

# **MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY**



**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND PUBLIC MANAGEMENT**

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CHINESE GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS IN AFRICA: A  
CASE OF ZIMBABWE-CHINA BILATERAL ENGAGEMENTS FROM 2003-2015**

**BY**

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Dissertation submitted to the Department of Politics and Public Management in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Bachelor of Science in Politics and Public Management Honours Degree

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## **List of acronyms**

CHEC – China Harbour Engineering Company  
CATIC - China Aviation Technology Import-Export Corporation  
DRC - Democratic Republic of Congo  
ESAP - Economic Structural Adjustment Programme  
EU - European Union  
FDI - Foreign Direct Investment  
FOCAC - Forum on China-Africa Cooperation  
GDP – Gross Domestic Product  
IMF - International Monetary Fund  
LEP –Look East Policy  
MDC - Movement for Democratic Change  
ZANLA - Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army  
ZIPRA – Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army  
ZANU – PF - Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front  
ZAPU- Zimbabwe African People’s Union  
ZEDC - Zimbabwe Electricity Distribution Company  
ZESA - Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority  
ZIDERA - Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act  
ZIMASCO - Zimbabwe Mining and Smelting Company  
ZISCO - Zimbabwean

## **Abstract**

*The China-Africa relationship has been showing its frailties as build on capitalist matrices in nature, with China being a capitalistic sadist and Africa a masochist. Unlike the West which uses philanthropy a guise for their misanthropy, China has an economically palatable approach called investment, which bring more complication to the African polyandry dilemma (state of being caught in between the Capitalist giants and pseudo communist giants). The Zimbabwe-China engagement presents a dynamic opportunity to studying Chinese geopolitical interests in Africa; for Zimbabwe had to divorce the ever-controlling Western racist husband and marry the new scheming, calculating Eastern husband (China). One notices that despite the Zimbabwean government mongering the gospel of win-win situation with China, a closer scrutiny show otherwise, with China appearing to be benefiting enormously in Zimbabwe while the economically bed-ridden Zimbabwe gets crumbs. The Western principle of attempting to enforce human rights and the rule of law came to clash with the Chinese principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of its partners. The west has always said that it is willing to re-engage Zimbabwe but on the condition that it adopts certain reforms. The Zimbabwean government has attempted to enforce these reforms however failed as for example the 2015 civil service rationalisation was done as stipulated by the IMF and the WB; however this failed to scoop favours for the country from the West. China remains watching silently and has not been forth coming in giving financial aid to the Zimbabwean government in its attempt to repay the debts owed to the WB and IMF. Zimbabwe becomes an epitome of the clash of 'capitalisms' in Africa.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

China has shown considerable interests in dealing with African states. These relations are premised on similar historical backgrounds of the struggle against imperialism. This research is an analysis of the geopolitical interests of the Chinese in their dealings with African countries using Zimbabwe as a case study. The Zimbabwean government has since the turn of the millennium shown considerable interests in dealing with China through its Look East Policy. The study investigates the reasons behind the China-Zimbabwe engagement and evaluate whether Zimbabwe has or can benefit from these engagement.

### **Background to the study**

China-Africa relations are a complex and have drawn considerable attention as China has occupied centre stage in global politics challenging the United States of America and Europe who had, of late uncontested monopolised global influence. In the case of Africa, the Western countries have since colonisation enjoyed influence in Africa; however the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a lot of African countries frequently engaging with China with the thought that China would help the continent's development process. Ampiah and Naidu (2008) noted that China is apparently overtaking the positions that have been monopolised by the United States of America and European countries in Africa. China has shown interests in dealing with African countries that are rich in minerals through diplomatic support; investing and giving aid to the governments in exchange for access to natural resources.

Sino-African relations have attracted reactions from various academic sectors. Timberg (2006) argued that the Zimbabwean media often sees China as having taken the Western powers place. Duddy (2010) contends that in Namibia the minister of Trade and Industry is reported to have lashed out at foreign SMEs because Chinese corporations are seen as not adhering to Namibian tax, labour, investment, and various other laws .Amadilha (2012) however noticed that the presidents of the two countries have been more than positive about Chinese engagements, with the Namibian president quoted saying: "We will always be grateful to China for the support extended to our struggle and for standing firmly with us in our current efforts towards economic and social development" and Zimbabwean government calling the Chinese 'all weather

friends' (Weidlich 2007). There are paradoxes in the China-Africa relations.

Eisman (2005) observed that the interaction between China and Zimbabwe started back in 1979, during the Rhodesian Bush War. The Soviet Union supported ZAPU, led by Joshua Nkomo and supplied them with arms while Robert Mugabe's ZANU got support from the Soviet Union's rival Beijing who met in a January 1979 and affirmed their intent to cooperate closely. The official diplomatic ties were established in 1980 however, Zimbabwe maintained its relations with the West and kept closer ties with the United States of America. The turn of the century saw a turn in the political and economic dispensation in Zimbabwe and its diplomatic relations with the West crumbled paving way to vigorous engagements with China through its Look East Policy.

Zimbabwe-China bilateral engagements have always been based on well calculated geopolitical strides by China. Hilsum (2007) wrote that the beginning of China Africa relations was premised on China's need for a proxy to confront western powers, and later to curb the influence of the Soviet Union. Its support for ZANLA was partly to counter Soviet support for ZIPRA. Hilsum also noted that the Chinese Ambassador Zhou Yuxiao in Harare once told the Financial Times that Zimbabwe was a commonly discussed problem and that they were aware of the crisis. China has economical interests in Zimbabwe's resources as Hilsum continued to point out that currently the Chinese interests are commercial and diplomatic. The study investigates Zimbabwe-China engagements in order to ascertain the sustainability of their bilateral engagements.

The Zimbabwean government adopted the LEP in 2003 as a response to a failing economy and against the sanctions imposed on the government by the Western powers. At the turn of the millennium Zimbabwe was faced with grave economic and political challenges. The time was characterized by a critical meltdown of the economy within an overwhelmingly unstable political topography. Mandaza (2005) noted that due to the deteriorating economic environment and a debilitating human rights record, Zimbabwe's traditional aid donors and traditional allies from the west began to disengage from the country, withdrawing their commercial and political support. Zvayi (2005) argued that in the midst of Western isolation and sanctions on Zimbabwe, China increased its interests in Zimbabwe; this was mainly because of China's non-intervention in

the domestic policies of its partners. The Chinese policy of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of its partners crushed Western attempts to exert pressure on the Zimbabwean government for political and economic reforms. China, thus stood as a ‘messiah’ and offered both economic and political support in various forms to Mugabe’s administration, providing several trading arrangements, aid, loans and prospective future investments. The government of Zimbabwe reciprocated by giving China access to natural resources and retail licences to Chinese manufacturing companies to trade their goods in the country. The study examines the nature of China’s geopolitical interests Vis a Vis its increased engagements with Zimbabwe and explores the impact of these engagements have on the politico-economic development of the country from 2003-2015.

### **Statement of the problem**

The study sought to explore China’s geopolitical interests in Africa and particularly in Zimbabwe. The study sought to unravel whether China’s interests in Zimbabwe were developmental or exploitative.

### **Objectives of the study**

- ✓ To examine the Chinese geopolitical interests in the context of Zimbabwe-China bilateral relations.
- ✓ To examine the methods used by China in its engagements with Zimbabwe and other African countries.
- ✓ To evaluate challenges associated with the China-Zimbabwe engagement
- ✓ To assess what needs to be done by Zimbabwe to achieve political stability and economic growth through its engagement with China.

### **Research Questions**

- ✓ What are the Chinese geopolitical interests in the context of the Zimbabwe-China bilateral engagement?
- ✓ What are the methods used by China in its engagements with Zimbabwe and other

African countries?

- ✓ What are the challenges associated with the China-Zimbabwe engagement?
- ✓ What needs to be done by Zimbabwe to achieve political stability and economic growth through its relations with China?

### **Justification of the study**

The current China-Africa relations have attracted considerable scholarly interest, nonetheless, Zweig and Jianhai (2005) have arguably noted that studies of Chinese foreign policy with Africa mainly focus on China's interests in Africa's natural resources especially oil in countries such as Angola, Nigeria and Sudan as well as a plethora of other natural resources on the continent. The research noted that some scholars have written on China's support on the Zimbabwean government when it was turned into a global pariah by the Western countries, few have taken notice of the current growing differences, complaints and tensions from both countries and the failure of the Zimbabwean government to ameliorate its economic woes through engagements with China.

China has become an influential player in the International system thus one would expect her to help her partners to achieve basics like good governance, economic stability and the rule of law. On the contrary, China claims to strongly conform and abide to principles of sovereignty and non- interference in domestic affairs of its partners. Zimbabwe is a case of impingement between China's non-intervention policy and the international prescriptive expectations on the Chinese government. The understanding of how China's policy of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of its partners and the 'supposed' international responsibility is affecting Zimbabwe and Africa at large is of importance to this research. The contact of these factors, juxtaposed with an unrelenting, and haunting economic downfall and growing repression in Zimbabwe justifies why digging deeper, dichotomising and exploring the ongoing close state of affairs between the two countries is epochal.

This study will help to understand the impact of external actors armed with different and conflicting agendas and expectations on a developing country's economic and political

dispensation. China's contribution through government-government aid, investments and its diplomatic support in international forums will be the pillar of assessment in this study. Thus, the study will greatly contribute to the policy faculty as it will crystallize how the two countries engagements have impacted the political and economic dispensation in Zimbabwe from 2003-2015. More, so the study will significantly contribute to the existing literature on China-Africa relations with bias to China Zimbabwe bilateral engagements.

### **Theoretical framework**

The study of international relations can be understood using a lot of theories, however for the purposes of this study only three theories will be used namely Realism, world systems theory and power and dominance theory. The world systems theory propounded on by Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) suggests that there exist an economic system in which rich countries exploit the poor countries. The theory is premised on three hierarchical structures in which countries are divided into the core, periphery and the semi-periphery. According to Hurst (2003) the core countries are rich capitalist who exploit the periphery for labour and raw materials. The core countries have strong military power and are not dependent on any one country. Kardulias (1999) noted that in the modern day discourse the world systems theory has only the core and periphery and in this case the periphery is classified as underdeveloped countries that export raw materials to the core countries and are dependent on these countries for capital as their industries are underdeveloped. Zimbabwe can be classified under the periphery countries and China as the core.

The trade between Zimbabwe and China has taken the form of barter trade with Zimbabwe giving China minerals and natural resources in return for finished products. Chinyama (2015) points out that the economic interaction take the form of barter trade, where Zimbabwe accepts the Chinese assistance in return for ceding control of certain minerals or agricultural crops due to the cash-crisis facing the country . University of Zimbabwe political scientist Anthony Hawkins argued that Zimbabwe is ultimately the loser in this case because the country has to forgo future foreign currency earnings because of this barter system. Despite these economic and political relations with the world's second superpower, the Zimbabwean economic crisis continues unabatedly. Matahwa (2007) postulated that it is now clear that Zimbabwe is heavily indebted to

China and for immediate assistance Zimbabwe has promised future proceeds from its natural wealth. Thus China stands to manipulate Zimbabwean resources.

The theory of political realism in international relations holds that states are the main actors in the international system and ultimately guided by national interests and state survival (Morgenthau (1948). Smith et al (2008) argued that states pursue self interests of which the primary aim is to achieve military power. Realists believe that states in the international system operate in an anarchic environment as Reynolds (1992) opines that there is no higher and sovereign authority in the international system to regulate states behaviour. China-Zimbabwe relations are a true reflection of the realist theory at work. The Zimbabwean crisis became the ground on which international values and interests clashed as different geopolitical powers attempted to have their way on Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe engaged China to affirm its sovereignty in an anarchical global environment.

More, so the Western countries and USA castigated the Zimbabwean government as they claimed that the government was abusing human rights and that there was no rule of law. Sachikonye (2008) is of the view that during the crisis period, issues of democracy, human rights and the rule of law became the main reference of Western criticism of the Zimbabwean government. The Zimbabwean government not bowing interpreted this as a breach of sovereignty as Mugabe, cited by Hove (2012) “if the choice were made, one for us to lose our sovereignty and become a member of the Commonwealth or remain with our sovereignty and loose the membership of the Commonwealth, I would say let the Commonwealth go”. Deng (1998) noted that the Chinese did not consider the Western values in its relationship with Zimbabwe. Having a realist approach at mind, the Chinese confined itself on the policy of non-interference in the country’s internal and political issues. The Zimbabwe-China relationship thus is based on realist grounds as the Zimbabwean government engaged China with the idea that the engagement will be beneficial to its aims and values while China also ignored the Western principles but chose non-interference to benefit from its engagements with Zimbabwe.

The study also used Michel Foucault’s power and dominance theory to scrutinise Chinese engagement in the Zimbabwean economical terrain. The theory endorsed that there are three



primary models in which a nation can express its power within the domestic political sphere and globally; through sovereignty, government and discipline. The main thrust of Foucault's theory is that states use concocted schemes and fora to achieve and maintain global geopolitical dominance. Foucault (1980) concurred that power can be seen as multidirectional, impersonal and strategically subject-less but this is clear diversion for dominion. The study used Foucault's theory to underline that China –Zimbabwe relations are a result of China's strategic manipulation of various events, mechanisms and structures to tap into the Zimbabwean natural resources and expand its global hegemony.

Foucault's power and domination theory was selected for its broadness. China uses different state apparatuses like SOE's and aid to subjugate and exploit Zimbabwe. Dillion (1995) agreed that the main composition of a state is dynamic and plural mechanisms of diplomatic dogmatism for the perpetuation of political subjectivity which then calibrates to other states. The Chinese have used soft power in its engagements with Zimbabwe; this was done through the promise of aid with no strings attached. Foucault (2000) also draws on the idea that there is global governmentality or global politics. The study bases on this argument that China-Zimbabwe relations can best be understood in this vein. The Chinese have well oiled diplomatic machinery for dominance and Africa has been on the receiving end. On the other hand the African countries and Zimbabwe specifically have used their engagements with China to circumvent Western pressure and domination. Zimbabwe is attempting to redefine its global position by defying the West while China engaged Zimbabwe to gain more power and geopolitical dominance.

Foucault is the proponent of bio-politics or bio-power which he described as a technologically structured power, invented by states for their self serving reasons, encompassing various techniques and can be deployed amenably by any states and non-state entities and exported as expertise. The Chinese aid and investment is a product of her self interest and thus they dwarf the bio-power of the receiving state.

Foucault's framework of power and dominance complements the World Systems theory as well as the realist theory because it acknowledges the existence and influence of non-state actors as a tool for international domination. Moyo (2014) argues that the new Chinese model of

development is anchored in state capitalism as compared to Western private capitalism, De-emphasised democracy while the West and US shout liberal democracy, China has prioritised economic rights despite the West calling for the prioritisation of political rights. The Chinese are paving a new dimension in global politics through the undermining of Western and US models of development and interstate engagements as Thiele (1986) argued that where there is power resistance is always its companion. Foucault (1980) contends that the effectiveness of power is not always in the use of force but rather in setting up instruments of domination that are tolerable and efficient. China's modus operandi is a counter to the West as it paints its self in the image of a non-aggressive-development oriented partner, in order to enlarge and strengthen its geopolitical interests.

### **Methodology**

The researcher will use the qualitative research methodology in data collection which is about investigating, understanding phenomena and answering questions. The research seeks to understand the China-Africa relationship within the context of the Zimbabwe-China relations by exploring assorted issues of fundamental interaction between the two countries in a bid to discover answers for the above mentioned questions.

### **Desktop Research**

Desktop review of academic material will be done due to the nature and methodological dimension of the study. This method is best for the gathering of China-Africa and China Zimbabwe information. Crouch and Housden (2003) noted that the desktop research involves the summary, collection and synthesis of existing research literature rather than primary research, in which data are collected from, for example, research subjects or experiment. The study will rely on secondary sources of information like newspaper articles, political and economic magazines, academic journals, video clips and political speeches by government officials. The researcher will review published and unpublished literature as well as reports obtained from the government of Zimbabwe as secondary sources.

