entertainment and non-scholarly, television productions such as *Hotel Rwanda*, *Blood Diamond*, and *Lord of the War* significantly influence global audiences' perceptions and imaginations of the continent. (Bork, 2011) summaries how these productions highlight the gravest Pan-African problems of genocides, conflict diamonds, and arms dealing, among many other productions that exert labels of corrupt leadership and ethnic conflicts, "Hollywood conveys Africa as another, recycling the view of Africa as the "Dark Continent" full of savagery. Additionally, Hollywood does not make attempts to show that many of Africa's troubles are remnants of the disruption caused by colonialism" (Bork, 2011), and slavery.

The role of media in spreading political dissent does not only falsify history and spread negative assumptions about Africa but also risks the livelihoods of African citizens through national governance disputes between civilians and office bearers. It is one thing to assure individuals the right to dissent without fear of government regulation or worse (Gerbner, 2016). The author adds how the corporate media system has no intrinsic interest in politics or journalism but tends to promote anti-politics. States struggle to enforce national values when faced with widespread Western propaganda, resistance is generated among the citizens, and fundamental politics becomes elitist (Bute, 2017). In this case, dissent exists to satisfy the commercial media system in reaching a mass audience, risking the safety and security of the mass civilians and worsening the international reprimand of African states through hard and soft power resolutions such as war and sanctions (Mhango, 2018).

The influence of media on public opinion can also be assessed within the regional context, for example how it has developed in Zimbabwe (Moyo, 2018). Since its inception during the colonial period of Rhodesia in the 1930s, the field of broadcasting in Zimbabwe has been a source of contention. Throughout the pre-independence and post-independence periods, the ruling class has consistently used broadcasting to exert political control and manipulate the general populace, despite claims of objectivity. Rhodesia, subsequently renamed Zimbabwe, had a state monopoly on broadcasting and its placement within the Ministry of Information, which permitted it to be used as a political tool by the ruling government (Ndlovu, 2014). The justification for these practices was national interest, national security, and national sovereignty-strategies and ideologies employed by governing elites in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe to limit democratic participation via the imposition of broadcasting accessibility restrictions.

The fundamental premise becomes that the media play a crucial role in modern democratic systems by functioning as crucial information conduits (Jungherr, Rodríguez, Rivero, & Gayo-Avello, 2020). Nonetheless, it is essential to recognize that when utilized improperly, media can entail significant risks. The aforementioned causes have resulted in an increased propensity for global government regulation of broadcasting in an effort to prevent the abuse of these powers (Mazar, 2016) .

In the African context, a discernible and noteworthy correlation between media and political authority has been observed, prompting governing elites to exercise heightened vigilance regarding its ownership (Wasserman, 2013). In the past, coup plotters in various regions of the continent have consistently targeted radio and television stations such as the tragic results of hate radio broadcasts in Rwanda, which led to one of the most horrific genocides in history (Bork, 2011).

It is highly improbable that any African government will voluntarily relinquish direct control over broadcasting unless forced to do so. During the crucial transition periods, for example when a newly elected administration seeks to establish legitimacy at the state level, broadcasting arises as one of its most important tools. It is both irrational and dangerous to relinquish or distribute it to other groups. (1992, Zaffiro). In the majority of Southern African countries, the allocation of broadcasting facilities to political parties, especially in the run-up to major elections such as parliamentary and presidential elections, has consistently favored the incumbent party. This trend can be attributed to the realization by governing elites that controlling broadcasting resources benefits their legitimacy construction and maintenance.

According to Raymond Kuhn (2023) television broadcasts determine the outcome of elections. On the other hand, due to its ability to overcome obstacles such as illiteracy, geographical distance, linguistic diversity, and limited access to print media, radio is crucial in reaching the vast majority of Africa's population, particularly those living in rural areas.

Under such conditions, media can serve as a prominent medium for political discourse, influencing how citizens visually and intimately engage with geo-politics.

2.4 The role of media in agenda setting and framing of geo-political news in the SADC region.

The CNN Effect

The impact of the press on the political system is more often assumed than investigated (Cohen, 2015), and little has been done to study empirically the nature of behaviors

that shape foreign affairs coverage or the mechanisms that affect political processes and policy-making. So far, there is a lack of systematic research and acknowledgment of media influence on policymaking (Arnold, 2011). In an investigation of mass media, “The CNN Effect” and “The Al Jazeera” effect prove how, in our era, the prestige and power of a state are not determined by military power but by media influence (Palloshi, 2015). The two terms refer to the ability of these two networks to affect foreign policy through their covering and broadcasting of international events after assessing whether global mass media has the ability and capacity to be an important factor in domestic and international politics (Palloshi, 2015).

Global mass media create a “*virtual sovereignty*,” and virtual states affect the stability of traditional states where the media can alleviate tensions and conflict by providing new perspectives to audiences- “*mobilizing conscience*.” Many scholars have provided their analysis, adding to how the media decides what states will address through both domestic and foreign policy (Nelson & Ojebuyi, 2017). On the one hand, discusses how global television has a decisive and dominant role in international politics, adding that it has completely changed the conventional diplomatic system that determines political and diplomatic outcomes. Ammon (2001) adds to the discussion through what he coined “*telediplomacy*”, a term developed to describe the emergence and growing influence of the global news system, which has dramatically changed the international political scene. He believes “*telediplomacy*” can drive policy and determine diplomatic outcomes.

CNN became the first example of how media could influence international governance (Papadopoulos, 2009). The American-based cable TV channel was developed in 1980 when most Southern African countries were still recovering from colonialism (Hallin

D. , 1994; Hallin D. C., 2020). The television channel became globally recognized due to its coverage of war news in Europe and famine news in Africa. The term nicknamed *mediademocracy/ mediacracy* broadened to collectively imply all cable news network television that could cover real-time events, including all mass media with a global reach, such as Fox, SkyNews, BBC World, and MSNBC (Palloshi, 2015). The CNN Effect is, therefore, a product of western media and their intervention and interference with international phenomena.

Scholars note the influence of media, particularly the CNN Effect in Western foreign policy, giving an example of the U.S. intervention in Somalia versus its hold back against Sudan in the late 20th century. The daily display of starvation in Somalia, a production tailor-made for television, propelled the US government into humanitarian assistance (Palloshi, 2015). However, despite suffering similar effects, Sudan was left unassisted because it had no media coverage. While it may be argued that the U.S. decision to intervene militarily in Somalia was the result of diplomatic and bureaucratic operations, with news coverage coming in response to those decisions, the relationship between media and shifting public perceptions through public diplomacy is evident, “decision-makers can use CNN’s reach and popularity to manufacture public consent and manipulate public opinion.” (Kuhn, 2023) Another danger that the CNN Effect poses is driving the government into action based on what is broadcasted through the network, sometimes at odds with states’ national interest” (Palloshi, 2015).

The Al Jazeera Effect

The Al Jazeera Effect contests the CNN Effect, raising among other regional voices that take account of global news such as Al Arabia, New Delhi’s NDTV, and AajTalk

(Palloshi, 2015). These channels' programming is borrowed from the CNN format constructed to suit Arabic and Muslim societies. Palloshi (2015) comments that the rise of the new media is perhaps the most important development of our century for it has the power to create a balance of viewpoints as people are now able to choose among a wider array of international networks, be exposed to varying perspectives and consequently have a better understanding of the global dynamics as well as the lives and cultures of people and nations at the other end of the globe. During the 2003 Iraq war, Al Jazeera broadcasted opposing views to American interests, exposing the devastating impact of the U.S. invasion on general civilians (Zinreich, 2023). The channel also broadcasted alternative opinions to Western propaganda to mention coverage in Afghanistan and Palestine. However, these Arabic narratives do not compensate for the vacuum of black African perspectives that the Southern Africa region suffers to date.

