

**The coverage of China in Mozambican press.**  
**Some preliminary notes**

*Sérgio Chichava, IESE, Mozambique*

- How Chinese engagement in Mozambique has been covered by Mozambican media?
- What are the main features of Chinese engagement in the Mozambican media and ICT sectors?
- Why China is supporting Africa in the media and ICT sectors?
- Are there differences between Public and Private Mozambican media coverage on Chinese engagement in the country?

# Outline

- Mozambican Press: A brief Overview
- **Sino-Mozambican Media and ICT cooperation**
- Coverage of Chinese issues in the Mozambican Press
- Conclusion

# Mozambican press overview

- 1975-1990- No freedom of speech/no private/independent press; All media were monopoly of the State: Press must serve the “Revolution”, help to build a “new man”;
- From 1990 up to now with the approval of liberal constitution: freedom of speech/proliferation of free press.

# General features of Mozambican press

- **Public press:** still more important/covering entire country
- **Private press:**
  - I. Mostly concentrated in Maputo, the capital;
  - II. Struggling with material/financial difficulties;
  - III. Press in Portuguese/Most of Mozambique don't speak/cannot read Portuguese;
  - IV. Very active: denunciation of power abuse /corruption, e.g.



# Sino-Mozambican Media and ICT cooperation

- 2011-Agreements for radio, cinema/ television, Confucius Institute;
- E.g.: Through an agreement between TVM (Mozambique) and TDM (Macau) CCTV programs will be Introduced in Mozambique. TDM will subtitle CCTV programs into Portuguese.
- TVM programs will be sent to Macau for broadcast by TDM. TDM will subtitle TVM programs into Chinese.

# **Sino-Mozambican Media and ICT cooperation (Cont.)**

- 2012: TDM Macau broadcast some of their Portuguese radio programmes through CRI which has already daily broadcasts directed to Mozambique/other Lusophone countries.
- The level of media exchanges/cooperation are still low.



# **Chinese companies are also active in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector**

- 2010: Thanks to two agreements between Mozambique with Huawei and ZTE the Chinese companies are supporting the consolidation and the implementation of the local E-Government (GovNet);
- Huawei is providing equipment and services while ZTE is giving technically and financially support. (INTIC 2010);
- 2011. Chinese StarTimes in a joint-venture with the Mozambican Focus 21 is helping Mozambique to move from analogue to digital TV. Operation expected to be completed before 2015;

## **Chinese companies are also active in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector**

- Through an agreement between Mozambique and China governments, Huawei is also constructing the National Data Center (CND) in Maluana, Maputo Province. It will also equip as well as support in operationalisation of the informatic system of the National Data Center (CND). (INTIC 2012).

# Why china is interested in the strengthening cooperation with African media?

- Encourage multi-tiered and multi-formed exchange and cooperation between Chinese and African media;
- Enhance mutual understanding and enable objective and balanced media coverage of each other (CAP 2006);
- 1<sup>st</sup> Forum on China-Africa Media Cooperation, Beijing, August 2013: Major event after FOCAC 2006 marking Chinese commitment with African media.

# China-Africa media cooperation

- A way to :
  1. Build a new image of China in the world, in Africa in particular: African media should report China-Africa friendship positively;
  2. Legitimise the sincerity of Chinese commitment with Africa;
  3. Fight against western anti-China “campaign” in Africa:  
*“Western journalists rarely have positive views about China. They label China as “neo-colonialist” or an “energy-predator” because of its booming economic ties with Africa.”*  
(Liu Chang, Shang Xuqian, Xinhua Net, 22/04/2011).

# Cont.

- **A way to change western perception of Africa: (I) Chinese media should report China-Africa friendship positively (ii) Chinese media should report Africa positively;**
- *“Western media organizations have long described Africa as the "dark continent"/the "failed continent," a vast land plagued by war, diseases, bad governance/corruption and other ills while ignoring the positive developments in the region” (Xinhua net 22 April 2011).*
- African and Chinese media must tell the real “story of China”, the "story of Africa" and the "story of China-Africa friendship" to the global audience (Chinese Ambassador in Kenya, 2013).