The researcher will also utilise the process tracing method in a bid to underline connection

between the Chinese geopolitical interests in Africa and Chinese engagement in Zimbabwe as well as the outcomes and experiences in Zimbabwe's political and economic topography.

### **Assumptions and Limitations of the Study**

The study is premised on the assumption that Zimbabwe-China relations can yield positive and beneficial results to Zimbabwe if major changes are made to the approach used by the Zimbabwean government when making its foreign policies. China used soft power in its engagement with African countries and this was convenient for countering Western influence. The research assumes that if Zimbabwe does not re-engage with the West it will find itself with a stand-off with the West and East. The research assesses the impacts of the China-Africa engagements within the context of Zimbabwe-China bilateral relations. Zimbabwe engages China through its LEP; the main limitation therefore, would be the unavailability of the main tenets of the LEP.

### **Delimitation's**

The research mainly focuses on the Chinese geopolitical interests in Africa with particular attention on Zimbabwe-China bilateral relations from 2003-2015.

### **Conclusion**

The research seeks to analyse the geopolitical interests of the Chinese in Africa, in the case of Zimbabwe-China engagements. The main thrust of the research is to find out what inspired and strengthened the relationship between the two countries as well as evaluating the sustainability of China-Zimbabwe engagement.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **BACKGROUND TO CHINA-AFRICA RELATIONS AND CHINA -ZIMBABWE RELATIONS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter develops the literature on the history and development of the China-Zimbabwe bilateral relations. The chapter unravels and untangle the developments that led to the economic and political collapse as well as the diplomatic impasse between Zimbabwe and the West.

#### **Background to China-Africa Relations**

China-Africa engagements are not a new occurrence, the relationship dates back to the pre independence era. According to FOCAC (2010) after the achievement of its independence in 1956, Egypt became the first African country to establish formal diplomatic relations with China. The sequential independence of many other African countries raised the number and by 1978 China had diplomatic connections with almost forty countries, (FOCAC, 2010). This became the foundation of China-Africa engagements; the relationship with most countries grew slowly and intensified in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Cold War was also a major contributor as many African countries were being shaped up and hence China and the Soviet Union attempted to counter Western influence in Africa. Xing and Shaw (2013) are of the view that the relationship between China and Africa is premised on the grounds of ideological similarity and similar historical accounts as the Chinese suffered under the brutish hand of the British during the Opium Wars in 1841-43. Xing and Shaw also noted that like Africa China was thus ‘divided by Western powers as ‘spheres of interest’ and was ‘caved up like a melon’. This created a certain link and sharing of the victim mentality and hence leading to Chinas involvement in the fight against imperialism in Africa.

The Bandung Conference which was held in 1955 became the landmark event in the China

Africa discourse. Judith Van de Looy (2006) noted that the meeting was attended by 29 Asian and African states with the sole purpose of promoting political, economic and cultural relations between the two continents. Judith van de Looy continues to note that the thrust of the meeting was to discuss colonialism, imperialism and the hegemonic position of the Western powers. Larkin (1975) posits that

*“During the conference, China and the African states adopted the five principles of Peaceful Coexistence. These covered (1) mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; (2) mutual non-aggression; (3) non-interference in each other’s internal affairs; (4) equality and mutual benefit; and (5) peaceful coexistence..”*

The conference became the ground on which the current China-Africa relations are based and African countries started to show interests in dealing with China by establishing formal diplomatic ties with China.

Technical support, financial support and academic support earmarked the presence of the Chinese in Africa .According to Servant cited in Chigora and Chisi (2009) The Chinese presence in Africa was typified by technical personnel as thousands of doctors and more than 10,000 agricultural engineers were sent to places that had experienced the bitter part of the Cold War. Cooperation was also noticeable in the military sphere as Chigora and Chisi argued that between 1955 and 1977 China sold more than \$142 million weapons to Africa. Chigora and Chisi also argue that China played a central part in educational improvement of the African populace as about 15,000 African students have managed to study in China since the achievement of independence .China-Africa relations have drawn considerable academic, political and global attention, the drive behind much attention is the different approach used by China in its engagements with African countries and also due to the way the West has despised Chinese methods. China has denied claims that it has a policy specially crafted for Africa; it holds that, unlike the West they have no agenda in Africa but they are merely engaging Africa on a clean slate to push for development of the continent with no hidden agendas.



Overlapping the parallel ideological retrospect between China and Africa De Villiers, (1976) argues that China's first successful breakthrough was in East Africa where it gave voluminously generous aid for the construction of the Tanzanian railway line between the newly independent states of Tanzania and Zambia in which after the great entrance China continued with infrastructural development in a number of African countries. De Villiers continued to trace China into West Africa where it was given tenders to build stadiums, clinics and other infrastructural projects. Chigora and Chisi (2009) concurred that by early 1970's; the position of the West and Soviet Union in Africa was dwindling drastically as a result of China's onslaught.

The research notices that during the mid-1970's cooperation between China and Africa was based on concreting solidarity between two continents that belonged to the same historical spectrum and shared the 'under-developed' tag. The attention shifted in the 1980s as noted by Looy (2006) that during the 1980s, Africa became less important for China as it sought international recognition from Washington and Moscow and intensified Chinese contact with both countries to promote economic development. This is because during the earlier stages of most African states independence China was still a recuperating geopolitical toddler, ambitious but cautious not to provoke the Western powers. Kanza (1975) opines that from 1966 to 1969, Chinese attention towards Africa was diverted due to domestic problems, nonetheless after internal disputes had been settled; China began to concrete old relations and establishing new relationships in the African continent. The research found out that China's relationships with most African countries remained silent after the achievement of independence like Angola, Namibia, Malawi and Zimbabwe as the Western powers were keenly involved and sought to infiltrate the African ideological systems.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a renewal of these relations and rigorous engagements between Africa and the Chinese through the conference held in Beijing in 2000 where over 40 African countries were represented. The revived interests of China-Africa engagements were inspired by three major developments (a) Chinese growth into a global power, (b) Chinese thirst for natural resources to maintain its geopolitical position (c) Africa's disgruntlement with Western influence in the Continent and/or their failure to cover debts owed to the West and Western International

institutions. The rise of Chinese geopolitical interests in Africa was greatly felt and much emphasised when China engaged Sudan, a country rich in oil but which had been castigated and turned into a global pariah by the Western countries and the United States of America. China continued to engage other mineral rich countries like Nigeria, Angola, Somalia, Zambia, DRC, Zimbabwe and many more. The 21<sup>st</sup> century saw into China being the second largest trading partner to Africa.

### **The history of Zimbabwe-China relations.**

The recent growth of the Chinese economy and its geopolitical influence has attracted considerable scholarly and political attention; nonetheless the relationship between Zimbabwe and China can be traced back to pre-colonial times. Manyeruke, Mhandara and Nyemba (2013) traced the relationship between China and Zimbabwe back to over 600 years ago during the Ming and Qing dynasty when the Chinese established relations with the Munhumutapa Empire based on trade and cultural exchange. Taken from that period, the current China relations cannot be properly understood as there was no Peoples Republic of China and the CCP then. The current vigorous engagements between the two countries can nonetheless be tracked to the Liberation struggle in Zimbabwe as noted by Eisenman (2005) who argues that the interaction between China and Zimbabwe stretches back to 1979, during the Rhodesian Bush War.

The evident footprints of the Chinese dragon were left when she supported Zimbabwe in the early 1960's after the splinter of ZANU from ZAPU which was supported by the Soviet Union; ZANU attempted to get funding from the Soviet Union but was rejected. The Soviet Union supported Zimbabwe African Peoples Union led by Joshua Nkomo and supplied them with arms while Robert Mugabe's ZANU got support from the Soviet Union's rival (Beijing) culminating in a January 1979 meeting in which both sides affirmed their intent to cooperate closely. Zimbabwe created official diplomatic ties in 1980, to maintain its relations with China while at the same time closely tied to the West and the USA. Mugabe relied on the West for financial support and on China for ideological comradeship, (Alao 2007). One can thus argue that this shows that Mugabe's commitment to China in the 21<sup>st</sup> century was not really out of his ideological astuteness but rather an alternative option made after being cornered and losing

internal legitimacy.

China remained a recognised ally to the Zimbabwean government but not a major contributor in FDI and military support until the turn of the century when the Zimbabwean government succumbed to the controversial Fast Track Land Reform Program due to internal pressure from the War Veterans. Bond (2009) notes that after Zimbabwe was subjected to ESAP, a declining economy and internal dismay and conflict due to the rise of the new opposition politics and disgruntlement of the War Veterans, the ZANU PF government resorted to the FTLRP to secure its position. The FTLRP however soured its relations with the West and USA as most of the white commercial farmers who lost land were from those countries and they regarded the program as a violation of human rights. The Internationalist Communist Tendency (2006) published that in response to the raised violence motions to suspend Zimbabwe from International Institutions like the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and even the Commonwealth were raised. The USA congress passed the ZIDERA in December 2001 in an attempt to push for political and economic reforms in Zimbabwe (Chigora and Chisis 2007). This led to Zimbabwe to look around for survival.

Zimbabwe was isolated internationally, aid from the West was cut, diplomatic ties soured ; cornered Zimbabwe turned once again to its former friend and sought assistance from China for its survival. It emerged that by the same period China had already shown considerable interests in Africa and was re-establishing itself as a powerful force in the global economy thus the relationship was recuperated, reincarnated and cemented with the Look East Policy on Zimbabwe's side and the FOCAC on the Chinese side. 2003 marked the reincarnation of the Chinese Dragon in Zimbabwe, trade, weapons and diplomatic assistance has frequented their engagements ever since the announcement of the LEP.

### **Tracing the Zimbabwean Crisis**

Independence brought a new government in Zimbabwe in the form of a majority government elected by the populace. The government gave hope for a better post-colonial state, not only to the local populace but also to the international community and former coloniser, (Britain) as

Mugabe quoted by Johnson And Sampson (1995) had said on his reconciliatory speech ‘If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today I have become a friend and ally. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds us together’. Zimbabwe became what Julius Nyerere called the ‘Jewel of Africa’. Richardson (2005) noted that during the early years of independence Zimbabwe was one of the promising African states with plentiful natural resources, productive agricultural sector and a strong compliment of human resources. Thus the most prominent question one could be having is how such a country experienced a dramatic turn, better explained by what Desmond Tutu in 2008 called ‘an unfortunate turn from Africa’s bread basket to a basket case itself’.

The euphoria that came with independence was short lived as the government was yet face a more gruesome struggle for survival. With the debts inherited from the Smith regime and an unstable political terrain Zimbabwe was yet to undergo a more taxing struggle than it had imagined. According to Jubilee Dept Campaign (online) the Zimbabwean government inherited US\$ 700 Million debt from the Smith regime, loans were given by the West and with them Zimbabwe was forced to liberalise the economy however it did not work as by 1991-97 economic growth fell and unemployment doubled. According to Dansereau (2005)

*The Zimbabwean crisis was a result of the failure of an internal-based and an externally driven one. This left the government with an unstable economy with unprecedented debt and harsh loan conditions and mostly with no capacity to mitigate inflation, rising poverty, unemployment and hunger for land. The government was then left with an increasingly vociferous labor groups who continued to face deteriorating real wages. Government’s lack of response to their problems eventually turned their dissatisfaction to resistance and then opposition.*

The Zimbabwean crisis was a result of domestic and external factors. The debt inherited from the Smith regime forced the government to engage the IMF and the WB for loans. This had a negative effect of accumulative debt forcing the government to remain indebted to the

international institutions. When the government had failed to pay the debt aid was cut and this was not good for the economy and further fuelled the crisis.

The internal problems faced by the government led to the birth of internal opposition to government policies and the government responded by the use of force to quell the civic movements and opposition parties. This government response exacerbated the situation and led to socio-economic problem that have cast a dark spell over Zimbabwe as summarised by Makumbe (2003) as quoted by Olaleye (2004) noted that the:

*‘Breakdown of the rule of law resulting in many cases of human rights abuse and denial of access to justice for the victims; promotion of the political culture of fear and the negation of the democratic ethic, which have in turn resulted in increased level of apathy on the part of the majority of the people; humanitarian disasters of various kinds, such as displacement of more than six thousand people from their rural home during the 2000 election campaign, and well over 70 000 during and after the presidential election in 2002; A collapse of social sector with health and education institutions failing to measure up to the expected standards of service delivery; a chronic shortage of foreign currency, fuel and many other imports that are necessary for the manufacturing industry, the mining industry, commerce and agriculture; capital flight, withdrawal of official development assistance and the drying up of foreign investment resulting in rapid shrinking of the economy; and soaring unemployment currently estimated to be higher than 70%, which contributes to an already unfortunate and unacceptable level of poverty with some 80% of the population living below the poverty datum line is the Zimbabwean crisis’*

Thus the Zimbabwean crisis is a mixture of colonial inheritance, political, economical, social,

and diplomatic factors that together became what became a long seated and deep rooted situation haunting Zimbabwe for almost two decades, to date.

### **Economic Instability**

In addition, the country's economy faced a critical downfall over the same period as shown by worsening macroeconomic indicators and continued decay of industrial production. Hanke (2009) reported that between 2000 and 2008, Zimbabwe's national economy contracted by as much as 40 percent, as inflation rose from about 25 percent in 1997 to 231 million per cent in July 2008. Foreign direct investment dwindled from US\$400 million in 1998 to less than US\$30 million in 2008 while unemployment rose to more than 90 per cent by July 2008. There were serious shortages of foreign currency, fuel, and other basic supplies from the formal market that further strained the country's economy. The study seeks to establish the reasons behind the economic decline in the midst of cosy engagements between China and Zimbabwe.

Moreover, the decline of Zimbabwe's socio-economic structures also led to a health crisis in Zimbabwe as many hospitals were closed and there was no medicine in the country. The education system was also hit harder as many schools were closed down and universities for long periods in 2007-8. Kovacs (2012) noted that the break of socio-economic structures and economic structures, combined with violence and repression describe what is normally been called the 'Zimbabwean crisis. These events are the pillars of assessing the impacts of the China-Zimbabwe relationship in ameliorating Zimbabwe from its economic and political crisis and China's real interests in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe's involvement in the DRC war was another taxing factor to the Zimbabwean economy and contributed greatly to the crisis. Raftopoulos and Mlambo (2009) noted that the cost of the DRC war was a major contributive factor to disgruntlement of the people and the decline of the economy. Brett (2004) noted that in 1998, Zimbabwe engaged in a ruinously expensive military expedition in the DRC which was funded by printing more money and borrowing from the domestic banking system. This made the crisis even worse as it clearly implies that the DRC military intervention combined the fiscal strain with the already crawling Zimbabwean economy.

Mashingaidze asserts that the DRC military venture drained at least US\$1 million per day, from the Zimbabwean fiscus. The DRC war broke the last straw on the Zimbabwean economy exacerbating the crisis

The grants given to the War Veterans by the government contributed greatly to the economic and financial crisis in Zimbabwe. Brett (2004) is of the view that faced by serious economic challenges and financial strains the Zimbabwean government made the situation even worse through the grants that were given to the former freedom fighters as this led to an unprecedented fall of the Zimbabwean dollar. Mambondiani (2007) opines that the payments given to the former freedom fighters by the government led to a Zimbabwean 'Black Friday' as the Zimbabwean dollar lost 17.5% of its value as compared against the US dollar. The grants given to the war veterans contributed greatly to the Zimbabwean crisis

In addition, the grants given to war veterans by the government had another effect; the West was significantly alerted by the spending and saw it as recklessness by a country that was facing economic and financial problems. Peter-Berriers (2002) concurs that the Western countries and funding agencies expressed concerns about the spiralling budget deficits and the violence that followed later on due to farm invasions. This made the Western countries and their institutions of financial to lose confidence and hence to withdraw their support to the Zimbabwean government. The withdrawal of the West led to an economic crisis in Zimbabwe.