The Four Effects of Media

(Palloshi, 2015) adopts the principles of Bahador who comments on the CNN Effect and how it can be classified into four distinct categories of influencing government policies. The following can be understood in relation to the assumption that Southern Africa has been subjugated through the media's deliberate actions that influence and or support the actions of western governments on regional phenomena.

f. The Accelerant Effect

This first category discusses the power of media to provide instant reporting that lobbies governments into making immediate analysis and making official actionable resolutions without thoroughly investigating the matter. The quick transmission of pictures, live feed, radio, and other forms of media, worsened today by the internet,

have an accelerant effect on policy. Historically, such media has resulted in military bureaucratic action where America exercises military power against weaker states. In summary, the media has the effect to influence states into abrupt decision-making that may be detrimental.

g. The Impediment Effect

The second category is quite self-explanatory, discussing how the media can undermine public support by purporting perspectives where citizens assume that they are powerless. This effect is among the indirect causes of African underdevelopment and subjugation, where Africans are deceived to think less of their cultural beliefs and social practices. Impediment does not only affect African thinking and living but oversteps into our leadership and political representation in global relations.

h. The Agenda-Setting Effect

Agenda Setting can be traced back to the findings by Dr. Max McCombs and Dr. Donald Shaw who studied the 1968 U.S. presidential election. Their theory brings forward the findings that the persistence of news covered by media influences the public into the thought that it is important. In that sense, the state is redirected into addressing the news, sometimes through policymaking. Agenda Setting has been broadly discussed looking into the many ways media projects important news. Some of these ways include first-page features and bold large text, guiding people on what to think about, a concept known as media framing.

Through framing, mass media creates the public picture of the world and the importance of an issue while choosing and shaping the political reality. Two levels of agenda setting are known, one where the media decides the news, and the second where it determines what to prioritize about the news. Prominent issues include foreign

policy, fiscal policy, law and order, public welfare and civil rights. Media therefore not only shapes information but determines what about the subject is of importance.

i. The Force-Multiplier Effect

The final effect is one that directly subjects media to the power of the state and national governance where it speaks in coherence with state interests. How media displays news plays a role in public diplomacy, consolidating and mobilizing support for government policies and strategic decisions in international relations. Similarly, governments are able to use media to flak, a concept thoroughly discussed by Chomsky in the propaganda model.

The Media Sphere's Model

A number of theories have emanated from the propaganda model to mention Daniel Hallin's media spheres. The media sphere interrogates the 1985 text "We keep America on top of the world" and its statement that journalists double information and political ideology (Hallin D. C., 2020). It reviews the sets of relationships a journalist has with different social actors, political parties, economic institutions and the audience. (Hallin D. , 1994) contests through the liberal theory that because media is private property it is stratified by class. He argues that the owners of the news media are not representative of the public at large and that democracy, and more narrowly the credibility and morale of news organizations were at risk if the owners had the power to use the media at will as instruments of class and personal interests. He also adds that propaganda i.e., the use of communication as an instrument of power and profit rather than as a medium of dialogue, had become pervasive in the public spheres as well as in political life.

Hallin groups media into three spheres; Legitimate Controversy, Consensus, and Deviance (Ladd, 2022). The sphere of Legitimate Controversy refers to as the “sole province of objectivity” offering a neutral understanding of an issue where the audience is able to learn from the media and also formulate their own perspectives. The second sphere, of Consensus, implies information that is universally agreed on such as cultural beliefs. In this sphere, the public accepts that such information is one-sided because it represents their greater values. The final sphere, of Deviance, holds much controversy, where the journalist is expected to disregard or denounce such as issues of morality.

2.5 The relationship between global hegemony, propaganda and development in Southern Africa.

The information production process is built over powerful cultural and ideological assumptions that are based, centred, and located in the affluent ‘Western’ parts of the world. Integrating local information and narratives is integral to establishing true meaning (Thomas, 2014). The authors comment on the hegemonic format of audio-visual display, noting how mainstream media creates and reinforces assumptions and structures of subjugation and domination. Africa has been the subject of racism, portrayed through northcentral biases covering stories on poverty, civil unrest, political instability, ethnic conflicts, pandemics, and illiteracy (Grant, 2014). These conclusive misrepresentations have a widespread impact on public perceptions that Africa is underdeveloped and inferior to the West and America (Njoroge, 2021).

The agency of Africa is overlooked in Western media, compared with other regions, including other countries in the South (Thomas, 2014). News selection and recruitment of media networks, including journalists, news producers, and press editors, apply western based selection models that decide the relevance of local African news

(Cohen, 2015). These profit-driven models are fixated on hierarchical, elitist hegemonies that only absorb positive coverage of states that serve Western and American states' cultural, ideological, economic, and geopolitical interests (Mullen & Klaehn, 2010). Little existing documentation questions the increased need to satisfy diplomatic strategies by the global north in undermining African political competence through media. As a result, the visibility, accuracy, and impact of African narratives are drowned by western propaganda.

The media environment in Southern Africa is distinguished by a combination of plurality and hypercommercialism, with the local media often being recognized as exemplars of investigative journalism. Despite the ongoing challenges to press freedom, the media business in Southern Africa has more than one hundred FM radio stations, over sixty free-to-air television channels, as well as a wide array of newspapers predominantly influenced by two major media conglomerates, namely the Daily News and the Standard newspapers.

The media landscape in Southern Africa is notably distinguished by the prevalence of hyper-commercialization and the monetization of news. Consequently, this has resulted in the phenomenon of tabloidization, wherein news content tends to be sensationalized, occasionally skeptical, occasionally moralistically sincere, and populist in nature. Despite facing criticism for credibility concerns resulting from many malpractices, such as formulaic sensationalism and frivolous entertainment, media continues to be a highly influential standard within the geo-political landscape of Southern Africa.

It is frequently observed that prominent media agencies in the region engage in critical examinations of government and business operations, as well as expose instances of

corruption and wrongdoing. The media systems and paradigms prevalent in the Western world, along with activities such as watchdog journalism, have exerted a substantial effect in the region of Southern Africa. This influence has played a key part in shaping the agenda of the media landscape in Southern Africa.

In the region of Southern Africa, similar to numerous other African countries, journalists have historically received education based on Western curriculum, leading to the establishment of a media system that may be characterized as an extension of the Western model. The primary sources of instructional materials, journalism ideas, textbooks, and references utilized by journalism institutes in Southern Africa predominantly originate from Western countries.

Similarly, the structural adjustment programs had long-term subjugating consequences on the development of Africa. A product of western “modernity” and “growth,” African governments adopted the ESAP, a failed western approach that depicted Africans as people who needed foreign thinkers and planners to think and plan on their behalf (Poncian, 2015). Economies such as Zimbabwe, had achieved positive, albeit modest, economic growth during most of the 1980s, and enjoyed significant improvements in social service provision (Brett & Winter, 2020). However, the Economic Structural Adjustment Programs rolled out by international governance organizations, especially the World Bank, repeatedly failed, proving that Western development models were myths among the underlying factors that underdeveloped countries in the Southern African region (Saungweme, 2013).

Moreover, these super states do not consider their oppression. Rather, they continue to make public statements and comments broadcasted through media to spread false discourse about Africa. Leaders such as Tony Blair, the former French president

Nicolas Sarkozy, and, more recently, Donald Trump used media to spread derogatory misinformation about African development. Complimentary to this, international non-governmental organizations strengthen negative perceptions of a backward continent by publishing on their websites dehumanizing media content that is used in their fundraising campaigns in Africa. Such media includes images of child labor, extreme poverty, land degradation, carefully using language that negatively paints the image of Africa.

(Poncian, 2015) contests that books and other academic writing also constitute western propaganda that led to the subjugation of Africa. Such books as *The Trouble with Africa* (Calderisi, 2007), *Africa in Chaos* (Ayiittey, 1999), *Africa Betrayed* (Ayiittey, 1992), *No Refuge: The Crisis of Refugee Militarization in Africa* (Muggah, 2006), and *Everyday Corruption and the State: Citizens and Public Officials in Africa* (Blundo & de Sardan, 2006) were cited among the text that provides a negative depiction of Africa adding that the titles themselves are used by publishers to draw public attention and inspire public opinions through the readers (Poncian, 2015).

The subjugation is so extreme that some commentators associate recent record economic growth in Africa with the implementation of western-based neoliberal reforms, an argument that implies that recent economic growth would not have happened if not for the Western-based structural adjustment policy prescriptions (Poncian, 2015). This deliberate tarnishing of African images and practices in media, text, and eco-political reforms drives the conversation into further interrogation of why the northern states are driven toward under-developing Africa.