# Press coverage of Chinese engagement in Mozambique

- Positive/Negative/Cautious views of China in Mozambique, in Africa and the rest of the world

# General positive views

- Chinese are good/hard workers;
- China is an example for Mozambique and the rest of the undeveloped world in the struggle against poverty/hunger,
- China is a good partner than West which is jealous at the strengthening of Sino-African relations: non-interference; fulfilling of promises.

# Some positive views

- **China: the *former 'red bogeyman' is today, the salvation for his former Western detractors, G. Mavie, AIM, 15/10/2010:***
- **To Mavie, even if China was scorned by West [which is in economic crisis], today is helping them without any spite. The Chinese attitude [regarding the West] shows that this country is guided by Confucius values, who defended no revenge to our enemies!**



# China as an example to legitimize local politics

- Mavie: turning to Mozambique:
  - China [its achievement against hunger/poverty] is also a great experience to the people who are still suffering with hunger and poverty like the Mozambicans, which when our leaders like Armando Guebuza urges us to fight poverty, listen to him with scepticism.

# some negative views

- Generally related to illicit activities/bad behavior of Chinese companies/citizens: illegal exploitation of timber/sea resources/mistreatment of Mozambican workers/not-respecting of local laws; Low quality of Chinese infrastructures...
- **E.g.: Chinese also on trafficking of rhino's horn in Mozambique. *Not only on timber are living Hu Jintao compatriots*** (Mediafax, 20/03/2013).
- In April 2013 the rhino's was considered extinct in the LIMPOPO PARK . The Chinese are blamed.

# Timber exploration, one of the most controversial Chinese activities in Mozambique



# some negative views

- ***The Chinese are still continuing to humiliate Mozambicans (Canal de Moçambique, 6/09/2012):*** after beating/insulting/ giving low salaries to local workers, now they don't respect the police. This it was after two Chinese citizens beaten a Mozambican policeman.

Lei do Trabalho seis meses depois

# MITRAB arrasta os pés

A nova Lei do Trabalho, que tem como objectivo principal melhorar as relações entre os trabalhadores, empregadores e o Governo, bem como estimular investimentos e mais emprego, volta novamente para o centro da controvérsia, na base de muitas dores de cabeça e ataques de nervos. Em causa está a velha questão da contratação de mão-de-obra estrangeira, que dividiu profundamente o Governo, os empregadores e os sindicatos aquando da revisão daquele instrumento normativo.



Págs. 2 e 3

## Mozambican press cautious approach

- Even if it's 'better' than the West, China is also looking for Mozambican resources;
- What it's criticised is not the overall Chinese presence but the attitudes of some companies/Chinese citizens, most of the time **in cahoots with local authorities.**

## Press reactions to Frelimo's criticisms of Chinese negative views

- **Who's afraid of China?**, Savana, 26/08/2011
- “...Today, all those who have a critical view of our relations with China, questioning actions and situations that are harming national interests, are criticized by those who are very enthusiastic about Chinese engagement; most of them are looking only with their own interests, which is mostly obviously different from the interest of ordinary Mozambicans ... Mozambique can cooperate with every country in the world, as long as that brings benefits for all... Mozambicans have the right to show their indignation when their natural resources are exploited without any benefit [to them].

## Preliminary conclusions

- No clear difference between private and public press coverage of Chinese engagement in Mozambique;
- Difficult to differentiate between Chinese State actions and Chinese companies in Mozambique: when a Chinese company is involved in illicit activities it's China's as a whole or all Chinese's citizens who are blamed for it.
- Generally, China as a country and Chinese companies are welcome. Critics/concerns are related to what is viewed as harming local interests.