### **Political Crisis**

The Zimbabwean political topography has since the achievement of independence in 1980 was mired in political instability cause by political motivated violence and the abuse of human rights. The undertones of violence in Zimbabwe were exemplified by Mugabe (1976) cited in Meredith (2002) who clearly stated that:

*'Our votes must go together with our guns. After all, any vote we shall have shall have been the product of the gun. The gun which produces the vote should remain its security officer-its*

*guarantor. The people's votes and the people's guns are always inseparable"*

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) buttressed this when he noted that violence has always been in the ZANU PF's DNA as exemplified by the 1980's Gukurahundi Massacres that claimed more than an estimated number of 20 000 people from the Midlands and Matabeleland regions. Meredith (2002) opined that in December 1982 Mugabe attended a 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade Passing out Parade and gave a flag with the word *Gukurahundi* emblazoned on it and this state oiled machinery was responsible for the murder of more than 20 000 women, men and children who had no military affiliations. Meredith further noted that Mugabe; when told about the atrocities he told residents of Matabeleland that 'Don't cry if your relatives get killed ...Where man and women provide food for the dissidents, when we get there we eradicate them. We do not differentiate who we fight because we can't tell who is a dissident and who is not'. The *Gukurahundi* period had short term impacts and long term effects to the Zimbabwean crisis. The short term effects was the loss of development during the period and the long term effects are the covert tribalism which has been a driving force to underdevelopment in Zimbabwe.

In addition, the Gukurahundi's contribution to the Zimbabwean crisis was the covert dissatisfaction of most of the growth of what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2008) calls Ndebele particularism which he argued as being a product of coalescence of grievance and resentment to Shona triumphalism. This tribal divide had the effect of some Ndebele people viewing the Zimbabwean government which was dominated by Shona speaking people as bad and aiming to oppress them. *The Sunday Mail* a Zimbabwean newspaper on 20 November 2005 published Mugabe saying that Zimbabwe was one entity and could never be divided into the form of Lesotho as some people were applying for that. This shows that the political crisis in Zimbabwe is deep rooted and thus contributes to the crisis that Zimbabwe faced in 2003-2015 leading to its engagement with China.

The emergency of the MDC into the political space in Zimbabwe had serious political problems as the ZANU PF government had created a one party state and thus would not take competition lightly. Olaleye (2004) notices that the political crisis in Zimbabwe started to intensify with the



birth of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999 and this gave birth to the politics of ‘us’ and ‘them’ which became the mode of contestation. ZANU PF refused the opposition the ability to take overpower using whatever means deemed necessary. The Solidarity Peace Trust (2008) noted that Mugabe told people in his rallies that ‘you can vote for them (MDC), but there will never rule this country, never ever...’ Such statements bring sentiments of a political crisis where the vote of the people has lost value and such was the nature of the Zimbabwean political crisis.

In 2000 the war veterans became more vociferous and demanded land from the government. The demand by the war veterans came at a time when the government had failed to address the land issue and the economy was nose-diving into oblivion. Meredith (2002) articulated that Mugabe’s government had promised the people land in 1981 but was busy occupied with acquiring farms for top government officials, MP’s and security officials and by 2000 they had acquired only 8% of the land. According to Mvutungayi (2010) the increasing power and vibrancy of the war veterans set up a new drift for a radical land reform process which came face to face with a government that was dragging to respond to their demands. The period saw a lot of violence and major abuses of human rights which greatly caused instability in the country as the war veterans went about occupying farms that mainly belonged to white commercial farmers violently.

Meanwhile, This period became an opportune moment for Mugabe to use the war veterans for his political benefits against the opposition, as the opposition members became victims through being labelled as enemies of Zimbabwe and hence against the land reform. Raftopoulos (2004) postulated that the opposition was labelled as puppets of the West who sort to reverse the gains of the struggle hence legitimising the use of force against them. These trends describe the political crisis in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe’s political topography has been characterized by internal violence and megascopic human rights violations. Mudyandzo (2011) states that the June 2008 electoral outcomes, because of its unacceptability within the domestic body politics, destabilized the domestic political environmental and in turn this affected Zimbabwe’s regional and

International relations in particular with the Western countries who responded by tightening economic and travel sanctions leading to the Global Political Agreement, on the same line of thought Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) argues that political violence has always been in the DNA of ZANU PF and violence was mainly noticeable in the land reform processes and increased tremendously in the aftermath of the 2008 disputed elections. China disregarded these circumstances and tightened its engagements with Zimbabwe.

### **Diplomatic Impasse**

The Zimbabwean crisis brought about the diplomatic impasse, as Zimbabwe's traditional partners like the United Kingdom and America turned their back to the Zimbabwean government with accusations that the government was perpetrating violence and abusing human rights. According to Youde (2013) in 2002 the USA had assets freezes and 152 individual bans and four companies as well as an arms embargo on Zimbabwe, the EU also had similar restrictions to more than a hundred government officials, in 2003 George W Bush signed Executive Order 13288 blocking the assets of 77 Zimbabwean officials in response to the politically motivated violence in Zimbabwe. Brautigam, (2009) postulated that faced with a debilitating political situation and economic crisis due to the withdrawal of the West, Zimbabwe announced its LEP. The diplomatic relations that Zimbabwe had were severely injured and there is still hostility between Zimbabwe and Western countries and America. This gave a chance for Zimbabwe China relations to spring back to life in 2003 through the signing of the LEP.

### **The Look East Policy**

The LEP is the term used to describe the relationship of Zimbabwe with the Eastern countries. The policy was formally adopted by the Zimbabwean government in 2003 when it sought to redefine its foreign policy objectives for survival. The policy has dichotomous feelings and reactions; it has ambiguously drawn criticism and admiration both internally and externally. The admirers of the policy posit that it was a sign of political astuteness by the Zimbabwean government as it stood against the illegal economic sanctions imposed on the country by the Western countries while those against the policy hold that it is irrational and fails to realise the internal ills of the Zimbabwean government (Mudavanhu 2014), (Chung 2015). According to

Smith (2006) Mugabe when officially announcing the policy, exclaimed that “We look again to the East where the sun rises and no longer to the West where the sun sets”. The LEP thus became a response by the Zimbabwean government to the deteriorating relations with the Western nations and the USA.

Basically, the Look East policy was adopted by the Zimbabwean government in 2003 after the European Union had placed sanctions and travel embargoes on a number of top government officials and members of the ZANU PF party. Chabwinja (2014) argues that the Zimbabwean government adopted the LEP as a protectionist move when the West had sort to isolate the country not based on the cost-benefit analysis. The policy thus has serious implications on the economic developments as well as the political trajectory in Zimbabwe.

## **Conclusion**

The China focused on the historical background of China Africa relations and then the history of China-Zimbabwe engagement so as to trace the roots and reasons that led to the growth of their current engagements. The Chinese have been involved in Africa prior to independence of many Africa states with Egypt being the first African states to establish diplomatic ties with China and South Sudan being the last and youngest state to establish diplomatic ties with China. The Chapter also establishes how and when the Zimbabwean crisis began leading to its engagements with China and estranged relations with the West.

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CHINA'S AFRICA POLICY AND GLOBAL HEGEMONY AGENDA**

#### **Introduction**

China-Africa have been ambiguously interpreted, some label the relations as resource grab mission by China while some have seen China as a light shining in a distant horizon giving hope to the rich, yet poor continent (Africa). Sceptics of the relations have paralleled China's aim with those of the West in Africa during the colonial epoch. China is tagged as the new imperial power, seeking to recolonise Africa. This chapter focuses on the Chinese policy for Africa (the way China engages with African states) and also evaluates the Chinese activities in Africa in a bid to understand how China's policy for Africa is hinged on its global hegemony agenda.

#### **China's Policy for Africa and Global Hegemony Agenda**

The global system has been breached, the old model has been replaced and China has proven to be a worthy contender in the world circus. The Chinese influence in Africa has undeniably grown and this breeds different sentiments from the Westerners, African and the Chinese, blurring the China-Africa discourse in the process. Yi-Chon (2013) argued that maybe when China gets involved in Africa either through trade investments or foreign assistance it is either trying to colonise Africa or compete and undermine the influence of the West in African countries and therefore its behaviour must be identical to or even worse than, that of former colonial powers. Eisenman (2012) noted that the former South African President Thabo Mbeki in 2006 had this to say about China Africa relations "The potential danger, in terms of the relationship that could be constructed between China and the African continent, would indeed be a replication of that colonial relationship". Prah (2007) contends that Africa is benefiting a lot from its engagements with China . In the same line of thought Large (2008) postulated that China is a catalyst for Africa's development with a new level of improved livelihoods that had not been known in the continent for decades. According to Li (2010)



*‘To further the study of the general Sino–African relationship, we need to contextualise individual cases, meaning we should make sense of the connection between certain Chinese activities and the political economy of local society in Africa, connect Chinese dynamics to the African context and analyse the Chinese presence in well-grounded contexts. In other words, to accurately contextualise the Sino–African relationship, we need detailed and sustained empirical studies on the individual strands of the relationship, and it is also imperative that Chinese perspectives on this topic are taken into account...’*

The study stands on the ground that China has a policy for Africa and that its engagements with African countries stands to benefit China in its quest for global hegemony while at the same time the study acknowledges that the presence of the Chinese in Africa has had positive and negative impacts in different countries depending on the bargaining power that the country has when engagements with China are made.

The rise of China has impacted densely on the global society. Kristof (1993) wrote that ‘the rise of china, if it continues, may be the most important trend in the world for the next century. According to Li (2010) China has risen into a major player in the 21<sup>st</sup> century geopolitical and capitalistic terrain. The growth of china thus polarises the old model and challenges the dichotomous North-South gap into what Pieterse (2011) argued to be a shift from the old North-South axis into the new East-South turn. This growth of the Chinese has forced China to have a certain approach in its engagements with different foreign countries as it seeks to maintain its position in the global hegemony praxis.

Accordingly, the African continent has, as history bears, played host to yet another hungry global power. Scholars have argued that the relationship between Africa and the Chinese resembles that of Europe and Africa and the common denominator is Africa’s natural resources. Brooks and Shin (2006) are of the view that the reason for China’s engagement in Africa and increased

influence is to secure natural resources as well as to curb Western influence at the same time perpetrating China's global influence. Wang (2007) opines that the Chinese government have used internal state owned enterprises' backing to support its 'Going Global' strategy. China is moving towards a goal of driving in a new development dimension in the global scene; this was noted by Hui (2003) as growth oriented and market extremism and Harvey (2006) called it neo-liberalism with Chinese characteristics and taints of Maoism as further crystallized by Dickson (2003). Thus China has managed to position itself in the global village through its interactions with Africa.

In addition, in the pursuit of its foreign policy China uses soft power when engaging states. Power and Mohan (2010) argue that in its pursuit of a growth oriented strategy most of the African countries have drifted into the centre stage of China's foreign policy which is shifting from concerns with ideology to preoccupation with business. Nye (2004) postulated that China uses soft power to cajole client states into accepting Chinese deals and contracts. The aim of the Chinese is to grow into global hegemony and Africa has the resources to carter for China's hunger.

More over the frequent engagements between Africa and China warrants the existence of a supposed Chinese policy for Africa, which has been termed by Nordtveit (2009) as the Beijing Consensus, however China refuses that it has a policy specifically crafted for Africa. Nonetheless in its engagement with African states China claims to strongly respect the sovereignty of its partners as well as non-intervention in the domestic affairs of its partners. This is what Shambaugh (1994) coined as 'Xiaokang', meaning the creation of a moderately prosperous and harmonious socialist society, this ideology has informed the Chinese engagement with African states. According to Pambazuka News (2009) China has made relevance of both political and economic benefits and portrayed itself as an attractive economic partner and political friend to African governments, this was seen by African leaders as an alternative to the "Washington Consensus" and was termed the "Beijing Consensus", which in simpler terms mean support without interference in internal affairs.

China has well established structures to further its policy towards Africa; these institutions

function as the spring board on which Chinese geopolitical interests are fulfilled in Africa. These include the Chinese Communist Party organs, and State-Owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission which was formed in 2003 to supervise state-owned enterprises; China Export Import Bank and the China Development Bank which were given the responsibility to assist Chinese enterprises to expand their activities to overseas markets for access to natural resources and African markets, (Yi-Chong 2013), the China–Africa Development Fund established in 2007, this fund supports Chinese firms venturing into Africa; the Agricultural Development Bank was given the responsibility of agricultural financing in Africa (Cull and Xu 2003); China Investment Corporation founded in 2007 manages China’s foreign exchange reserves; China–Africa Business Council which was established in 2004 helps investors find partners; and triennial FOCAC meetings between Chinese and African leaders.(Raine 2009). These institutions serve the interests of the Chinese government and further its geopolitical interests in Africa.

The Chinese policy of non-intervention has been revered by some scholars and statesman while at the same time viewed by some as a clearly defined strategy courted with soft power to wheedle African countries that had prior been bruised by the West through the preaching of the gospel of democracy, rule of law and liberalism,(Gill and Huang 2006). Callahan (2010) pointed out that the Chinese principle of non-interference is informed by its former experiences of colonialism under Japan and the West during the century of humiliation. Armed with similar historical experiences and well calculated soft power China has engaged Africa to stretch its global and geopolitical influence.

China has ventured into global politics and global economics armed with new and well tuned Chinese-type capitalism which is premised mainly on the use of soft-power in its engagements with African countries. China realised the weaknesses of the Western countries and simply opened the opposite entrance into Africa’s natural resources. Alden (2007) concurs that soft power is part of China’s oil diplomacy in which the purported unconditional aid, low interest loans, and technical cooperation is given and King (2006) opines that in exchange for the aid and loans China gets deals over oil supply, engineering contracts and trade agreements from Africa. To give an example Corrado and Brock (2014) for In late 2004 the Chinese Export Import Bank

approved a USD 2 billion “soft loan” to Angola for infrastructure, with a low interest rate, at 1.5 percent over 17 years. However, one of the conditions is that only 30 percent of the construction work will be subcontracted to Angolan firms, leaving 70 percent of the work to Chinese firms. This kind of a scenario leaves Chinese nationals to benefit from the deals.

The growth of the Chinese population and economy has led to the attempt to create employment by the Chinese government. In Africa the Chinese government has used its bargaining power to create employment for its nationals, for example the Centre for Chinese Studies policy Briefing (2015) commenting on China Egypt relations noted that Egypt signed a US\$ 10 billion for the construction of a high-speed train line covering 900 km distance, the deal however established that Egypt will provide only 20 percent of the labour leaving 80 percent to Chinese nationals. Raine (2009) however believes that the Chinese have attempted to solve this situation as in 2008 the Buffelsfontein project in South Africa employed only five Chinese out of 1,000 workers. She also contends that in 2006 Zambia and China signed agreements to harmonize labour relations’. Corrado and Brock (2014), commenting on China-Angola relations argue that the local people are now resentful of the Chinese because they invest large amounts of money but no employment is created for the local people as Chinese nationals dominates the workforce. China’s interests in Africa are encompassed in creating employment for its nationals abroad in the expense of locals.

The trade between China and Africa is often critiqued for that it often takes the form of barter trade. The Chinese government and state owned enterprises use infrastructural development in exchange for the extraction of minerals. For example commenting on China-Angola relations, McGroarty (2015) pointed out that in 2015 the Chinese pumped in US\$6 billion for infrastructural development and power plants in exchange for the half of the 1.7 billion barrels of oil that would be mined by Angola for the next coming two years. McGroarty contends that China has been proactive in Angola and has had enormous deals with the Angolan government however the standard of the living for the masses has not improved. A closer scrutiny of the deal would establish that the Chinese stands to benefit much from the deals. This crystallizes the geopolitical interests of the Chinese in Africa as self-serving and biased towards China’s benefit.

Chinese aid to Africa is not a new occurrence, nonetheless what is eye catching is the extent at

which the aid has risen over the years. Zinyemba (2012) is of the view that China's model of development aid is unique in that it is palpably woven into its strategic economic interests in Africa'. Davies et al (2008) call the Chinese aid model a 'coalition of engagements'; whereby aid is seen to be one aspect of the state's collaborative business approach in the region. Zinyemba further asserts that the drivers behind Chinese aid allocation is no different from other donor countries when they chose recipients of their aid based on the donor interest aid model. The argument put forward by these scholars is that aid is given on the basis of national interests of the donor country in the recipient state. Lengauer (2011) noted that in order to understand Chinese aid one should put their economic and commercial interests first. The motives that drive the Chinese foreign aid policy towards Africa are largely driven by its own interests rather than the needs of the African states.