2.6 Summary

Media perspectives are the real problem, and the work by other researchers and theorists agree with the idea that media is used as an agent of public diplomacy by states in order to further their interests. The northern states have fashioned their hegemonic approaches by use of force and in contemporary global dynamics through classist ideologies. In order to maintain their dominance over Africa and keep it underdeveloped, media diplomacy is a tactic these power states have adopted, misinforming the world about the global south while exploiting its resources and raw materials. Opposing ideologies to the hegemonic neo-capitalist and neo-colonialist interests of powerful states are deemed irrelevant and reported negatively in order to separate the public from supporting weaker political actors.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

According to Saunders et al (2019), methodology informs: why a research study has been conducted, how the research problem was defined, why the hypothesis was formulated, and what data was collected through which particular method. In this research study the research methodology used gave a clear-cut idea of the study in relation to the use of media as a soft power tool and this chapter gives the details of this methodology under the following sub-topics; Research design, study population and sampling procedure, research instruments, validity and reliability of research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques.

3.2 Research design

Research design is the approach used to incorporate the different components of the research in a comprehensible and logical way, ensuring that the research problem is adequately addressed (Boru, 2018). Research designs differ according to their purpose and are categorized as descriptive, explanatory or exploratory (Lawrence & Murray, 2013). This study will made use of the analytical descriptive approach in order to test hypotheses and to investigate the relation between media and public perceptions in informing global power dynamics. According to Boru (2018) the combination of descriptive and analytical research gives a description while testing the research hypotheses, correlation analysis and normality test in answering the research questions. In this respect, the researcher sought to understand the phenomena in reality, measured and supported by evidence from primary data.

The research designs were used to illustrate the relationship between media (the independent variable) and public perceptions (dependent variable). Research questions

were used to develop 2 surveys put on a five-point likert scale where 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree and 1=Strongly Disagree. A simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the study sample. The researcher tested the reliability of the survey questionnaires by conducting a pilot test.

3.3 Research philosophy

A research philosophy is a system of beliefs, ideologies, and a set of assumptions about how knowledge develops (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). According to Creswell (2013), it is essential for a researcher to develop a research philosophy as it provides an important assumption about how they see the world. While research philosophies are varied, this research study adopted positivism research philosophy to carry out an in-depth examination of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables for this research study.

The philosophical stance of positivism is grounded by the view that human behavior is influenced, controlled, and shaped by external forces (Park, Konge, & Artino, 2019). In this case, public perceptions are largely influenced by media. The researcher therefore; accepted results based on data collection and facts as knowledge to explore the relationship between the variables in relation to foreign policy administration.

3.4 Population and Sampling

Purposeful sampling was used during the identification of active media in the Southern Africa region and the key actors, i.e., private media organizations, companies and networks, civil society in media, and individuals specializing in news and media. The research targeted 230 key respondents as follows;

- I. 200 KAP survey respondents aged above 18 years from Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- II. 30 Key informants from media organizations or independent.

3.5 Research instruments

The research utilized two survey questionnaires for quantitative data collection. A discursive interview template with open-ended questions collecting background sector information and follow up thematic questions was developed. The two KAP surveys generated for quantitative data collection used Google Forms, which organized the data into graphical and analytical information for interpretation measured on Likert scale as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Likert Scale

Number	Level of agreement	Mean Range
1	Strongly disagree	0.001 – 0.999
2	Disagree	1.000 – 1.999
3	Neutral	2.000 – 2.999
4	Agree	3.000 - 3.999
5	Strongly Agree	4.000 – 4.999

The Likert scale had pre-coded responses ranging from 1 – strongly disagree 5 – strongly agree. The participants were able to indicate their level of agreement on most of the questionnaire questions. During the data presentation process an average mean was used to summarize the research findings, ranging from 0.001 (strongly disagree) to 4.999 (strongly agree).

3.5.1 Quantitative Data Collection

For the purposes of collecting quantitative primary data for this study, Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP Survey) questionnaires were used. (Yerima, 2020) defines a KAP survey as a quantitative assessment with predefined question formatted in a standardized questionnaire. This questionnaire therefore had a defined and structured collection of questions including one measurement scale. Data collected include demographic characteristics, and levels of knowledge, attitude, beliefs, and feelings about media, in accordance with the research objectives of the study in order to collect information that is relevant and sufficient.

The questionnaire used both open-ended and close-ended questions. Closed questions were used for most answers while open ended option to respond were provided where the respondents may desire to elaborate themselves. Each survey took approximately 2-5 minutes to respond, with not more than 15 questions.

The responses from the questionnaires were analysed and grouped into themes that informed the interview guide.

3.5.2 Qualitative Data Collection

Given that this research study made use of a mixed method research, interviews were also used as a research instrument to collect qualitative data. According to (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019), an interview schedule is among the effective methods involving direct verbal interaction between individuals. It provides in-depth data that are limited to get using a questionnaire (Giereth, 2022).

The researcher scheduled online face-to-face interviews managing to observe both verbal and non-verbal expressions that would not be observed in other techniques. The

choice of this technique was based on the notion that the interview permitted the researcher to obtain greater clarity of information related to the themes developed through the KAP surveys and modify questions that were inadequately responded.

The interviewer was also able to collect supplementary information about the respondent's personal characteristics and environment which is often of great value in interpreting results. Each interviewing session lasted between 30 minutes to one and a half hours as the duration of the sessions would depend upon the degree of rapport between the researcher and informant, and internet connectivity.

3.6 Validity of the Instruments

Content validity of the instrument, i.e., the degree to which the sample of the test represents the content that the test is designed to measure (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019), in this research study was determined through expert judgement. The researcher made use of subject matter specialists like the university supervisor and industrial experts to evaluate validity of test items. Experts also made suggestions on the effectiveness of the questionnaire by checking whether it was related to the research questions or not and gave feedback. Their recommendations were incorporated in the final questionnaire.

3.7 Reliability of the Instruments

Reliability can be understood as the extent of consistency demonstrated by the instrument procedures such as the degree to which a particular measuring procedure gives similar results over repeated trials (Creswell, 2013). In research, however, reliability might be influenced by random error (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). To fulfil this essential need, the research began with a pilot test. Other reliability measures included administering the survey to targeted participants in the three

countries, both male and female, young and old therefore using the same test on different groups.

3.8 Piloting

To enhance the validity as well as the reliability of the questionnaire, a pre-test was conducted on a population similar to the target. This was done before the main research targeting local media service providers using random sampling. These media providers were not among the sample for study. The pilot study assessed the suitability of the questionnaire for the study checking whether the questions were relevant to the study, the wording was clear to the respondents, the items were logically arranged to facilitate responding and whether there was need to delete or add some items.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

A mapping exercise was carried out through a systemic desk review. The relevant authority was sought from respondents, and preparation meetings were held with key respondents to discuss the scope of the research. Surveys were sent out to the respondents. A different survey was sent out through digital broadcasting to target general citizens from Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Three iterations of data collection, data grouping, data analysis, and data interpretation were done before validating themes and coming up with conclusive findings from the research, including formulating an updated literature review. The data collection was administered in English. During the interviews, the researcher had to treat all participants respectfully, as encouraged by Creswell (2013). Transparency and rapport building were key to settling the participants and preparing them for the data collection. The participants were allowed to speak freely about the phenomenon in question (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

3.10 Data analysis procedure

Data analysis involved arranging the obtained data, editing, cleaning and coding of data before the same were entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) package version 24.0 for analysis. SPSS was favored as it is very methodical and includes a wide variety of the most common graphical and statistical data analysis. The study utilized both descriptive and inferential analytical techniques. Descriptive analysis involved measures of central tendency such as calculation of mean, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages. In addition, data analysis was in form of tables, graphs (bar graphs, pie charts, tabulation) and statistical calculations (weighted average index). Tabulation was essential for neat presentation and reducing large mass of data to bring out the distinct pattern, examining data trends and making parameter commenting clear and concise.

3.11 Ethical Consideration

According to Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill (2019) ethics is the suitability of the researchers' behavior concerning the rights of individuals who participate as the topic of their study or those who are affected by it.

The researcher sought the approval of AUREC, which is the authorizing board. Following this, informed consent was sought from the respondents and their organizations, who participated at a voluntary basis with the ability to withdraw at any given point during the research process. All participants were informed of the research and were presented with an information sheet (see annexe) which was referenced in the surveys for their consent and acknowledgement.