The increasing level of Chinese development assistance inflows to the continent gave rise to a plethora of scholars who have seen the lack of pushing for transparency as an attempt by the Chinese authorities to hide their real intentions. For instance Nour (2010) see China's aid as largely driven by economic considerations to secure resources as well as open up new markets for its investments and goods. Nour (2010) cites the tying of Chinese aid to Sudanese oil exports and investments as a clear indication of aid creating a channel for the siphoning of natural resources. Brautigam (2008) drawing on China-Ghana relations noted that the financing of Bui Dam hydro electric project in Ghana was made up of \$292m in commercial export credits at a commercial interest rate and \$270m as a concessional loan. This captures China's strategic interests in Africa. It could thus be argued that the Chinese forward their geopolitical interests by attaching long-term commercial loans with aid so that they maintain engagements and leverage their soft power with recipient states.

The Chinese government has a firm hand in the economy as well as in the administration of state owned enterprises and this enables the government to influence development assistance to the extent that it runs in tandem with the state's trade and investment interests. According to Zinyemba (2012) given the need for resources for its economic growth, the 'Go Global' strategy makes it possible for the state to use its aid to pursue its donor interests. The incorporation of state institutions and structures by the Chinese government puts the Chinese at a better standing

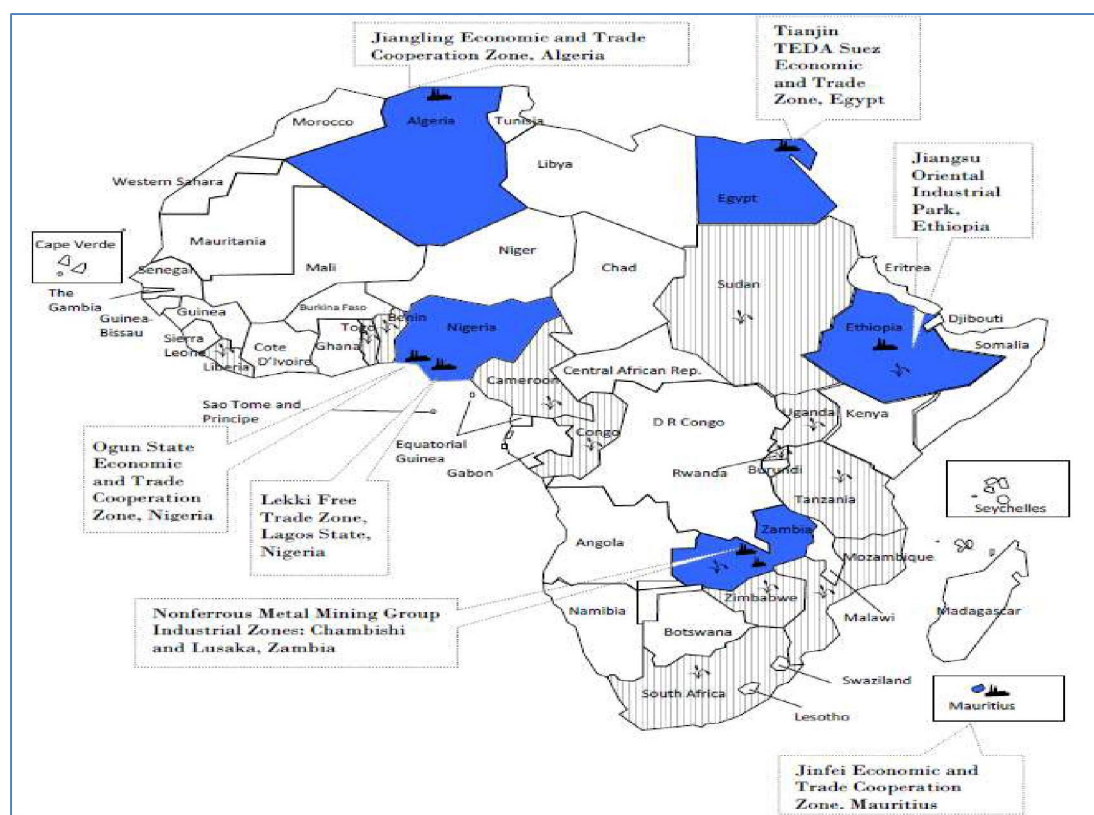
as compared to the West pertaining the maximisation and fulfilment of its strategic and geopolitical interests in Africa. Based on the ability to coordinate efficiently the Chinese government thus has an advantage to institutionally direct aid and investments to countries that are of strategic importance commercially and politically as well as diplomatically because it is the main shareholder in most of these SOE's in Africa and abroad.

The Chinese have established overseas zones strategically scattered around the continent. Alves (2001) posited that Chinese Economic and Trade Co-operation Zones (ETCZs) at the Beijing Summit in 2006 signalled a major shift away from a trade and investment focus, dominated by China's drive for resource security, to a more diversified form of engagement with Africa. Fig 1.0 shows the overseas zones established by the Chinese around Africa, the blue shaded states are where the Chinese has established industries which are basically strategically chosen or producing goods while the grey-stripped countries show Chinese interests not backed by ETCZ activities. Algeria to begin with is important for Chinese trade for its sea ports as the BRICS POST (2016) opined that in January 2016 the Chinese government through the China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) and China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) in Algeria, agreed to give USD\$ 3.3 billion dollars for the construction of the centre for trans-shipment 55 miles west of the capital Algiers. The port is central to the ability of the Chinese to ship their goods into Africa, thus the primary aim is to enable the Chinese to ship more of their goods into the continent. Nonetheless the Algerians will also benefit through infrastructural developments and the creation of employment.

More so, Egypt is an important part of the Chinese geopolitical expansion policy. Egypt is the mother of African civilisation and has shown and proven to be a stable development landscape. The Chinese have taken note of its strategic position in relation to the Arab nations and influence in Africa. Wenping (2016) argues that Egypt has been promoting China's relations with the African continent and Arab Nations. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (2016) concurred that China is Egypt's main trade partner, as trade between the two countries has reached USD 12.9 billion in 2015 and China's investment in Egypt cloaked USD 6 billion and the number of Chinese enterprises in Egypt exceeded 80 in 2015. Trade between the two countries however seem to be balanced as Egypt is benefiting through strategic engagements with the Chinese as

Winter, Orion and Lavi (2016) argued that Chinese trade and investment is vital for Egypt's economic growth and for creating employment. Winter, Orion and Lavi continued to outline that major deals signed between the two governments are 15 projects involving 100 Chinese companies, Chinese investments of \$15 billion, and 21 MOU's were signed for different developmental projects. Egypt seems to be benefiting from its engagements with the Chinese perhaps it can be used as a model for China Africa cooperation.

Figure 1.0. Chinese first overseas economic zones in Africa



Source: Brautigam, D 2010. *The Dragons Gift: The Real Story of China In Africa*. Oxford

The influx of Chinese products in the African market has deep rooted implications for the local production industry. According to Brautigam and Xiaoyang (2011) the influx of competitive Chinese products, small-scale Chinese traders, and Chinese labour in infrastructure projects is seen as a serious threat to African manufacturers, market vendors, and workers. Marysse and Geenen (2009) argue that there is no hope that the current China-Africa engagement will help the

continent achieve its long-term development goals. One can hold that Africa has become a dump site for Chinese cheap products and this can however have negative rather than positive impacts.

*China Outward Investments Deals in Africa compiled by The Heritage Foundation 2006-11 (table 1)*

Investor	Value (\$US millions or more)	Subsector	Country
Sinopec	730.00	Oil	Angola
Sinomach	500.00	Autos	Cameroon
Sinopec	540.00	Oil	Cameroon
CNPC	200.00	Oil	Chad
China Railway Engineering	1,190.00	Copper	DRC
MCC and Sinohydro	1,700.00	Copper	DRC
Minmetals	1,280.00	Copper	DRC
Export-Import Bank	3,000.00	Metals	DRC
CITIC and Chinalco	940.00	Aluminum	Egypt
Tianjin Development	200.00	Property	Egypt
Jushi Group	230.00	Other	Egypt
Bosai Minerals	1,200.00	Aluminum	Ghana
Sinopec	850.00	Gas	Ghana
Chinalco	1,350.00	Iron	Guinea
Wuhan Iron and Steel and China Development Bank	110.00	Iron	Liberia
CNPC	150.00	Oil	Madagascar
Taiyuan Iron consortium	750.00	Property	Mauritius
CNPC	4,990.00	Oil	Niger
China National Nuclear	190.00	Metals	Niger
China Railway Construction and China-Africa Development Fund	2,970.00	Construction	Nigeria
CNOOC	2,270.00	Energy	Nigeria
China Railway Materials	260.00	Iron	Sierra Leone
Shandong Iron	1,490.00	Iron	Sierra Leone



First Auto Works and CADF	100.00	Autos	South Africa
ICBC	5,600.00	Banking	South Africa
Jinchuan	1,360.00	Copper	South Africa
CIC	250.00	Investment	South Africa
SinoSteel	230.00	Steel	South Africa
Jinchuan Group and China Development Bank	230.00	Metals	South Africa
CITIC, China Development Bank, Long March Capital	470.00	Metals	South Africa
Sinochem	500.00	Agriculture	Sudan
CNOOC	1,450.00	Oil	Uganda
China Nonferrous	310.00	Copper	Zambia
China Nonferrous	300.00	Copper	Zambia
SinoSteel	100.00	Steel	Zimbabwe
Sinosteel	300.00	Metals	Zimbabwe
<b>38,290.00</b>			

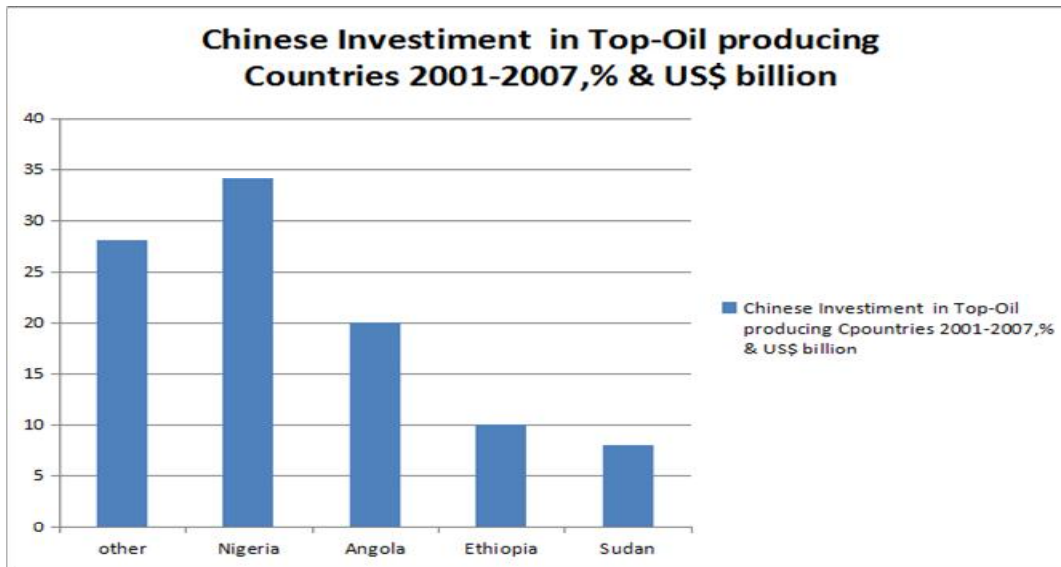
Source: The Heritage Foundation (2012) [China-Global-Investment-Tracker-2012](http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2012/01/china-global-investment-tracker-2012),(online)

Available at

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2012/01/china-global-investment-tracker-2012?query=china+global+investment+tracker:+2012> accessed on 21/06/2016

The Chinese SOE's have ever since the turn of the century played a role in Africa and as shown in fig 3 the investment in African resource sectors from mining to infrastructure was growing and today the investment stands in billions of US dollars. The Chinese are interested in the extraction of minerals in Africa. Africa supply China with natural resources and international support and as such aids its goals of maintaining its geopolitical position.

*Figure 1.3 Chinese investments in Africa's top-oil producing countries by 2007.*



Source: Golley J and Song L (eds) *Rising China: Global Challenges and Opportunities*. AUN E Press

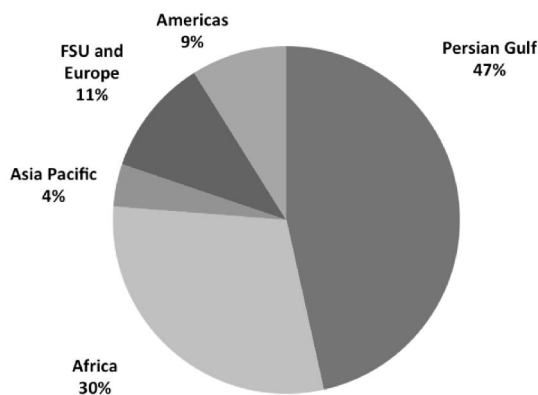
China-Africa relations have positive results as shown by the improvement of infrastructure and the improvement of technology in some African countries. Baah and Jauch (2009) articulated that, China's engagement with Africa today is based on a commercial agenda that aims to sustain rapid industrialisation and economic growth rates. According to Alden (2010) the Chinese engagements with Africa are an opportunity to benefit skills and technology transfer by the continent. Baah and Jauch are of the same view as they contend that aid, debt relief, scholarships, training and provision of technical specialists to African countries stands to benefit Africa in the long run. China's aid in Africa is pivotal in pushing forward development and fighting poverty. However on this note Lamido Sanusi, former Nigeria governor wrote in the Financial Times, as cited by Chen et al (2015) observed the Chinese have been seriously involved in mining, infrastructural development however they did this using equipment and labour imported from China, this has serious implications as there is no transfer of skills. The nexus between coloniser and the colonised is the transfer of primary goods from the colonised and bringing back finished goods. The image portrayed is that of a neo-colonial power attempting to benefit from Africa through its perpetuation of geopolitical interests.

It is imperative to note that the Chinese has also been giving aid and debt relief to African states

for the purpose of developing the continent. Yao (2006) contends that in 2005 China managed to establish more than 720 projects for Africa and in the education sector gave over 18,000 government sponsored scholarships as well as dispatching more than 16,000 medical workers who helped treat more than 170 million patients in Africa. Burgis and Wallis (2010) argued that in 2006 there were a total of 259 projects sponsored by the ExIm Bank in Africa. According to Wang and Bio-Tchane (2008) China has of late provided debt relief to African countries as in 2000 to 2002 it wrote off overdue debts amounting to 10.5 billion Yuan and in 2006 it cancelled over 10 billion Yuan to 33 heavily indebted and most underdeveloped African countries who have official diplomatic relations with China. Burgis and Wallis further articulate that the total number of debts that were cancelled is 168. Opeku-Mensah (2010) convicted that despite the Western criticism of China's realism oriented aid policy, the Chinese model has realigned the power relations in the conventional international aid system. China has managed to help African countries through development aid and by giving debt relief and the research note that perhaps the tainting of the Chinese image is being perpetrated by the West as they now have a serious challenger in the global stage.

The argument that China is involved in Africa for the purpose of the exploitation of oil reserves has been critiqued by Kennedy (2011) who noticed that the Chinese import most of their oil everywhere but not in Africa as only 30% is imported from Africa, 47% from the Persian gulf, 9% from the Americas, 11% from Europe and 4%. This then puts serious holes into the argument that China seeks to manipulate African oil as it is not solely reliable on African oil.

*Chinese Crude Oil imports by region in 2010*



*Note: The figures do not sum to 100 per cent due to rounding.*

*Source: Adapted from Kennedy A.B (2011) China's Petroleum Predicament: Challenges and opportunities in Beijing's search for energy security. In Golley J and Song L (eds) Rising China: Global Challenges and Opportunities. AUN E Press*

Chinese military presence in Africa has grown considerably and the relations are loaded with arms deals and defence initiatives. Chuka (2010) argued that recent Chinese military involvement in Africa takes fundamentally the route of selling Chinese arms, participation in UN peacekeeping operations, and defence of their oil investments and under heavy attacks in Africa's conflict zones. China is a major supplier of small arms and light weapons to Africa. Alden (2007) contends that military cooperation in the form of arms sales are parts of China's relations with African governments, especially those engulfed in civil wars and internal opposition which are barred from obtaining weapons and aid from traditional western sources. Alden traced these types of deals to Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and in Chad and Sudan.

According to Grimmett, (2008) China-Africa arms deals in 2003 reached USD 1.3 billion and China has been a major contender to the position formerly monopolised by Russia by delivering 13% of weapons to sub-Saharan Africa. Taylor (2006) argued that from 2004 to 2007, China's percentage increased to almost 18%, featuring the delivery of different army equipments. While Chinese supplies may not be the highest, Chinese weaponry has nevertheless proved to be significant in some Africa's bloodiest conflicts, where decades of civil wars have proved a market for foreign arms dealers. According to Brown & Sriam, (2008) the classic contemporary example of China's weapon-exporting policy in Africa is China's involvement in Sudan long war. Shinn, (2009) contends that in Sudan, China adopted a policy entirely founded on economic interest, and have supplied the Sudanese government with fighter aircraft and an assortment of weaponry. Alden, (2007) commenting Uganda argued that the Chinese have set up three small arms factories in Sudan that produce light weapons for use in the region as well as in Uganda. China aims to sell arms to conflict ridden countries in Africa and stands to make benefits from these dealings.

China-Africa relations and coordinated effort rely on upon correspondence and shared preferred standpoint. Similarly China benefits as African countries have supported China in retaining its seat in the United Nations. Consistently, Africa has emphatically maintained China's position on

issues concerning China's influence, and international image management interests. According to the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of South Africa (2008) China expressed its profound gratitude to the African continent during the Wenchuan earthquake in China in 2008, African countries crushed their own specific difficulties and dashed to China's assistance. In the meantime, the rich resources and prospective gigantic growth of African states has given China the ability to pay back through its engagements. China-Africa cooperation on infrastructure, resources and economic development, industrialization, trade and financing is fundamental for the development of Africa and perhaps the ideas that are being perpetuated that China seeks to exploit Africa are merely meant to tarnish relations.

The China-Africa relations have boosted Africa's bargaining power in its dealings with the international community. This is mainly because competition is always good for business as it increases the bidding offers. According to Weissenbach (2011) the African engagements with China have strengthened Africa's bargaining power as different actors will be coming in for deals with the continent. Feffer (2007) argues that China is increasingly seen as possessing a global status in the same vein that the US was an indispensable country. The impact of the growth of the Chinese has obviously challenged the positions that were monopolised by the West and the USA in Africa and this has a positive impact on Africa as different actors and approaches are brought into the continent. On a different viewpoint, Cornelissen et al (2012) contends that the effect of the growth of the Chinese can give rise to a new scramble for African resources and endanger Africa's international relations. The evidence seen from the above assessment is that Africa is benefiting from its engagements with China diplomatically and economically.

There is new literature developed by scholars who note that the depicted despicable and so called diabolic nature of China-Africa relations is a result of the Western sulking as the Chinese are closing space for them in African economical and political space. Chen, Dollar and Tang (2015) noted that it has been revealed that reveals that most of the concerns leveled against Chinese investments and the image of resource hunger as well as its disdain for good governance are not always well grounded. They also continue to postulate that the fact on the ground is that China FDI by the end of 2013 accounted for only 3% of the total FDI in Africa. According to the UNCTAD's (2015) the flow of Chinese FDI to Africa during 2013-2014 was 4.4% of the total of

the continent. The European Union countries, that is, France and the U K, are the largest investors in Africa. The U.S. is a considerable force, and even South Africa invests more on the continent than China (Chen, et al 2015). Based on the above founding the portrayal of Chinese influence is a result of propagandist perpetuation of a falsified version so that China loses its dominance in Africa.

The idea of the Chinese hunger for natural resources has been shunned by the Chinese as they have diversified their investments and even invested in countries that are not rich in natural resources. China also provides services and there are significant investments in infrastructural development and manufacturing sector. It is beyond doubt that when considering country-to-country engagements Chinese has invested everywhere as Chen Dollar and Tang argue that China invests in resource-rich countries like Nigeria and South Africa, but also in non-resource-rich countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. The study realize that if the Chinese model of investment was basically and totally profit oriented then the number and projects would be only in resource endowed countries.

## **Conclusion**

The Chinese policy for African countries is tied on its global hegemony agenda and has been largely for the beneficitation of China however Africa has also benefited through its interaction with the Chinese in terms of trade, technology, aid and a reliable market for their resources.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### CHINA IN ZIMBABWE

#### Introduction

This chapter delves into the literature on Zimbabwe-China bilateral relations in a bid to unravel the impact and the extent at which China is involved with Zimbabwe. The Chinese government has worked together with the Zimbabwean government in the mining sector, has given military support, invested in the country and boosting FDI, boosted the tourism industry and enormous trade deals have been made.

#### China in Zimbabwe

China has played a significant role in Zimbabwe, economically, financially, and diplomatically. Zimbabwe on the other hand has paid back by giving the Chinese access to natural resources and has further trumpeted the Chinese ideas to other African countries; this has put the country as a case of impingement between Chinese geopolitical interests and the Western countries beliefs of liberalism, good governance and the upholding of human rights. Chun (2014) wrote that

*“There are two equivalent interpretations of the relationship between China and Zimbabwe, it is often viewed as a microcosm of China–Africa relations due to its economic and resource elements; on the other, it is portrayed as an example of China’s support for a ‘pariah regime’ without any consideration of human rights and good governance...However, ... the China–Zimbabwe relationship is neither of these, but rather a possible model for China–Africa relations as a whole. Driven by the ‘Look East’ policy on the Zimbabwean side and the engaging policy supported by the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation on the Chinese side, this relationship has its own dynamic, development path and implications. This is mainly because of the recurring engagements with African states and its impact on the global economy.”*

China-Zimbabwe relations have developed over time into a distinct form of a relationship that has surpassed the mere natural resources interests into a global ideological war ground. China thus plays a pivotal role in Zimbabwe today than can be conceived in any African country.

The China-Zimbabwe engagements were concreted by the government at a time when the West had tagged Zimbabwe as a failed state (Rivero 2008). This raises questions on the legitimacy and affectivity of the engagements as concreted by the LEP, this is so because the government had no other option for its internal survival. Chigora and Chisi however believe that the LEP is an epitome of self-determination and Zimbabwe is a valid example of how African states should independently pursue their foreign policy. Chigora and Dewa (2009) posited that China-Zimbabwe engagement can prospectively turn around the Zimbabwean economy.

China has always shown political, economic and military support for the Mugabe's government. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2014), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (2004) from 2000 onwards elections had opposition voices silenced in the media as Chinese radio-jamming equipment was used to block anti-government radio stations. Mudavanu (2014) pointed out that militarily Zimbabwe has benefited from its relationship with the Eastern bloc as they have managed to access fighter jets, weapons and trucks. The study seeks to examine Zimbabwean government could thus be mortgaging the economic development of the country so as to protect the incumbent government's political interests without considering objectively the impacts the relationship has on the economy and implications of its relations with the Eastern bloc and China.

### **Chinese Trade with Zimbabwe**

Trade between China and Zimbabwe has risen within the course of the time, as bilateral trade between the two countries totalled US\$205million for the first half of 2007. Mangwana (2015) wrote that by 2003 the trade between the two countries had increased to 310 million a year and by 2012 it had galloped to US\$ 1.1 billion. Economic analysts like Wilson (2005) say that Zimbabwe will pay a high price for its government's appetite for cheap foreign "loans" from so

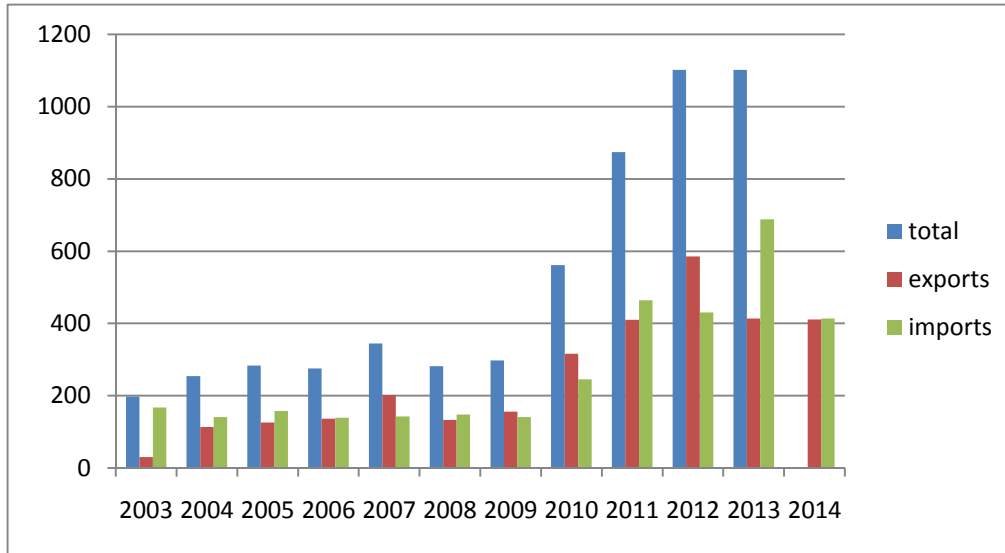
called "friendly" countries like China. One notes that despite the high sounding sums the cost of the relations between the two countries is rising to Zimbabwe as the economic crisis has continued and there is an influx of low quality Chinese products in Zimbabwe. This polarises the ability of their intercourse to bear fruits and in alleviating Zimbabwe from its economic throes. The Zimbabwean development has been and could be slowed down by the Chinese.

Similarly to Chinese trade with many other African countries, bilateral trade between China and Zimbabwe has always been characterized by the export of raw materials in return for end products like auto mobiles, clothing, agricultural material and electrical machinery and other equipment as noted by Edinger and Burke. Mvutungayi (2012) contends that unlike some of the African countries, Zimbabwe seems to be slowly recuperating through the informal sector and all of this is a result of Chinese goods and Zimbabwe has even realised trade profits. Mvutungayi further argue that this trend is generally unusual that a non-oil exporting developing country. This trend thus could be an indication that Zimbabwe managed to secure a valuable market in China for its resources after the withdrawal of the West as indicated in the figure below.

The Zimbabwe-China trade grew after the Zimbabwean government adopted its LEP in 2003. Figure shows that from 2003 the trade pattern has been inconsistent however 2010 to 2014 the trade volume has been growing. This is a good sign as the Zimbabwean government has managed to secure a trading partner and market for its produce and resources after the West turned its back to the country.



## China-Zimbabwe Trade 2003-2014



Source: National Data, National Bureau of Statistics of China, 20 May 2014, <http://data.stats.gov.cn/workspace/index?m=hgnd>  
The Herald Business (Zimbabwe), (2014) Chinese investment in Zim surges', 22 May; OEC (2014) Zimbabwe. (online) Available at

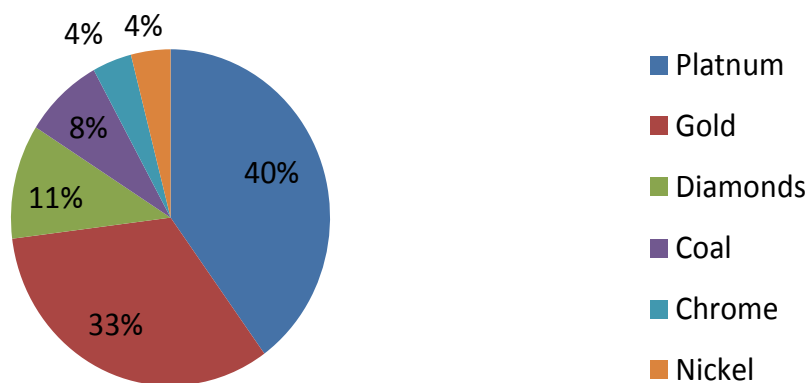
### China in Zimbabwe's mining sector

The recent growth of the Chinese economy into a major global economical player has also increased its appetite for raw materials and Zimbabwe has been targeted as a major source. Boyes (2016) is of the view that Zimbabwe may not have oil like other African countries interesting for China but it has copper, platinum and diamonds. Besada (2007) concurs that Zimbabwe is attractive to China because it has the second largest deposits of platinum in the world as well as other more than 40 rare minerals like ferrochrome, gold, and copper. These resources are the major contributions to the current China-Zimbabwe bilateral engagements for example ZIMASCO the largest ferrochrome producer in the country has been taken over by the Chinese company SinoSteel. Muronzi (2016) wrote that 'SinoSteel China's leading steel trader has completed the full acquisition of a 100% stake in ZIMASCO Consolidated Enterprises which in turn owned 73% equity in Zimbabwe operation'. The Chinese are fast growing into major players in Zimbabwe's mining sector and with the manner they are conducting business it is apparent that they will end up owning an unprecedented stake in all mining products.

More, so Chinese State Owned Companies have invested in Zimbabwe's mining sector. Youde (2014) wrote that Chinese private companies and State Owned Companies (SOC) have invested a lot in Zimbabwe as for example Anjin Investments invested US\$460 million in 2011 to develop the Marange diamond field in conjunction with the Zimbabwean military. According to Besada (2007) Beijing has deals in place for mineral extraction in Zimbabwe in return for financing and mining equipment and in reciprocation Chinese companies like China National Aero- technology Import and Export Cooperation (CATIC) and the China North Industries Cooperation (NORINCO) agreed to finance multi-billion dollar projects in Zimbabwe. Ramani (2016) argued that China has set out to rehabilitate and modernise Zimbabwe's mining and agricultural sector in a manner amenable to its own broader interests.

Furthermore, Zimbabwe has sought to exploit its minerals and metals sector and according to Zimbabwe Investment Authority the country expected about USD 5-7 billion to boost growth in the mining sector. Fig 3 shows Zimbabwe's projected growth in the minerals and metals sector. China has played a significant role in the gold mining and diamond mining in Zimbabwe. In diamond mining China has invested heavily through Anjin Investments and also there are a significantly notable number of Chinese owned gold mines around the country. The growth in the mining sector is primarily dependent on investment by foreign companies; therefore given the uncertain and unstable Zimbabwean economy it would be unlikely to have western companies investing much however China has shown interests in investing in these projects.

## Zimbabwe Metals and Minerals Projected Growth 2012-2016



*Source:*

*Zimbabwe Investment Authority (2016) Metals and Minerals, (online) Available at [http://www.investzim.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=314&Itemid=716](http://www.investzim.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=314&Itemid=716) Accessed on 12/08/2016*

Zimbabwe is a country blessed with a plethora of mineral resources. The Zimbabwe Heritage Trust (2015) pointed that Zimbabwe has more than 30 different mineral resources from liquids, gas, timber and stones. Mumba (2009) agrees that Zimbabwe's Great Dyke contains inexhaustible deposits of minerals including platinum which is the second largest in the world estimated at over US\$500 billion. On the same note Sachikonye (2008) points out that, Zimbabwe and South Africa have the largest reserves of platinum in the world, and substantial reserves of chrome. China was lured by these natural resources to step in when the West sought to withdraw.

In addition to their great interest in Zimbabwe's platinum ores, China was also lured by other minerals in the country such as nickel and copper. Chinamining.org (2009) wrote that in 2008, the Mineral Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe (MMCZ) signed a memorandum of understanding with the Chinese Nickel Company, Jinchuan Nickel Mining Company of China which is China's biggest producer of nickel and cobalt. The deal mandated Zimbabwe to sell these minerals to China. The mining deals made with Chinese companies seems to be

strategically designed to attract more Chinese investments in Zimbabwe's resources in line with the government's LEP however the deals present a situation of exploiter and exploited as Zimbabwe has no bargaining power.