The questions were structured in simple English and easily facilitated via electronic devices through google forms. All the instruments were developed on the researcher's Africa University domain profile to ensure data safety, confidentiality and protection.

- **Informed Consent**

The researcher ensured that the respondents gave their informed consent by fully explaining the purpose and procedures, as well as the implications of their involvement. The participants had the right to decline to participate in the study and to withdraw at any time without justification. The respondents also had the option to request that the information obtained from them be deleted from the study. An information sheet accompanied the data collection tools, besides a section which expressed the same included in the survey questionnaires.

- **Confidentiality/privacy**

Participants were assured that the information they supplied would be treated confidentially during the process of obtaining informed consent. Identifiable attributes of individuals or groups were not collected through the data collection tools or included in quotes or any part of the research.

- **Potential for harm**

The researcher considered possibilities of harm that could take various forms, including psychological harm. Sensitive questions that may elicit negative feelings such as shame or worry were avoided in this situation because the research was not aimed at individuals.

The research therefore ensured ethical standards of research anchored on the DO NO HARM principle and other data protection mechanisms to safeguard the sensitive data

of beneficiaries throughout the research process. The researcher did not collect personal identification or security information, which may have risked the participants' cyber security. The data was stored in a secured university Google Drive with restricted access. No identifiable names were used.

3.12 Summary

This chapter focused on the appropriate research methodology and research design that was used for the study. Aspects discussed included the research philosophy, research design, the research population, sampling and sampling techniques, sampling procedures, data collection, data presentation, research validity and reliability as well as ethical considerations. The chapter gave an analysis of the methods used. The next chapter will focus on data analysis, presentations and discussions of the research findings

CHAPTER FOUR: 4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate media diplomacy as a matter of soft power used to influence public perceptions toward the trajectory of underdevelopment. This chapter presents the research findings and analyses the data to answer the research objectives and questions. The data collected was both quantitative and qualitative, and the results were presented in the form of percentage tables, charts, and graphs.

4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

Response Rate

Response rate refers to the percentage of completed questionnaire obtained or gathered in a survey. The following table 2 illustrates the response rate for this research study.

Table 2: Response Rate

	Questionnaires distributed	Returned Questionnaires	Response rate (%)
Public perceptions	200	163	81.5%
Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices	30	21	70.0%
Total	230	184	80%

Source: Primary Data (2023).

Based on the information provided in table 2 a total of 230 questionnaires were distributed, with 200 questions seeking to gather information related to public perceptions, while the remaining 30 questionnaires were aimed at gathering

information related to knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices. From this analysis, it has been observed that a response rate of 80% was obtained. (Creswell, 2013) suggested that, a response rate of 30 per cent is taken as less effective, but 60% and above will produce reliable results. (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019) also concurs as the authors articulate that, to ensure a sample validly represent the total population, a high responsive rate should be obtained. As can be noted in Table 2, a high response rate of 80% was obtained.

4.3 Demographic responses

This section gives illustrations through pie charts, bar graphs and frequency tables. The demographic characteristics include geographic location, gender, age and education level. This section presents the demographic information of the respondents.

4.3.1 Gender

Research results show that 51.2% of the respondents were male whilst 48.8% were female. The results are presented in pie chart, figure 1 below:

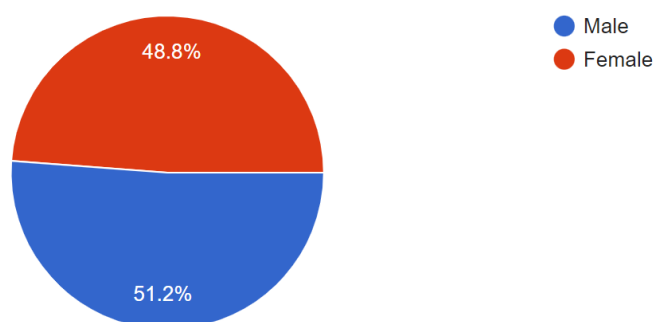


Figure 1: Gender of Respondents (N=184)

The research findings in Figure 1 imply that the majority of the respondents were male as compared to their female counterparts in within the media diplomacy. These results concur with the realities in Southern Africa where gender inequalities and gender norms prevent women from participating in governance and political issues.

4.2.2 Age of the respondent

The research results indicate that the ages of 18-29 had the majority representation compared to all other age groups. There were no responses from senior citizens aged above 60 years while those aged between 50-59 had the least respondents.

These results allude to the expectation that the young people rely more on digital platforms for access to information as compared to those aged 50 years and more. It therefore shows that more young people are subject to media influence on how they participate in geo-politics. The research showed that media does inform how young people perceive foreign policy and diplomatic agendas. The results are illustrated in Fig 2 below.

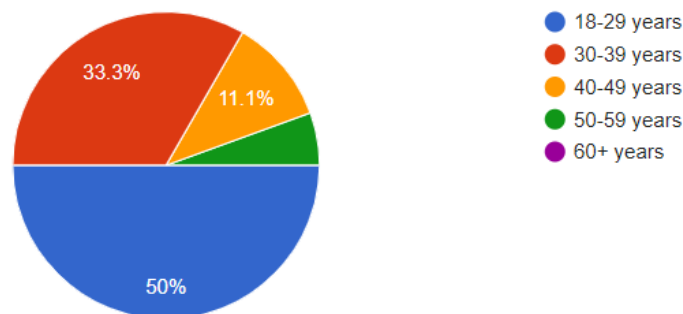


Figure 2: Age of the respondent (N=184)

4.3.3 Geographic Location

The researcher was focused on Southern Africa, targeting Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe in this region. The results therefore organized the different nationalities from which the respondents were from. The research findings have been presented in figure 3 below.

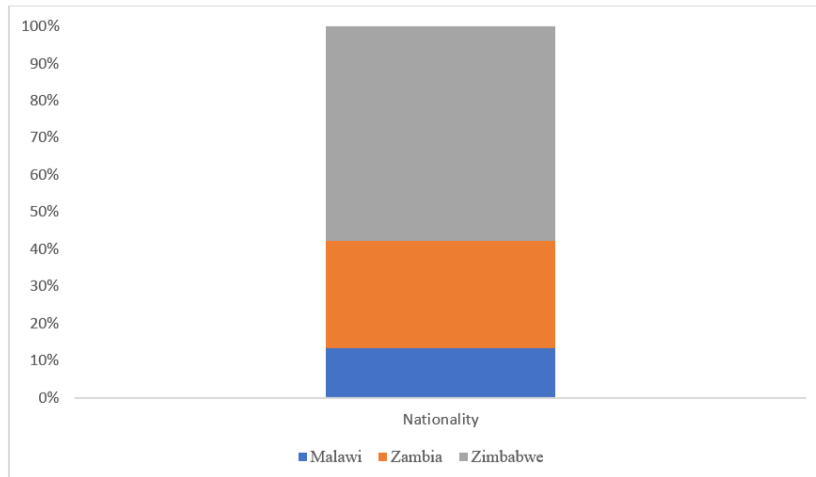


Figure 3: Nationality of the respondent (N=184)

As illustrated in the above figure 3 the majority of the responds over 50% where from Zimbabwe while the least responses of about 12% were from Malawi. Zambia contributed 38% constituting the total responses recorded and analysed to be from Southern Africa. This validates the study sample as people belonging to the global south.

4.3.4 Education Level of Respondents

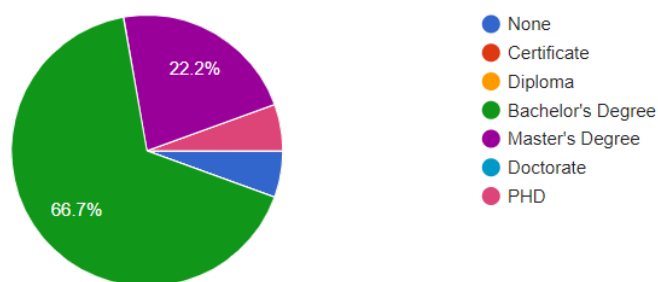


Figure 4: Education Level (N=184)

This research sought to bridge the literacy and education gaps by targeting all people regardless of their level of education. While having an education may influence how people understood and responded to research, the research was simple enough for any

Southern Africa citizen with knowledge of English and basic reading and writing skills to respond. The research therefore did not discriminate based on education.