China has played a significant role in the mining of metals in Zimbabwe as shown by various deals in this sector. In 2003, for example the Chinese Shanghai Baosteel Group invested US\$300 million in this sector and Sachikonye (2008) argued that this investment created employment in the country and that a chunk of the investment was used to buy equipment for boosting iron steel production in the Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Corporation (ZISCO). Moreover, *The Financial Gazette* in 2007 published that Sinosteel, China's second largest iron and steel dealer signed an investment agreement with the Zimbabwe Mining and Smelting Company (ZIMASCO) in September 2007 in a move to refurbish the iron and steel industry in the country. According to *Zimbabwe Independent* (2016) SinoSteel put US\$100 million in 2007 in a US\$ 200 million deal. China has played a significant role in the mining sector.

### **China in Zimbabwe's Agriculture**

China has played a major role in the Zimbabwean agricultural sector since the intensification of their relations through the LEP. The Chinese government has sort to show solidarity with the Zimbabwean Land Reform Programme and donated monies directed to this sector. According to In order to show its support of Zimbabwe's land reform programme, the Chinese government donated US\$241 worth of agricultural equipment to Zimbabwe in 2001 and continued to make subsequent credit lines to the sector during the crisis period. According to China-DAC Study Group (2013) China has played a recognisable role in Zimbabwean agriculture as shown by the loans and aid from the China ExIm Bank as well as the training of government staff in the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation. The Chinese since the LEP

Tobacco is one of the major agricultural products that Zimbabwe exports and the Chinese have become a greater consumer and investor in Zimbabwean tobacco. Mugabe (2013) put forward that the Chinese are the largest consumers of Zimbabwean tobacco as he said '...Tobacco, we don't smoke much of it, the Chinese smoke most of it...'. Schwersensky (2007) wrote that in

2005, the two countries signed an agreement for the expansion of tobacco fields for China to 2500 hectares of land and 10 000 more hectares were offered in a separate agreement the following year. Most of the equipment was directed towards tobacco mining farms and this increased production. China has become Zimbabwe's largest tobacco consumer with the crop pulling in immense Chinese investments into the agricultural sector.

*The Zimbabwean Herald* published that in 2007 Zimbabwe received a US\$200 million loan which was used to acquire farming equipments from China which included 1000 tractors, combine harvesters, irrigation pumps, disc harrows among other farming machinery and equipment. The China-DAC Study Group also noted that amongst many agricultural projects funded by china the Gwebi Agricultural Technology Demonstration Centre which cost USD 30 million, located about 40km north-west of Harare. The Centre has played a significant role in conducting agricultural experiments and training of staff. The Chinese have played a crucial role in Zimbabwe's agricultural sector and this has enabled the growth of the agricultural industry which had fallen during the early years of the crisis.

### **Foreign Direct Investment**

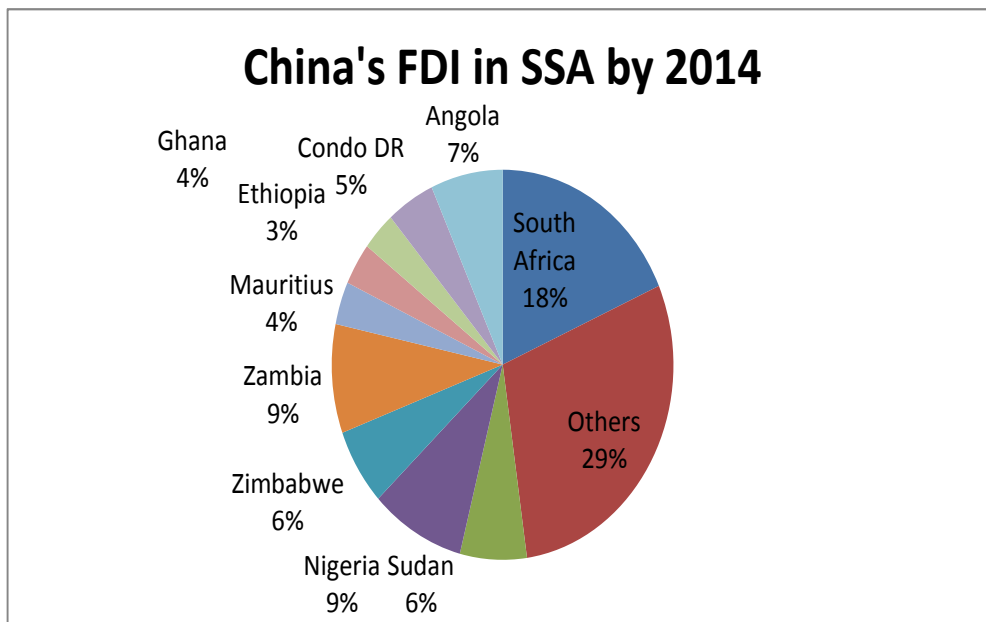
China's investment is very crucial for Zimbabwe's survival; this is because most foreign countries withdrew their support due to the indigenisation policy adopted by the government and the land reform program. This led to the closure of many industries in the country especially in mining and agricultural production dwindled. *The Herald Business* (2014) noted that annual Chinese FDI into Africa grew from \$11.2 million in 2009 to \$602 billion in 2013 as they diversified investment priorities. They continue to note that Zimbabwe also got a better stake of FDI as it Chinese grew from 0.8% of the total African FDI in 2009 to 7.2% of the total in 2013. This made Zimbabwe one of the major beneficiaries of Chinese interest in 2013.

The inflow of Chinese FDI in Zimbabwe was further promoted by the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA) between the two countries which was signed in 1996 and became officially effective in 1998,(Investment Policy Hub nd). The agreement sought to ensure security for the Chinese investments in Zimbabwe. According to Kamhungira (2016)

the agreement targeted the mining sector and led to a number of deals in the mining sector like the Marange diamonds field deal with Anjin investments. Moore et al (2013) opines that the mineral sector in Zimbabwe is estimated to contribute an average of 3.2% to the country's GDP; however the Zimbabwean Chamber of Mines put the contribution at 15% per year. The Chinese have thus invested in the mining sector in gold, platinum, ferrochrome and other different minerals in Zimbabwe.

The inflow of Chinese FDI to Zimbabwe is low especially when compared to other Sub-Saharan countries and Zimbabwe's neighbours like Zambia and South Africa. Fig 3 projects China's FDI inflows to Sub-Saharan countries in 2014, Zimbabwe stood at 6% together with Sudan while South Africa was the highest with 18% and Zambia 9% while Angola receives 7%. The Zimbabwean government has thus failed to secure centre stage in China's FDI and this could be a result of the failure of the internal environment to lure investment and the investment security threats in the country.

*Chinese FDI in SSA by 2014*



*Source: MOFCOM 2014*

The number of Chinese companies in Zimbabwe has grown significantly since the government's adoption of the LEP. The table below list the Chinese companies that were investing in Zimbabwe by 2015 and their sector.

*Chinese Companies in Zimbabwe 2015*

Name of Company	Investment sector
APR	Infrastructure and energy
CHEC	Infrastructure
Tian Ze Tobacco Company P/L	Agriculture
Zimasco	Ferro alloys mining
Sino Zimbabwe Cement Company	Cement and infrastructure
Zimbabwe Nantong International	
China National Aero-Technology Import & Export Corporation	Telecommunications and technology
NORINCO (Zimbabwe Office)	
Zimbabwe Jiangsu Int. P/L	
Hualong Construction Ltd	Infrastructure
Zimbabwe Liaison Office for Huawei Tech. Investment Co., Ltd	Telecommunications and technology
China Jiangxi Corporation	Technology
Connick Investment (PVT) Ltd	Technology
China-Zim International Minerals Corporation	Mining
Chian Nanchang Engineering P/L	Infrastructure
Eurostak Electric Co., Ltd	Power
Jin En International (Zim) (PVT) Ltd	
Sinotex United Import and Export Co., Ltd	Goods and services
China Jin Bei Li Mining Company	Mining
FUNO (PVT) Ltd	Mining
Sino Non Ferrous Resource (PVT) Co., Ltd	Mining
Jingniu Glass	Mining
China Shougang International	
Zimbabwe Shuangfeng Cotton (Private) Ltd	Agriculture
China Communications Services (Zimbabwe)	Telecommunications and

	technology
Jinding Mining Zimbabwe (PVT) Ltd	Mining
San He Mining Zimbabwe P/L	Mining
China Africa Sunlight Energy Ltd	Power and infrastructure
Gold Diamond Mine Development P/L	Mining
Timsite Enterprises (PVT) Ltd	Infrastructure
Anjin investments	Mining
Wanjin Agricultural Development Company(Zim-China)	Agriculture
Zimbabwe Lian Feng Company P/L Ltd	
China Machinery & Engineering Corporation	Infrastructure
China CAMC Engineering Co., Ltd	Infrastructure
China International Water & Electric Corp	Sanitation and infrastructure
Sino-Hydro Corporation Ltd. (Zimbabwe Office)	Power and infrastructure
ZTE Corporation	Telecommunications
Shanxi Road & Bridge International Engineering Company	Infrastructure
Number Seventeen Metallurgical Construction P/	Infrastructure and power

Source: Economic and Commercial Counsellor's Office of the Embassy of China in Zimbabwe, <http://zimbabwe.mofcom.gov.cn> accessed 10 January 2013 in Chun, Z (2014) China–Zimbabwe Relations: A Model of China–Africa Relations? SAIA: Occasional Paper 205, Global Powers and Africa Program.

## Defence Cooperation

China-Zimbabwe defence cooperation can be seen as amongst the closest of any country on the African continent. The cooperation dates back to the liberation struggle when the Chinese government aided Zimbabwe through weapons and military strategies. According to Xinhua (2007) an unprecedented number Zimbabwe's senior officials and military commanders, received their training in China. This is the military that has been used by the ZANU PF government to stay in power. Eisenman and Kurlantzick (2006) opine that the Zimbabwean military plays a significant role in politics thus the military cooperation and between China and Zimbabwe is a crucial element of their engagements. The close defence cooperation intensified when the West turned against Zimbabwe by the turn of the millennium as Edinger and Burke (2008) argue that China has become an increasingly vital source of military equipment and diplomatic assistance



for Zimbabwe since the implementation of Western military embargoes and cutting of diplomatic ties.

In addition, according to [http://en.people.cn/200406/22/eng20040622\\_147120.html](http://en.people.cn/200406/22/eng20040622_147120.html) in June 2004 it was rumoured that Zimbabwe was planning to buy Chinese-made jet air-crafts valued at US\$ 240 million to replace the country's Chinese made Chengdu F-7s however the rumours were later dismissed as not true. Nkatzo (2008) postulated that Zimbabwe had purchased six K-8 jets from China in a bid to update its military weapons. *The Gurdian* (2008) reported that arms that were sent by China from Zimbabwe had to return to China because South Africans refused that the shipments be off loaded in their shores. In 2014 the Chinese People's liberation Army donated \$4.2 million to the Zimbabwean military to fund various army projects as a sign of solidarity, as noted by *Zimbabwe Situation* (2014). The Chinese paid no attention to the crisis engulfing Zimbabwe and the dangers that encompassed arms sale to a country embroiled in turmoil like Zimbabwe. SIPRI (2010) argued that regardless of internal turmoil, China supplied Zimbabwe with about USD 28million in arms between 2005 and 2007. Meidan (2006) further contends that China constructed a factory for manufacturing weapons in Zimbabwe. China has thus been playing a pivotal role in Zimbabwe's military and defence sector.

The Chinese donated to Zimbabwe in 2013 US\$ 98 million interest free loan for the building of the Zimbabwe National defence college in Mazowe. Karombo (2013) wrote that the college is to be turned into fully fledged university training for military training and the initiative would be a landmark in the country, and is to be operated by the Chinese foreign intelligence service in conjunction with Zimbabwe's CIO and military intelligence.

China has become one of the major diplomatic defenders of the Zimbabwean government through its veto powers in the United Nations Security Council. The international community under the leadership of the USA and Britain had sought to intervene in the Zimbabwean crisis however China and Russia voted against. Chigora and Goredema (2010) commenting on Zimbabwe-Russia relations, noted that China and Russia used their rights as permanent members to veto the decision to punish Zimbabwe. *China Digital Times* (2008) argued that after the July 2008 presidential elections the British and the U.S.A governments proposed to the UN Security

Council members to relook into the crisis in Zimbabwe and apply pressure on Robert Mugabe's government for political and economic reforms however China and Russia backed Zimbabwe. Muchena (2006) articulated that China's diplomatic support was vital in preventing United Nations sanctions against Zimbabwe in 2005 after the government embarked on 'Operation Murambatsvina (a Shona word meaning '*Cleaning Chuff*' in English) in the country's cities which was interpreted as a violation of human rights. Zimbabwe has benefited greatly from the Chinese diplomatic cooperation.

### **Chinese Aid to Zimbabwe.**

The diplomatic impasse that affected Zimbabwe by the turn of the millennium left Zimbabwe mired in a deep financial crisis and marred with a scathing international image. This greatly affected its relations with the Bretton Wood institutions as aid and loans were cut by the IMF and the World Bank. China however came to the rescue and offered Zimbabwe developmental aid without conditionalities and with no concern over the internal domestic situations as China stood by its principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of its partners. According to *The Zimbabwean*,(2012) China donated an amount of US\$14 million worth of food Aid to Zimbabwe when the country was facing a serious food shortage problem. Kishi and Relaiigh (2015) postulates that China has given aid to Zimbabwe without conditions and given the history of the ZANU PF government the aid has been used to stifle the voices of the people and further human right abuses. China has become a major player in giving aid to the Zimbabwean government saving it from international oblivion.

The Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe has shown interests in getting Chinese aid and has even publicly declared that he prefers Chinese aid because it does not come with conditions like that of the USA and Western countries who force him to accept homosexuality, (Thornycroft 2014). The Zimbabwean government has received aid from the Chinese in the form of development aid or government to government aid.

### **Tourism**

The tourism industry in Zimbabwe suffered significantly overall during the crisis period as the

country grappled with a dented image in its traditionally dependable Western markets. The West played a major role in denigrating the image of Zimbabwe through its international media as they portrayed Zimbabwe as engulfed in political turmoil and a risk to international visitors. McGowan et al (2007) noted that in 2003 the tourism sector declined and shrank 13% and a further 4% in 2004. In contrast to the Western approach however, Zimbabwe and China signed a tourism agreement on 15 June 2004 that would facilitate better travelling conditions for Chinese tourists coming to Zimbabwe as postulated by Alden (2007) that China granted Zimbabwe an Approved Destination Status which encouraged its citizens to travel to Zimbabwe through simplification of visa requirements.

The growth of the Chinese economy has led to the expansion of the Chinese population in world tourism. Masarurwa and Moyo (2014) noted that there has been a 25% increase of Chinese tourists into the Western countries and the USA and that about 80000 Chinese tourists have visited Southern Africa while disappointingly only 5000 visited Zimbabwe. Thus despite the relaxation of travel requirements for Chinese nationals visiting Zimbabwe this has failed to yield convincing results. NewZimbabwe.Com (2016) noted that the growth of Chinese tourist has however risen when Zimbabwe government re-revised its visa laws enabling Chinese national and other 35 countries to apply for visas at their arrival. This shows that the tourism sector in Zimbabwe is slowly growing and this is as a result of Zimbabwe's engagement with China

### **Energy and Infrastructure**

Zimbabwe as a developing country has a serious problem of infrastructure and energy production as it relies mostly on importing electricity from its neighbours. China has however played a critical part in the energy and infrastructural utilities in Zimbabwe. The relationship started right after independence when Chinese contractors were given tenders to construct most of the infrastructure like stadiums and schools by the Zimbabwean government. For a long time since independence, China's construction operators have been very active in Zimbabwe's construction industry.

In addition, According to Moyo (2004) in 1995, China and the Industrial Development

Corporation of Zimbabwe launched Sino-Zimbabwe Cement joint company in Gweru. This venture led to the joint production of cement for construction projects within the country as well as for exports. *The People's Daily* (2006) noted that the largest energy deal was with China Machine Building International Corporation in June 2006 estimated at US\$1.3 Billion to mine coal and build two new thermal power units at the Hwange thermal plant. In order to consolidate its role in Zimbabwe's construction industry, China opened a tile and brick factory in 2004 as noted by Chun (2014). China has played a significant role in Zimbabwean energy and infrastructure sector.

*Zimbabwe mega Energy and Infrastructure deals (table 2)*

Project	Budget in US\$	Investing Company	Set completion date	Project status
Vic Falls Airport Expansion	150 million			
Kariba Hydro power Station	319.5 million	Sino Hydro	2017	41% complete 02/2016
Harare Water and Sanitation	144		2015	
Telone Optic Fibre	98 million			
Bakota gorge	2200 million		2020	Identifying contractor
National Matabeleland Zambezi Water Project	1.2 billion			Identifying contractor
Harare Thermal Power Station	85 million			Awaiting launch
Beitbridge-Chirundu Highway	155			Tendering process underway
Gwanda Solar Power Station	202 million	Intratek Zimbabwe and CHINT Electronic (China)		Launched
Bulawayo-Harare	1.2 billion	China Railway		Awaiting launch

Highspeed Train Route				
Coal mines Development	2.1 billion	China Africa Sunlight		Awaiting launch
Bulawayo Thermal Power Station	90 million			Tendering process underway
Dema Emergency Plant		Sakunda Holdings and APR of (China)		Launched
Munyathi Thermal Power Station	90 million	Number Seventeen Metallurgical China		Awaiting launch
Gairezi Mini-hydro	128 million	INTRATREK, Bharat Heavy Equipment and Angel International Limited (AIL) (China)		Awaiting launch
Hwange Thermal Power expansion	1300 million	Sino Hydro (China)		Awaiting launch
Insukamini Project in Matabeleland North	197 million	ZTE (China)		Awaiting launch

Source: Infrastructural Development Bank of Zimbabwe (2016) Energy Projects,(online)Available at [https://www.idbz.co.zw/?page\\_id=287](https://www.idbz.co.zw/?page_id=287)

The Chinese have invested largely in the energy and infrastructure sector as most of the government tenders are given to Chinese State Owned Enterprises.

## Conclusion

This chapter focused on China in Zimbabwe and the findings are that China has been involved in Zimbabwe's mining sector, infrastructural development, security and diplomacy as well as tourism and giving aid to the Zimbabwean government. This has further strengthened the relation between these two countries.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

# **AN EVALUATION OF CHINA'S STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN ZIMBABWE**

### **Introduction**

This chapter gives a re-look into China's geopolitical interests in Zimbabwe and traces the on-going developments of the relations between the two countries in a bid to identify these interests. This is done to evaluate the sustainability of the China-Zimbabwe bilateral relations.

### **China's Africa policy and Zimbabwe**

The research identified that China does not have a specific policy crafted for Zimbabwe; however China has a policy for Africa and Zimbabwe-China relations have been outstandingly changing over the time covered by the research. The main reason for the complexities and paradoxes in their engagements is Zimbabwe's domestic policies and politics and the attention and response that the international community has given to them. Alao (2014) argues that the Zimbabwean internal politics and international pressure has led to a situation whereby China had to explain its diplomacy to ensure smooth relations with other African countries who differ with Zimbabwean policies. Alao goes on to note that in some instances the Zimbabwean government has had to fracture its policies to accommodate China.

Zimbabwe can be seen as a strategic component in the broader China's policy for Africa. China's broad investments in Zimbabwe's crisis-ridden economy and rhetorical support for Mugabe's isolated regime are pivotal for the enrichment of its geopolitical interests in Africa. This is mainly because if the China-Zimbabwe relationship records recognisable success in terms of the alleviation of poverty and ameliorating the country from its economic and political problems, China will be able profit economically from Zimbabwe as Western powers have little influence in the country. This can also be used by many other African countries that might shun the West

and engage China. The Zimbabwe-China relationship thus stands to be an example to the broader China policy for Africa.

### **Foreign Direct Investment and the Indigenisation Policy**

China's FDI is very crucial for the Zimbabwean economy and this is mainly because of the fact that China is the main investor in Zimbabwe as a result of the Zimbabwean LEP. Most of the Chinese investments are directed to the mining sector. This therefore means that for the country to develop in the middle of the Chinese geopolitical interests it has to strike a balance between the Indigenisation law and attracting FDI in the mining sector given its importance to the Zimbabwean economy (Makangadza 2013). Ramani (2016) argued that:

*As public opposition to illicit revenues accrued from diamond exports soared, Mugabe implemented a nationalization law in 2008... However, Mugabe's dependence on Chinese investments had risen to the point that he had to exempt China's deals from the nationalization law. This exception consolidated China's hegemonic position over the mining sector*

This exemption of the Chinese had internal implications for the government as the government later on had to reconsider the Marange deal, straining relations between the two countries. Kamhungira (2016) points out that the government of Zimbabwe in March 2016 took seizure of all mining rights at Chiadzwa diamonds and this angered the Chinese investors under the Anjin Investment and this further threatens the Zimbabwe-China bilateral engagement. This brings about a clash of interest between the Zimbabwean Indigenisation law and the FDI masked by the Chinese interests in Zimbabwe.

The topic of Zimbabwean Indigenisation policy and Chinese FDI has of late attracted controversy as to whether the Zimbabwean has a blanket exclusion of all Chinese companies from the Indigenisation policy. Brautigam (2014) argues that there is no blanket exemption of Chinese firms on the Indigenisation policy. Brautigam argues that there are companies that have

been excluded from abiding by the indigenisation policy regulations like Tian Ze a Chinese company which has worked hand in hand with local black farmers in tobacco farming however this does not cover all companies. News Day (2011) argued that the then Minister of Indigenisation and Youth Empowerment exempted a number of Chinese firms from the indigenisation policy. The Zimbabwean Indigenisation Policy has thus clashed with the Chinese FDI as the policy seems to shake when Chinese companies are concerned.

The Zimbabweans have also been concerned about the manor at which the Chinese companies handle their business. The Chinese unlike most of the companies that are owned by other investors in Zimbabwe, they put semi-structures especially in the mining sector, this has caused many locals to view them as merely in the country for resource grabbing not on permanent basis. Alao (2014) noted that most of the Chinese mining companies are exempted from the CSOT (Community Share Ownership Trust) which is part of the empowerment crusade by the government. The infrastructure used by the Chinese in their mines and the continued compromise of the Zimbabwean government leaves a lot to be desired. The image portrayed by the Zimbabwean government is that of trying to lure the Chinese into investment and while the Chinese have invested in the Zimbabwean economy they have done so half-heartedly. One can say that while Zimbabwe is busy 'looking east' China has refused to give Zimbabwe a bold gaze because of the Zimbabwe's internal policies and politics.

### **A Hyena in Sheep' Skin: Unmasking Chinese Geopolitics in Zimbabwe's Economy**

The Chinese-Zimbabwe brethren have been showing its frailties as build on capitalist matrices in nature, with China acting as a sadist and Zimbabwe a masochist. Unlike the West which uses philanthropy which is a guise for misanthropy, China has an economically palatable approach called investment, which bring more complication to the Zimbabwean polyandry dilemma (state of being caught in between the Capitalist giants and pseudo communist giants), for Zimbabwe will have divorce the ungrateful Western racist husband and marry the new calculating Eastern husband. One notices that despite the Zimbabwean government mongering the gospel of win-win situation with China, a closer scrutiny show otherwise, with China appearing to be benefiting enormously in Zimbabwe while the economically bed-ridden Zimbabwe gets crumbs. According

to Chabwinja (2014) the then Presidential Affairs Minister Didymus Mutasa complained about the Chinese failure to help Zimbabwe ameliorate its economic problems. The same article quoted President Mugabe complaining about the Chinese system of failing to create employment for the local people by bringing their relative to work in their firms. The realist theory of international relations believes that states seek to serve their own interests in their interactions with other states hence Zimbabwe is losing a lot to china who has economic muscle and geopolitical interests in Zimbabwe.

The Chinese in Zimbabwe have often been given tenders by the government however it has been noted that they often fail to finish projects. Kombora and Mukaro (2007) argued that In May 2005, a Chinese company, China Jiangxi Corporation for International Economic and Technology Cooperation (CJCIETC) secured a US\$145 million tender for the construction of the Kunzvi Dam amid allegations that normal tender procedures were not followed .Kombora and Mukaro continued to note that corruption and lack of accountability clouded the deal. The project however has not been completed and the city of Harare still mired in serious water shortages. The failure of this project is one of the many projects that have been started by the Chinese but have failed completion in Zimbabwe. This brings about the idea that China is in Zimbabwe not to benefit the country but rather to exploit and perpetuate its geopolitical interests.

Zimbabwe is faced by a number of difficulties and this has paved way for countries like China to seize the moment and maximise their interest as Thompson (2012) argued that Zimbabwe's pugnacious politics and few partners mean that countries such as China can invest and do business fairly freely, and in a self-enriching manner. On the same line of thought Matahwa (2007) posited that the Zimbabwean government is believed to have mortgaged the bigger stake of tobacco production to the Chinese for financial support giving an example Matahwa noted that in 2007, China promised a loan of US\$58 million to the Zimbabwean government intended to purchase farming inputs and tools on condition that Zimbabwe will deliver 110 000 tonnes of tobacco to China in two year. On the same point, Anthony Hawkins cited by Matahwa (2007) declares that the Zimbabwean government can only manage to curb its economic abyss if it addresses its woes without mortgaging crucial export of resources to the Chinese. The major setback in this deal was that it would mean that Zimbabwe would have to close its auction flows

if its tobacco output remains stagnant and this would give a surplus to trade locally after giving the Chinese their share. This would possibly deny the Zimbabwean government large sums of money from the auction flows. The Zimbabwean government thus has a few choices but to engage with China regardless of the deleterious implications to its future and the perpetration of Chinese geopolitical interests.

### **Zimbabwe Skipping the Tendering Process for Chinese Companies**

The Zimbabwean government has undermined the tendering process that is in line with the countries legislation when awarding tenders to Chinese owned companies. The Administrative Justice Act (Chapter 10:28) and the Competition Act (Chapter 14:28) are the two main legislations that govern the giving of tenders by public institutions. These pieces of legislation make it unlawful for anyone to award tenders for public goods and services without them going to tender. The research identified with that the Zimbabwean government has been giving tenders to the Chinese without following the correct procedures and disregarding Zimbabwean legislation.

According to Kombora and Mukaro (2005) in May 2005 the government awarded a tender for the construction of Kunzvi dam to a company called China Jiangxi Corporation for International Economic and Technological Cooperation (CJCIETC), the deal was accompanied by allegations that normal tender process was not followed. The deal also neglected more than five capable local companies who then raised concerns as the project was just given to the Chinese company. *The Financial Gazette* (2007) noted with dismay that the project has not been finalized and the City of Harare is still facing water challenges. Mutenga (2016) contends that the construction of the Kunzvi Dam is still a pipe dream as the country and Harare is mired in serious water challenges. The project has been a failure and this can be attributed to the failure to follow proper tendering procedures by the Zimbabwean government.

In addition the failure of the Zimbabwean government to follow the tendering process and the politicization of the process has tarnished its image internationally. Magaisa (2016) contends that the Dema Diesel power plant deal was given to Sakunda Holdings which did not even apply for

the tender. This was done because the company is owned by a ZANU PF loyalist and brother of Mugabe's son in law Derrick Chikore. Mafume (2016) argues that the initial winner of the tender was APR Holdings an American company however it was later informed that the tender has been given to Sakunda Holdings indefinitely. Magaisa also contends that Sakunda Holdings has no capacity to build the power station and they have since partnered with Aggrecko PLC (which had lost the tender in the initial process) for equipment and expertise. Aloa (2014) argued that projects that are not procured through lawful and open tender system are often over priced and prone to failure. *Zimbabwe Situation* (2016) buttressed that the Zimbabwean government ignored the fact that APR Energy could save USD 200 million as it was going to use liquid petroleum gas instead of diesel to generate power. The 200 million could have been used for another energy projects given that Zimbabwe is deeply indebted to Zambia and South Africa in the energy sector. The politicization of the tendering process by the Zimbabwean government is taxing to development and leads to the failure of most projects especially those involving the Chinese.

The credibility of the Zimbabwean tendering process towards Chinese companies was also compromised during the tendering of the rehabilitation and dualisation of the Beitbridge-Chirundu Highway project. *The Source* (2016) argued that Zimbabwean government gave a tender for the dualisation of Beitbridge-Chirundu Highway to CHEC Ltd and Geiger International was identified as the financier. The Source also highlighted that the major problem is that CHEC Ltd has been banned by the World Bank for corruption. *The Financial Gazette* (2016) contends that in 2003 the Zimbabwean government had given the tender to Zimhighways a consortium of 14 firms however these were later sidelined by the government on claims that they could not raise the money for the project. *The Financial Gazette* also noted that Zimhighways accused government officials for requesting bribes for the deal to commence. In a different incident that polarises the tendering process of the Zimbabwean government, China has paid less for Zimbabwean platinum. *The Zimbabwean* (2014) postulated that China paid only 3 billion dollars for a contract that under normal circumstances was worth 10 billion dollars, to extract platinum. Corruption and greed has polarised the credibility of the Zimbabwean tendering process. This has helped China to fulfil her geopolitical interests in Zimbabwe and this is the case with many other African countries.



## **Zimbabwe and the Chinese Global Politico-economic Whirlwind**

Zimbabwe has tied itself with China for almost two decades. There are different interpretations of the relationship between China and Zimbabwe however the most triumphant analysis is that Zimbabwe strengthened its ties with China after the West had withdrew its economic and political support and tagged Zimbabwe as a failed state due to reported cases of political violence, the abuse of human rights and the absence of the rule of law, Kovacs(2012), Maundeni (2002). Zimbabwe is caught up in the Chinese global politico-economic whirlwind as China seeks to establish its influence in Africa and the world. The Russia-Cuba Missiles Crisis of 1962 comes into mind when one looks at the current China-Zimbabwe relationship where influential global powers (Russia and USA) clashed on a small country (Cuba), who became ideologically conflated and ended up paying dearly,(Wikipedia). Hilsum (2007) better describes Zimbabwe as a “small fish in a Chinese sea”. The study looks at the Chinese geopolitical interests in Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe has been used by the Chinese to gain natural resources and a voice.

Chigora and Chisi in their 2009 paper titled *The Eight Years of Interaction: Lessons from Zimbabwe’s Look East Policy and the Future of African Countries and Asia Pacific Region* described the LEP as a sign of ideological astuteness by the ZANU PF led government, nonetheless they ignored the fact that the reasons that led to the Zimbabwe-China relations were not actually conducive and do not tally with astuteness but rather exemplifies what one can call an option-less option. Mandaza (2005) commenting on the LEP that cemented the China-Zimbabwe bilateral relationship, postulated that:

*“Zimbabwe’s “Look East” policy is not an ideological assertion, the pursuit of an alternative ideology nor rejection of the capitalist road. It is based essentially on the need to survive when the West has apparently turned its back on the former British colony, a country which, if the entire story were told, has been so historically and economically tied and compromised into an intricate web of dependence on the northern hemisphere”.*

This view is further solidified by the current attempt by the Zimbabwean government to

re-engage with the West so as to get loans and aid for the country's ailing economy besides the fact that China has been actively involved with Zimbabwe for almost two decades. *NewsdzeZimbabwe* (29/06/2016) a online news portal detailed how the Zimbabwean finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa and a delegation including the RBZ Governor John Mangudja and the Minister of Commerce and Industry Mike Bimha travelled across Europe seeking aid and promising to repay the debt owed to Western institution to unlock aid. The research notices that this takes place after almost two decades had passed since Zimbabwe proudly embraced China as its core partner. China has capitalised on Zimbabwe's weaknesses, gaining natural resources and a voice in Africa, thus Zimbabwe can be likened to a fly caught up in the Chinese geopolitical web and consequently will stand to suffer accordingly.