The highest responses, 66,7% of the respondents, however, mentioned that they had acquired their Bachelor's Degree, with an additional 22.2% having acquired their Master' Degrees. The results, therefore, reflected the realities in most Southern Africa that citizens are educated. Further, in academic research, education is considered a valuable source of knowledge for better research findings. This, therefore, means that over 80% of the study group provided educated and informed responses, and this data can be relied on.

4.4 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. They provide simple summaries of the sample and the measures. Together with simple graphics analysis, they form the basis of virtually every quantitative analysis of data. This section of provides statistics based on the data collection tools administered in relation to the research objectives and questions.

4.4.1 The influence of media on public perceptions in agenda setting and framing of geo-political news.

Data presented in table below was derived from various responses from a 5-point Likert Scale were figures ranging from 0-0.9999 represents Strongly Disagree; 1 – 1.9999 represents Disagree; Where 2-2.9999 implies a Neutral response, 3 – 3.9999 represents Agree responses and lastly 4 – 4.999 implies that majority of the responses have Strongly Agree to the statement posed.

Table 3: Public Perceptions

Description	Mean	Std Dev
Media has the power to determine what I think and talk about regularly	4.8919	.73725
International media (CNN BBC SABC ALJAZEERA etc.) is my most significant source of information	4.2132	.88362
I rely on international media for "breaking news" (defined as newly received information about an event that is currently occurring or developing.)	4.3993	.84541
I trust the information provided through international media	4.4865	.93159
My national interest and values are correctly represented by media	2.0541	.70498
I am adequately informed about regional cooperation, agreements and treaties through media	3.1210	.70722
Media influences my values and standard of living	2.9459	.77981
At most, International Media truly reflects realities of Southern African societies	1.2612	.87078

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Data presented above indicated that within the three Southern African countries media has power to determine what people think and talk regularly as indicated by an average mean of 4.8919 which indicated that majority of the respondents have agreed to this sentiment. Additionally, it has been observed that international media (such as CNN| BBC|ALJAZEERA etc.) are the most significant source of information within these countries as indicated by an average mean of 4.2132 which implies that majority of the respondents have been strongly agreeing to this sentiment.

Given this majority the study population has been relying on international media for "breaking news" (defined as newly received information about an event that is currently occurring or developing.) as indicated by an average mean of 4.3993.

These research findings are consistent with Hayes, Guardino, & Guardino's (2014) observations that, despite the unquestionable importance of media in shaping global issues, International Relations studies continue to inadequately and insufficiently address this matter. Insufficient efforts have been made by local media to overcome the lack of understanding regarding the communicative dimension of global relations. In this particular scenario, this Southern African populace exhibits a significant dependence on information sourced from international media. This reliance stems from the faith placed in the reliability of the news, as seen by an average mean score of 4.4865. The argument posits that geopolitical power dynamics have contributed to the lack of attention to harness the capacity of media in international relations, specifically the inability to provide local content on foreign policies issues such as agreements, treaties and cooperations.

On the other hand, it has been determined that a significant proportion of the participants have observed that international media inaccurately portrays the realities of Southern African communities. This is evident from the average mean score of 1.2612, which represents the lowest mean score among all the variables. These findings align with the research assumption that there have been little efforts in Africa to utilize mass media as a means to promote cohesion and cooperation. Finally, a range of opinions on the impact of media on values and standards of living in Southern Africa were neither positive nor negative in nature, as evidenced by an average mean score of 2.9459.

These KAP survey findings exemplified the disconcerting phenomenon of societal disintegration, where the media can be a potent tool for passive citizen engagement with foreign policy events, tools, and strategies.

4.4.2 Local media's position and role in accentuating geopolitical agendas

The second section sought to establish the position and role of local media in accentuating geopolitical agendas. The same scale was used in the table were figures ranging from 0-0.9999 represents Strongly Disagree; 1 – 1.9999 represents Disagree; Where 2-2.9999 implies a Neutral response, 3 – 3.9999 represents Agree responses and lastly 4 – 4.999 implies that majority of the responses have Strongly Agree to the statement posed.

Table 4: Position of Local media

Description	Mean	Std – Dev
I know how to investigate topical stories in African governance	2.7027	0.877
I am informed of state(s) diplomatic agendas	4.1539	0.775
I have good understanding of my country's foreign policy	2.1081	0.774
I am up to date with regional cooperation, treaty instruments and agreements.	4.4832	0.905
My work includes representing the national interests on international broadcasting channels	2.5954	0.831
I have the resources and information I require to perform my duties effectively	2.6654	0.844
My communication channel/ platforms represent the values of my country rather than Western ideologies	2.9785	0.684
My skills include media framing and setting the agenda for public dialogue	4.4478	1.027
I am sometimes censored from fully expressing my independent views by political leadership	4.8126	0.878
I am sometimes censored from expressing my independent views by the media environment	3.4414	0.835
I am a trusted credible source of information to the public	4.6389	0.932
I use local sources of information to research on local news	1.4778	0.942
I am inclined to investigate public phenomena as it happens rather than be influenced by global trends in determining news	2.7335	1.830
The national interests my work addresses are similar to the agenda of the media institute I belong	2.6096	0.673

Source: Primary Data (2023)

The information presented in table 4 above was obtained from information collected from journalists and political commentators within Southern Africa. The findings note how the majority strongly agree to being informed about state's diplomatic agendas as signified by the mean of 4.1539 but with limited knowledge of their national interests as shown by the reduced mean of 2.1081. In addition to these findings it was noted that the work of these media actors did not include representing the national interests on international broadcasting channels. The research findings support Bute's (2017) claim that Western media dominance has resulted in severe identity distortion in Africa. They also validate the conditions of global hegemony that stifle weak actors through soft power.

It was further established that journalists and commentators are sometimes censored from fully expressing their independent views by political leadership as indicated by an average mean of 4.8126 being the highest mean. This seamlessly fits into the Propaganda Model's dimension on the control of media by state actors. It is good to reflect on the reality that political leaders in Southern Africa oppose Western leaders' use of competing perspectives to foment public unrest and impede regional progress. When diplomatic and non-diplomatic difficulties arise in Southern Africa, the media is sometimes chastised for revealing domestic scandals.

Also supported by the propaganda model are the majority respondents who Agree that media often censors their practice. This misunderstanding can be linked to a lack of local media involvement in governmental activities, notably in international relations and policy. One reason fully expanded by Chomsky's 5 filters is that those who own media outlets have the authority to choose which individuals or entities are allowed to broadcast opposing viewpoints to the wider public. The superseding dispute surrounding this form of political control becomes whether media proprietors have the

authority to suppress or encourage fundamental dissent, regardless of the implications for society progress and advancement.

When used efficiently and intelligently, the media can have a significant impact on global policy talks, as well as shape public opinion and influence crucial issues. Without a question, many administrations and successful worldwide institutions have made media relations a key component of their most heavily invested departments. This underlines the need of an independent and ethical media, taking steps to avoid government abuse of power by truthful reporting, enabling open dialogue, providing multiple points of view, and protecting individual rights.

4.5 Discussion and Interpretation

This research thoroughly explored the role of local media in establishing diplomatic ties and affecting public perception. It specifically tried to identify areas for improvement and potential pitfalls that should be avoided in order to effectively enhance friendly relations by elucidating the ways in which the media can contribute to the promotion of regional empowerment.

4.5.1 Global hegemony, propaganda and development

The study revealed a positive correlation between exposure to international media and levels of dissent among the population in Southern Africa. Participants who consumed international media displayed higher levels of critical thinking, political awareness, and interest in political activities. International media outlets were seen as primary sources of information, providing perspectives not covered by local media, and forming knowledge systems of the study group.

Most participants reported regular exposure to international media sources, including television, radio, and online platforms. Participants cited the BBC, CNN, and Al Jazeera as the most frequently accessed international news outlets.

“We have become attached to the daily consumption of international news, watching 24-hour channels such as CNN or BBC more frequently. Even when you don’t intend public places such as banks are always broadcasting these channels”- Key Informant.

This research gave evidence that International news reporting and broadcasting highly contributes to shaping public opinion in Southern Africa, particularly among those who rely heavily on these news sources. These networks’ reach and reputation as credible news organization has influenced how individuals perceive events in the region and form their attitudes and opinions.

While these global platforms and channels’ influence is notable, it is important to recognize that Southern Africa is a diverse region with its own local media outlets and alternative sources of information. Local media can provide different perspectives and insights that may not be covered by international networks like CNN. Additionally, social media and online platforms have enabled individuals to access a wider range of news sources and contribute to the broader media landscape, reducing dependency on monopolistic Eurocentric platforms.

“My twitter page massively engages young people on different local breaking news. I also use it to distribute some of the research publications I take part in. While I am sure to provide truthful information, I have barely interacted with the subject of media diplomacy, or its relation to foreign policy”- Key Informant.

The research, therefore, showed the impact of local voice in responding to or raising social matters. If the same effort is awarded to political coverage, local media can indeed gain momentum over international platforms.

While we cannot exist without international news, individuals in Southern Africa, like anywhere else, must play an active role in interpreting and evaluating the information they receive from CNN or any other news source. Critical media literacy skills are crucial in discerning the reliability, biases, and potential influences of news organizations. Developing these skills can empower individuals to engage with BBC or CNN's content critically and seek various perspectives. CNN, BBC or Al Jazeera have the potential to influence people's knowledge in Southern Africa through their wide news coverage and reach. However, the influence is not absolute, and individuals have agency in consuming and interpreting the information provided by CNN and other news sources. It is important to promote media literacy and access diverse sources of information to foster a well-informed public in Southern Africa.

The research reflects how ownership and control of international media has enabled the influential players- America, UK, etc to set the agenda and frame narratives according to their interests. This has created a biased portrayal of Southern Africa's development challenges, emphasizing negative aspects while downplaying positive achievements. The agenda-setting power of international media outlets may contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes, reinforcing existing power imbalances and hindering the region's development efforts.

The research established how media ownership patterns globally are centered around monopolies that limit local ownership by underdeveloped regions of the Global South often reflecting significant power imbalance. A small number of influential individuals own corporations and major media outlets, giving them the ability to shape public discourse and control the flow of information. This concentration of ownership has led to the dissemination of particular Western ideological perspectives that align with the

interests of the dominant elites impression of modernity and democracy, reinforcing their hegemonic position.

“Of course, BBC is going to broadcast how nonpartisan America, UK, or even France are in commenting on local politics. Of course, our leaders are going to be exposed as corrupt, sometimes senseless oppressors who only seek capitalistic exploitation of their country’s resources. This narrative has been since colonization. The Western agenda is to disassociate the people from their identity, making them idle in political participation.”- Key informant.

In a Key Informant Interview, one respondent commented on how local news for example ZBC, SABC and Malawi24 are overshadowed by BBC-Africa, CNN-Africa and other international broadcasters posing as local news providers. In these research findings, international media ownership patterns reflect a dominance and promotion of Western cultural norms, values, and lifestyles as the global standard, marginalizing and devaluing local cultural expressions. The representation of Southern Africa in international media may be limited to stereotypical or crisis-focused narratives, overshadowing the region's diverse and complex realities. This cultural imperialism has undermined local agencies and hindered the development of indigenous media industries, where African media broadcasters are competing with Western broadcasters on reporting African news.

CNN's reporting often focuses on global events, with limited time and resources dedicated to specific regions. Consequently, its coverage of Southern Africa has been selective and prioritizes stories that align with global news priorities or that have a strong international impact. This may result in less comprehensive coverage of local issues and contexts.

“CNN, like any media organization, has its own news agenda and framing techniques. The network decides which stories to cover, how to present them, and the emphasis placed on different issues. This can shape the information people receive and influence their knowledge and understanding of events in Southern Africa.” –Key Informant.

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter was geared on the data presentation, analysis and the discussion of research findings. The chapter gave a detailed illustration of the findings collected from the questionnaires distributed. The collected data was analysed using SPSS and presented using descriptive and inferential statistics. The following chapter brings a rundown on the summary of research findings, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of key findings of the study, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research. They are presented on the basis of the specific objectives and the corresponding research questions which were posed in pursuit of realizing the general objective of evaluating Media Diplomacy as a Foreign Policy tool in setting the development agenda.

5.2 Discussion

While there are ongoing conversations about the use of media as a key component of civil society, it is worth noting that the media has often been utilized as a tool for political manoeuvring by different socio-economic stakeholders. In Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the media sector has faced the growing necessity to adapt not only to local power dynamics but also to the swiftly evolving global landscape. Consequently, the media industries in this region have encountered formidable obstacles because of these transformations. As a result of these structural weaknesses, public knowledge on how to effectively contribute to regional development suffers.

The expansion of media companies from the North into various regions of Africa has led to the emergence of hybrid media forms inside Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Digital technologies have had a profound influence on the local media landscape. There is notable increase in opportunities for public engagement in media from the creation, curation, and dissemination of content. This has led the region into a

proliferation of independent and alternative media outlets. Collectively, these factors have greatly affected how the media industry functions in Southern Africa.

Past studies of foreign policy decision-making understood media as a channel for delivering messages but in the 21st century, the reality is the role of media is much more complex. TV, press, radio, and social media play a far more integral role in international relations. The media are a crucial part of the foreign policy agenda setting, framing and decision-making environment especially in relation to policy making, pursuing and safeguarding national interests.

There has been scrutiny surrounding the function of the media in these Southern African countries. Media reflects persistent socioeconomic disparity prevalent in the broader society. Local media has played a significant political and social role in fostering a democratic culture and safeguarding freedom of expression. It has however faced allegations of predominantly catering to privileged segments of the population, especially the socially affluent who are mostly the political elite.

In Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe the significance of democracy, governance, and the public interest is subject to debate, yet the media continues to hold a subordinate position on the political agenda. There is deliberate suppression or the absence of open discourse over its democratic function. In Zimbabwe, different laws restrict media freedom, for example, laws concerning licensing and ownership are a known method of applying government dominance over the media sector (Dwyer & Molony, 2019). Despite the continued calls for reform, the national broadcasting sector remains under complete state control, partisan to the ruling party (Mutsvairo & Muneri, 2019). Zambia has captured independent media appointing them into government while there is continued persecution of journalists (Freedom House, 2023). Finally, despite the

constitutional guarantees in Malawi, media freedoms remain elusive in the country due to regulatory flaws and economic hardships facing the country's media institutions and journalists (Kainja, 2022).

There is need for these countries to embrace the role of media and channel it toward local development and reformed public perceptions. Media is more than a vehicle for dissent toward political leadership and intentionality and strategic planning is required by local authorities to poses this soft power.

5.3 Conclusions

The relationship between media and diplomacy in underdeveloped regions of the Global South is characterized by unequal power dynamics, information control, and the marginalization of alternative voices. The ownership and control of international media by the Global North have significant implications for global hegemony and propaganda against Southern Africa's development. Concentrated ownership limits diverse perspectives, perpetuates power imbalances, and marginalizes local voices. The agenda-setting power, cultural imperialism, and potential for propagandistic narratives contribute to shaping public opinion and hindering the region's development agenda. However, there are also instances of resistance and the emergence of alternative media, offering hope for challenging and subverting dominant narratives and working towards a more inclusive and diverse media landscape. Recognizing and addressing these dynamics is crucial for promoting a more inclusive, balanced, and empowering media landscape that supports Southern Africa's development aspirations.

The following conclusions were drawn from this research study.

5.3.1 Why the influence of media on public perceptions in agenda setting and framing of geo-political news matters.

In Agenda Setting, media plays a crucial role in emphasizing key situations or issues, which attracts the attention of the audience and usually when people think or discuss those topics, they replicate and emphasize the same sentiments. The repeated spreading of regressive African narratives weakens regional governments from fully pursuing their national interests. It also separates the public from owning these interests and lobbying behind their governments. One's perspective of the world is largely based on what the media shows- the priorities of the media strongly stimulate public opinion. What the media promotes becomes topical, informing public knowledge. It is critical for governments to realise the role of media in representing local values, beliefs, systems and structures of leadership and governance. It is also critical for the media to be intentional in their pivotal role between the people and their ruling administrators.

5.3.2 How effective is western propaganda and how can local media strengthen power and governance.

Africa's continued reliance on foreign aid has increased the opportunities for bilateral and multilateral aid agencies to influence policy making in the region, devising leadership strategies for African governments. This has prescribed transformative ideologies in socio-economic and geo-political policies pursued by the Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe governments. Malawi for example is a donor reliant nation and with dependence comes subjugation, making the former "Nyasaland" colony a consumer nation. This model of development stifles internal growth, particularly crippling the export market. As a result, forex shortage has disrupted local conditions resulting in inflation, fuel scarcity, and overall high cost of living (Kondowe, 2023).

There is an opportunity for the government to utilize media diplomacy, publicly addressing this limitation and negotiating favourable conditions of aid. Participants indicated trust in international media. In the same research questionnaire, they disagreed with the statement that said their national interests and values were correctly represented by the same source. The majority response was that international media failed to truly reflect realities of Southern African societies. This has been disastrous for the economies in African countries. Such responses indicate how the public is prepared to question western propaganda, an existing gap that local media can embrace in order to discuss topical concerns that directly improve development.

5.3.3 To interpret the relationship between global hegemony, propaganda and development in Southern Africa.

Media organizations use their power that comes from agenda setting and framing of news, becoming autonomous actors in the political process. Powerful states use media in their strategic attempts to influence public perceptions to benefit their national interests. In this way, political actors are directly and indirectly involved in information creation, distribution, and control varying from the national context to the dominant global ideology. Media is used to spread political agendas that are absorbed by local communities as true representation of international affairs.

5.4 Recommendations

In instances where media confronts hegemony it is crucial to build media to mobilize the public and strengthen local development at national, regional and global levels. Soft negotiations require soft diplomacy.

5.4.1 Media Diplomacy as a foreign policy tool

In order for national interest, values and beliefs to be actualized, the citizens must be informed and involved. They must also be capacitated to discern national and global propaganda. Media must establish connections with communities, while remaining open, independent and accountable. The media should constantly and consistently engage citizens on regional tools and strategies toward effective implementation of development goals and pursuit of national and regional interests. Regulatory frameworks should protect not threaten media autonomy, safeguarding it against political intervention. This, in turn, enhances the level of accountability media has towards the general populace. Governments should embrace and not deflect criticism to develop and uphold its professionalism and integrity. When media independence is replaced by partisanship, the result is often decline in public trust in the media and withdrawal from proactive political engagement. The recommendation is to strengthen the democratic agency of governments, foreign relations and power dynamics.

5.4.2 Regional development of Media Systems and Infrastructure

Local media suffers a digital infrastructure and accessibility gap compared to developments occurring the global north. ICT has not been fully absorbed into all Southern African countries, especially Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The rural-urban digital literacy gap widens even further. There are few registered and functional telecommunication and cable networks. Most are state broadcasters who focus on national propaganda, barely relating international phenomena with national interests. There is need for regionally owned and controlled media broadcasting networks to form, expanding unity while engaging in strategic public engagement within the region. Such strategic engagement can be through an approach that partners with diplomatic missions, research institutions, policy think tanks, and entities in the digital

sphere to influence local people's solidarity. In the contemporary digital landscape, it is imperative to prioritize research efforts towards sustainability and the identification of independent financing sources. There is need to develop a unified position when advocating for the diplomatic role of local media on a global scale, especially on momentous events on the continent.

5.4.3 Strengthening the democratic function of media

To ensure the continued relevance of the media in Southern Africa within a political climate characterized by growing media intolerance, it is imperative for the media to develop novel approaches to effectively tackle the challenges that undermine its democratic function. Although several traditional media outlets in the area continue to be influenced by political and economic elites, the emerging social media landscape can also contribute to the erosion of well-informed and democratic discussions. This is evident in the spread of disinformation, falsehoods, and various forms of intimidation. In order to effectively address these emerging concerns, it is imperative to go beyond mere advocacy for media independence, freedom, and plurality. To effectively address the emerging difficulties, journalists and citizens must cultivate essential critical literacy skills that enable them to engage with policymakers more proficiently and guarantee the viability of media in an evolving landscape.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

Media Ownership and Influence:

Investigating the ownership patterns and influence of media outlets in Southern Africa, including both local and international entities, will help examine the extent to which ownership structures impact media content, narratives, and the representation of

developmental issues. It will further analyze the influence of media ownership on promoting or hindering development initiatives and identify strategies to foster a more diverse and inclusive media landscape.

Media Literacy and Critical Engagement:

Exploring the role of media literacy in empowering individuals in Southern Africa to engage with media content, including international media critically, is another further research area. One may investigate the effectiveness of media literacy programs in enhancing citizens' abilities to analyze, evaluate, and interpret media messages. Overall this will assess the impact of media literacy on promoting informed decision-making and citizen participation in development processes.

Alternative Media and Grassroots Communication:

Explore the role of alternative media platforms, community radio, and grassroots communication initiatives in addressing underdevelopment in Southern Africa. Investigate how these platforms can amplify local voices, promote participatory development processes, and challenge dominant narratives. Assess the impact of alternative media in fostering community resilience, promoting social cohesion, and driving sustainable development.

Policy and Regulatory Frameworks:

Finally, one can analyze the policy and regulatory frameworks governing media in Southern Africa. Assessing the effectiveness of existing regulations in promoting media pluralism, independence, and transparency helps explore policy interventions that can address ownership concentration, foster media diversity, and promote the role of media in driving sustainable development.

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1: AUREC Approval Letter



AFRICA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (AUREC)

P.O. Box 1320 Mutare, Zimbabwe, Off Nyanga Road, Old Mutare-Tel (+263-20)
60075/60026/61611 Fax:
(+263 20) 61785 website: www.africau.edu

Ref: AU2920/23

21 July 2023

SAMANTHA SEKAI NENGOMASHA
C/O Africa University
Box 1320
MUTARE

RE: MANUFACTURING DISSENT: MEDIA DIPLOMACY AND IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Thank you for the above-titled proposal that you submitted to the Africa University Research Ethics Committee for review. Please be advised that AUREC has reviewed and approved your application to conduct the above research.

The approval is based on the following. a) Research proposal

- **APPROVAL NUMBER** AUREC 2920/23
This number should be used on all correspondences, consent forms, and appropriate documents.
- **AUREC MEETING DATE** NA
- **APPROVAL DATE** July 21, 2023
- **EXPIRATION DATE** July 21, 2024
- **TYPE OF MEETING** Expedited

After the expiration date, this research may only continue upon renewal. A progress report on a standard AUREC form should be submitted a month before the expiration date for renewal purposes.

- **SERIOUS ADVERSE EVENTS** All serious problems concerning subject safety must be reported to AUREC within 3 working days on the standard AUREC form.
- **MODIFICATIONS** Prior AUREC approval is required before implementing any changes in the proposal (including changes in the consent documents)
- **TERMINATION OF STUDY** Upon termination of the study a report has to be submitted to AUREC.



Yours Faithfully,

MARY CHINZOU

ASSISTANT RESEARCH OFFICER: FOR CHAIRPERSON
AFRICA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Appendix 2: Information Sheet

AFRICA UNIVERSITY
(A United Methodist-Related Institution)

INFORMATION SHEET: "Manufacturing Dissent: Media Diplomacy and Underdevelopment in Southern Africa." By Samantha Sekai Nengomasha (139879).

1. INTRODUCTION

This is a Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Survey to get an overview of your understanding of media diplomacy and its relationship with governance in Southern Africa. This information Sheet provides details of the study relevant to your knowledge.

2. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- I. This research is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in International Relations and Diplomacy in the faculty of Peace, Leadership, and Governance 2023, approved by the AUREC (see attached annex).
- II. The respondent is allowed to inquire with the researcher about the research before and during participation in a manner that satisfies understanding.
- III. Participation is voluntary;
 - a. The respondent is free to withdraw from the study within the time limits outlined in the AUREC Research Approval Letter without providing a reason for withdrawal,
 - b. Or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study without any consequences to future treatment by the researcher. If the respondent withdraws from the study within the time limits outlined in the Information Sheet, they will not be required to answer any particular questions in the study.
- IV. The information provided to the researcher will be kept confidential, and responses anonymous (so that it cannot be used to identify the respondent), except for key informant respondents who agree to be profiled.

3. RESEARCH SUMMARY

One of the priorities of the twenty-first century, media has influenced both state success and failure in international affairs. The media is a vehicle that facilitates the successful transmission of domestic and foreign plans for public consent, even if policies are the foundation of how states perform socially, economically, and politically. How much people know and how they translate this knowledge into comprehension affects how they see their country's performance on a global scale. Therefore, the media plays a crucial role in producing consent, or in this study's situation, dissent. Dissent is regarded as a crucial component of democracy and is a by-product of liberalism. Political theory has mostly examined dissent in connection to governmental authority, asking how and to what extent dissent should be supported, allowed, and reined in by the state (Redhead, 2014). Political dissent, according to Clark (2007), is an expression of opposition to a political system, a political decision, or even a particular set of policies. In summary, political dissent is the narrative that stands in opposition to state propaganda and is typically manifested as protest and resistance to the current quo.

For the sake of this study, the propaganda model is used to examine how states use media to foster diplomacy, and how dissent is created in the Global South, especially in Southern Africa.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The following research objectives will guide this research study:

- I. To investigate the role of media in agenda-setting and framing geo-political news in the SADC region.
- II. To examine how propaganda can be used as a vehicle for power/governance in Southern Africa.
- III. To interpret the relationship between global hegemony, propaganda, and development in Southern Africa

5. TARGET PARTICIPANTS

This survey is one of the two instruments used to collect primary information. The respondents' data will be collected and organized using Google Forms and grouped into thematic topics.

The respondent may be invited for an interview to validate and seek clarity on the thematic grouping done via key informant interviews.

The list of respondents targeted at this survey are:

- I. Media Entities/ Institutions
- II. Government Ministries of Information, Communication and Technology
- III. Academic Departments of Humanities/ Social Sciences/ International Relations.
- IV. Non-Governmental Organizations
- V. Civil Society Organizations
- VI. Journalists

6. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The survey inquiries about regional knowledge in Southern Africa, collecting only this demographic group's public and expert perceptions.

7. RISKS

The survey is being administered digitally and may be subject to cybercrime. The researcher recommends the respondent;

- I. Join the questionnaire through a trusted and secured browser,
- II. Never disclose passwords or personal details that can be used to identify, clickbait, or clone the respondent.
- III. Verify the research through the AUREC Approval Letter (attached).
- IV. Verify the communication is sent from nengomashas@africau.edu

8. BENEFITS

The respondent will not be offered any benefits by the researcher for participating in this survey nor will they accept gifts or tokens presented by the respondent.

Participation is voluntary and free.

Appendix 3: KAP Survey Public Perceptions

"Manufacturing Dissent: Media Diplomacy And Underdevelopment In Southern Africa" - Research Questionnaire. - Research Questionnaire.

This is a Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Survey to get an overview about your understanding of media diplomacy and its relationship with governance in Southern Africa.

This research is being conducted by Sekai Samantha Nengomasha a Masters in International Relations and Diplomacy student at Africa University in partial fulfillment of the Degree Program.

* Indicates required question.

1. Email *

Participation Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet and had the details of the study explained to me.

My inquiries regarding the study have been addressed in a manner that satisfies me, and I am aware that I may still pose additional inquiries at any time.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study within the time limits outlined in the Information Sheet, without providing a reason for my withdrawal, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study without any consequences to my future treatment by the researcher. I also understand that if I withdraw from the study within the time limits outlined in the Information Sheet, I will not be required to answer any particular questions in the study.

I acknowledge that the information I provide to the researcher will be kept confidential, and I consent to the conditions outlined in the Information Sheet.

Under the terms outlined in the Information Sheet, I would like to take part in the research project that is being conducted.

I agree that the information collected for the purposes of this research study may be used for any other research purposes, provided that it is first anonymized (so that it cannot be used to identify me) and then used.

2. Having read the above conditions, do you give consent? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. Kindly indicate your Gender

Mark only one oval.

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Other: _____

4. Your Age group *

Mark only one oval.

☐ 18-24 years

☐ 25-34 years

☐ 35-44 years

☐ 45-54 years

☐ 55+ years

5. Your Nationality *

6. Your Highest level of Education *

Mark only one oval.

☐ None

☐ Certificate

☐ Diploma

☐ Bachelor's Degree

☐ Master's Degree

☐ Doctorate

☐ PhD

☐ Other: _____

Media and Governance

The following set of questions will let us know how specialists and practitioners perceive media as an agent or subject of foreign policy.

7. I have good understanding of my country's foreign policy *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree nor Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Other: _____

8. I am informed of state(x) diplomatic agendas *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree nor Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Other: _____

9. I am up to date with regional cooperation, treaty instruments and agreements. *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree nor Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ Other: _____

10. My work includes representing the national interests on international broadcasting channels *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree nor Disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

11. My skills include media framing and setting the agenda for public dialogue. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

Media and Diplomacy in Southern Africa

The following set of questions will let us know how specialists and practitioners are involved in African news.

12. I know how to investigate topical stories in African Governance. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

13. I use local sources of information to research on local news. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

14. African national values can be distinguished through media from Western ideologies. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

15. Global trends influence my work more than local news. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

Media and Power

The following set of questions will let us know how specialists and practitioners perceive media as an agent or subject of power.

16. I am sometimes censored from expressing my independent views by the media environment. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

<https://www.google.com/forms/d/1UJl8m-8WfYAPW0i1n0aCndmcaJd0mF0d00u0>

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12/1/21, 2:41 PM "Manufacturing Discontent: Media Diplomacy And Underdevelopment in Southern Africa" / Research Questionnaire / Research ...

17. I am sometimes censored from expressing my independent views by political leadership. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

18. I am sometimes censored from expressing my independent views by the public. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

19. I am a trusted credible source of information to the public. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

<https://www.google.com/forms/d/1UJl8m-8WfYAPW0i1n0aCndmcaJd0mF0d00u0>

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<https://www.google.com/forms/d/1UJl8m-8WfYAPW0i1n0aCndmcaJd0mF0d00u0>

6/8

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20. Thank you for participating in my research. Kindly confirm that all the information provided above is a true and honest. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

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Google Forms

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6/8

Appendix 4: KAP Survey Role of Media

"Manufacturing Dissent: Media Diplomacy And Underdevelopment In Southern Africa" - Research Questionnaire. - Research Questionnaire.

This is a Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Survey to get an overview about your understanding of media diplomacy and its relationship with governance in Southern Africa.

This research is being conducted by Selai Samanthu Nongomatha a Masters in International Relations and Diplomacy student at Africa University in partial fulfillment of the Degree Program.

* Indicate the required question.

1. Email *

Participation Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet and had the details of the study explained to me.

My inquiries regarding the study have been addressed in a manner that satisfies me, and I am aware that I may still pose additional inquiries at any time.

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I acknowledge that the information I provide to the researcher will be kept confidential, and I consent to the conditions outlined in the Information Sheet.

Under the terms outlined in the Information Sheet, I would like to take part in the research project that is being conducted.

I agree that the information collected for the purposes of this research study may be used for any other research purposes, provided that it is first anonymized (so that it cannot be used to identify me) and then used.

2. Having read the above conditions, do you give consent? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

3. Kindly indicate your Gender

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Prefer not to say
☐ Other: _____

4. Your Age group *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 18-29 years
☐ 30-39 years
☐ 40-49 years
☐ 50-59 years
☐ 60+ years

5. Your Nationality *

<https://forms.gle/VJL8m4bCYW8P5Wt1rcatCndrmackJf0edHd3t0t>

18

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6. Your Highest level of Education *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ None
☐ Certificate
☐ Diploma
☐ Bachelor's Degree
☐ Master's Degree
☐ Doctorate
☐ PhD
☐ Other: _____

Media and Governance

The following set of questions will let us know how specialists and practitioners perceive media as an agent or subject of foreign policy.

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8. I am informed of state(s) diplomatic agendas *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ Other: _____

9. I am up to date with regional cooperation, treaty instruments and agreements. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
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☐ Strongly Disagree
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11. My skills include media framing and setting the agenda for public dialogue. *

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Mark only one oval.

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15. Global trends influence my work more than local news. *

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The following set of questions will let us know how specialists and practitioners perceive media as an agent or subject of power.

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18. I am sometimes censored from expressing my independent views by the public. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly agree
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19. I am a trusted credible source of information to the public. *

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Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

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