The Chinese have their geopolitical interests in Africa and Zimbabwe has aligned herself with China however the Chinese will stand to benefit due to their global position and manage to manipulate Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is viewed as global pariah by a majority of countries and as such China sympathised with her to get access to natural resources and expand its influence in Africa.

### **Chinese Interference with Zimbabwe's Sovereignty**

China has used the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of its partners to dominate the international system. Bull (1986) argued that the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs and territorial jurisdiction of other states has been embraced by all countries however there are many interventions in the international terrain. China has also been accused of interference in the domestic politics of its partners directly and indirectly. In the case of Zimbabwe; China has been covertly involved in the domestic affairs. Sovereignty and self determination has been in the core of Zimbabwean governments public utterances either domestically or internationally. The FTLRP which was a sequel of war veterans' dissatisfaction and civil pressure from opposition parties and a tumbling economy in 1999 was regarded by the government as the Third Chimurenga where Zimbabweans were fighting for the reclamation of sovereignty through the repossession of farms from white commercial farmers by the black/native Zimbabweans. Ndlovu-Gatsheni elaborated that in 2001 the Ministry of information

and publicity under Jonathan Moyo published a heriography titled *Inside the Third Chimurenga* in which he noted that:

*The land question features prominently... as well as the issue of national sovereignty and territorial integrity and condemnation of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as a Trojan horse of imperialism aimed at delivering re-colonization of Zimbabwe... Mugabe emerges as progressive Pan-Africanist and an indefatigable fighter for the economic empowerment of black Zimbabweans through delivery of the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme”.*

The view is further concreted by (Mangwana 2013) who surmised that after the FTLRP ZANU PF interpreted the sanctions placed on the country by the West and USA as a breach of sovereignty and an attempt to re-colonise Zimbabwe. Thus the Chinese used public diplomacy of non-interference while when their interests are put test they interfere to protect their interests.

In addition, Lamprecht (2005) argues that China's economic involvement in Zimbabwe is shrewd, but their willingness to take over the economic means of production in a pariah state is politically perturbing. Non-interference in the domestic affairs of partners is the dogma used by China in its engagement with African countries and Zimbabwe in particular. China purports to respect sovereignty, nonetheless the extent at which China has invested in Zimbabwe it is inconceivable that they would stand by and watch while the succession wars vin ZANU PF are looming. Moyo and Ashurst (2007) drew from China-Angola relations and conjured that In Angola, China kept changing goal posts as it supported both the MPLA and the UNITA against the Portuguese colonialists. They continue to jot that in the mid 1970's the Chinese switched their support to the FNLA. According to Hilsum (2007):

*“Beijing armed both UNITA and the FNLA during a prolonged civil war from which they emerged the losers. Thirty years on, with the MPLA firmly in government, resource-rich Angola has become*

*China's biggest trading partner in Africa and its second largest oil supplier after Saudi Arabia.”*

Elias Mambo from the *Zimbabwe Independent*, a local newspaper published a story titled *Mnangagwa's China trip angers Mugabe* where he noted that Mugabe was alerted China's close ties with Mnangagwa as he feared that the Chinese were starting to fuel the succession wars that are dragging the ZANU PF party down. Chun (2014) concurred that amid raging factional battles in ZANU PF it became clear that China supported Mnangagwa against Joice Mujuru. The outcome of the Mujuru-Mnangagwa war saw Mujuru losing her position as the Vice president of the country. One thus wonders if China had any role in ousting her and paving way for Mnangagwa's ascendancy to Vice President. China has thus disregarded Zimbabwean sovereignty by betting involved covertly in the ZANU PF succession wars.

### **Bad Debtor versus Rogue Aid: Understanding Chinese Aid to Zimbabwe.**

China is a global economic giant and as such she has given aid to other developing countries. Zimbabwe has received enormous amounts of aid from the Chinese for developmental purposes as well as for relief or as a sign of solidarity between the two governments. Liu (2010) argued that projects the image of a friendly developing country intent on contributing to the enhancement of self reliance capabilities through its aid system. Aning (2010) contends that the Chinese aid and policy is perpetuated as seeking to apply influence without interference. It is from this basis that one starts to conceptualise the aid system of the Chinese in Zimbabwe as totally dismembered from this principle. The Chinese aid in Zimbabwe is not totally unconditional and based on friendly grounds; it is based on calculated steps by the Chinese government to spread its influence.

The Zimbabwean government has asked for aid from the Chinese to help them resuscitate the ailing economy however the Chinese have been reluctant and even refused to give aid to the Zimbabwean government. Moyo (2014) argued that the Chinese government is now sceptic on

giving aid or further investment to the Zimbabwean government due to its debt. According to Ncube (2014) the size of China's support for Zimbabwe in terms have shrunk from \$10 billion, to \$3 billion, and then, in February 2014 at \$400 million. Bloomberg (2016) contended that currently the Zimbabwean government is failing to secure aid from the Chinese as they are holding that Zimbabwe must first pay its debts of about 60 million to the Chinese. Moyo (2014) noted that the reason for the Chinese refusal to extend more loans and aid to Zimbabwe is because of the country's high credit ranking and high political risk record for investments. Moyo also highlighted that Lin Lin, the then Ambassador to Zimbabwe said that the Chinese consider the Zimbabwean situation before extending aid and loans to Zimbabwe. Moyo (2016) postulated that Zimbabwe has confessed that it is really dependant on Chinese loans and the failure to access these is bad to the country as the Chinese keep talking about the payment of arrears first. Zimbabwe is a bad debtor and China is a rogue donor as it gave Zimbabwe aid and support when the rest of the world had turned its back to the country due to internal problems. The current challenges facing the Zimbabwe-China engagements in terms of aid are a clear example that even Chinese rogue aid could not ameliorate Zimbabwe from its crisis but will only allow China to use aid to pursue its interests in Zimbabwe.

In addition China has shown in other African countries like South Africa, Nigeria and Zambia that they can commit large amounts of money in aid and loans. The refusal of the Chinese government to extend these loans to the Zimbabwean government shows that their trade is calculated and not only rogue in the sense that it does not take into considerations benefits. The aid is tied to the greater Chinese geopolitical interests as Chulu in *Zimbabwe Independent (2016)* articulated that:

*China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stands at a staggering US\$10,355 trillion for China and rising at 6,7% having cooled off from the dizzying upwards of 8% growth rates.. Banks in China, mainly the four state-controlled, warehouse a stupendous US\$16 trillion in deposits. Given that China's currency is arguably undervalued, its 100 trillion yuan bank deposits are way over US\$16 trillion. .... Of the US\$4 trillion that China has invested in financial assets, the majority is held as US Treasury bonds. Truly, China is metaphorically swimming in a sea of cash.*

One is left to wonder why the Chinese are refusing to give loans to the Zimbabwean given their financial and economic situation. Chinese interests are courted by aid and loans.

Chinese aid to Zimbabwe can be traced to the Rhodesian Bush War, when China assisted the ZANU PF party with military training and weapons (Richardson 2004). Steve Kibble (2014) in a report titled *Zimbabwe's International Re-engagement: The Long Haul to Recovery* pointed out that the unwillingness of China to support major Zimbabwean debt relief without significant control over mineral resources is a sign that Zimbabwe is not a secure place for investment even for the Chinese. The research notices that the minerals are used by the Chinese as a mortgage and assurance of getting rewards on their investments in Zimbabwe.

The Chinese government has given developmental aid to Zimbabwe. This is a positive development however the problem is the lack of transparency and accountability on the side of the Zimbabwean government. Davies (2006) Chinese investments proved to be critical when Norinco granted reprieve to the Hwange Colliery Company (HCC) after US\$6.3 million debt had accrued and threaten to ruin production in one of Zimbabwe's strategic mines relied upon by most industries for coal supplies. The Zimbabwean government is a bad debtor and this is proven from their failure to pay back the monies owed to the IMF and the WB.

### **Brand Counterfeiting and Chinese Low Quality Products in Zimbabwe**

In targeting a Polanyi type of market society mentioned in his *Great transformations* China has embarked on the manipulation of commodities in a brand counterfeiting schema. The underdevelopment of the African continent has been the cue for the Asian giants into dumping their 'Paper Tigers' and a market for their experimental products that are counterfeited from multinational corporations. As a counter capitalist strategy China has produced sub standard commodities which are dumped in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe as a country mired in crisis is a target to Chinese products because its industries are non-functional hence cannot produce enough goods to sustain its population. According to BBC News (2016) in 2015 China's exports to

Africa reached a total of USD 102 billion. *Zimbabwe Situation* (2015) noted that Zimbabwe in 2015 imported goods and services amounting to USD 36.7 million. The figures seem a bit low however one has to note that South Africa, which in 2015 was Zimbabwe's largest trading partner as in 2015 their trade stood at USD 332,7 million is also dependant on China. Thus Chinese goods are flooded to Zimbabwe from South Africa especially from the Musina town where most Zimbabweans shop for retail purposes. Given such large sums of imports by Zimbabweans it is heart breaking to have to underline that most, if not all of these goods will be low quality products that have imprisoned poor Zimbabweans into a critical market consumerism terrain.

Furthermore, There has been a lot of counterfeited Chinese products in the Zimbabwean market for example there have been mobile phones like Smadl, Novia instead of Nokia, Sansang instead of Samsang, Somy instead of Sony and many more. In the field of clothing and shoes the Chinese have labelled their clothing copying labels like Nike to Mike, Adidas to Abibas and many other different international brands are manipulated and counterfeited. According to Rupp 2008 in Zimbabwe Chinese goods are labelled as 'ZhingZhong' a term that is a slightly derogatory mimicking of Chinese language. This term has even been adapted to mean anything that is considered as not genuine.

The Zimbabwean's have raised concerns over the low quality goods and so has the government however the situation is still not resolved. According to *Chronicle* (2012) the Director-General in charge of training at the Information Office of State Council of the PRC Mr Hu Weiping acknowledged that his government has receive many complaints from the Zimbabwean government and business people complaining about the low quality goods that this was a result of some up-coming industries in the Wenzhong city in China. Chinese brand counterfeiting and low quality goods are very dangerous in the sense that they easily crush down the local thriving industries and chaining retailers in working for Chinese manufactures living comfortable in China, whilst these retailers will be considering themselves as self employed. The disheartening thing to most Africans and Zimbabweans is that the qualities of goods that are exported to the European Union are high-quality goods and Africa receives crumbs. Professor John Makumbe Cited in Weidlich (2007) opines that China exports high quality goods to Europe and America,

then dumps its low quality products in Africa and this has become a curse for Zimbabwe's textile industry. The Chinese strategic interests in Zimbabwe is to 'dump' their poor quality products while at the same time making huge amounts of profits from goods that would not have a market anywhere else.

In addition, China's low quality goods created unemployment in Zimbabwe. The Chinese have benefited in two main different ways when looking at their sub-standard products in Zimbabwe. Firstly, as highlighted above, they managed to off-load their poor quality products that could not stand a chance to compete anywhere else than in Africa where industrial production and infrastructural capacity is poor. Secondly they have managed to create employment for their citizens in Zimbabwe and this has led to high levels of unemployment. Professor John Makumbe also argued that the flood of Chinese goods suffocated the textile industry in Zimbabwe as Zimbabwe used to have its own factories manufacturing shoes, electrical appliances and uniforms but these industries collapsed due to Chinese products. Chinese products are of low quality hence cheaper than local goods, when considering the economic crisis in Zimbabwe most Zimbabweans buy Chinese products.

The research found out that the problem of low quality goods in Zimbabwe cannot be totally attributed to the Chinese interests in Zimbabwe. This is mainly because the Zimbabwean government has a role to play in regulating the quality of imports. According to Shava (2015) the Chinese do not only produce low quality material but also high quality material as for example the USA and Europe are the big consumers of Chinese products. The issue then is that the Zimbabwean government has allowed low quality goods to be dumped in Zimbabwe. Shava noted that the reason for the flooding of low quality goods is that is that the government has let short-time business people who are closely connected to the ruling ZANU PF government to come into the country and do murky business. The point that stands out is that the Zimbabwean government has failed to attract good business deals and quality goods and services due to the politicisation and predatory nature of the government.



## **Conclusion**

The chapter focused on the Chinese strategic interests in Zimbabwe. The interests of the Chinese in Zimbabwe are to gain access to Zimbabwean natural resources and due to the unfriendly investment grounds the Chinese have sought to protect their investments through extraction rights. The Chinese have also covertly been involved in the Zimbabwean political affairs thus interfering with Zimbabwe's sovereignty.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### Recommendations

The failure of the Zimbabwean government to ameliorate its economic and political throes through its engagements with China gives generic evidence that the government should hence, therefore attempt other options; below are the recommendations that are a result of the above research.

- ✓ The Zimbabwean government must craft the LEP document and put down modes and grounds of operations and engagements. The failure of the Zimbabwe-China relationship is perhaps caused by the fact that there is no strategic document that bears terms and conditions for engagement.
- ✓ The Zimbabwean government must not only 'look east' rather it must first look within, and then look east, west, north and south. That is to say the government must create an environment whereby investors from all dimensions come with capital and invest in the country. This can be done in the Chinese model of development or the Western model of development, however given the corruption in Zimbabwe the Western model of development seems to be fitting for Zimbabwe to adopt.
- ✓ The Zimbabwean government is mired in a political crisis and given the unpredictability of the ZANU PF internal fighting which could see the opposition taking over power in 2018. China should approach the Zimbabwean situation with caution as if the opposition is to take power China should be ready for Zimbabwe's potential turn to the West
- ✓ There is need for Zimbabwe to revise its engagement method with the Chinese. This can be done by first solving its relations with the West and secondly through the crafting of a national strategy that would rope in the opposition and civil groups. The reason for such an approach is to get rid of the mentality that most Zimbabweans have that the relationship between China and Zimbabwe is a ZANU PF-China relationship. This would be helpful to Zimbabwe and China as well as this would raise Zimbabwe's bargaining

power as well as raising Zimbabwe on China's investment priority list.

## **Conclusion**

China-Africa relations have attracted considerable controversy and misconceptions about the motives and intentions of their engagements. The relationship is mired in capitalistic tendencies and marred in dogmatised historical experiences that are used to mystify the engagements between China and Africa. The triumphant view is that China's economic development into a global power has also increased its hunger for natural resources and energy products to sustain and advance its position in the international system. The African continent has a vast pool of natural resources and hence China seeks to exploit these resources through the use of soft power and state capitalism. The other side of the argument is that China and Africa share common historical experiences of imperialist domination and thus their engagements are based on deep-rooted brotherhood and China's goodwill to help the continent develop.

The study noted that the Chinese activities and engagements in African countries are not uniform and there is no one Chinese policy for Africa. This is mainly because of the diversity and governmental issues of African countries. The Chinese have a placid framework of engagement in Africa. In the case of Zimbabwe, there is a clash of interests; some are mainly focused on Zimbabwe while partially tied to the China-Africa policy. The growth of China's is fuelled by the importation of natural resources, agricultural produce, and energy commodities however despite the fact that Zimbabwe can provide China with natural resources and agricultural produce it still falls short of earning a close economic position with China. Other African countries like Egypt, South Africa and Angola as well as Sudan have attracted Chinese attention. The Zimbabwean government has always over exaggerated its relations with China through floppy megaphone diplomacy.

The research identified that China's interests in Zimbabwe are not permanent and are driven by short-term interests in the exploitation of resources while at the same time the Chinese are threading carefully in Zimbabwe due to the fact that the country has the capacity to spring up into the African breadbasket. The main advantage of the Chinese is that they aided liberation

movements in Africa; however the China of today is worlds apart from the Mao era China. This is mainly because currently China is concerned with business other than ideology. Africa is caught up between two capitalisms- the Chinese state capitalism and Western private Capitalism. The evidence found by the research pointed out that most African countries are not aware of China's real face; they are caught up in the nostalgic mist of a pro-communist country while China has galloped into the global capitalist terrain. In the case of Zimbabwe the Zimbabwean government has realised the ills of their relationship with the Chinese as major politicians and even the President have complained about some of the Chinese activities in Zimbabwe as highlighted above. The failure to address the ills of the relations is primarily because Zimbabwe has no other international partner thus she has to allow China to exploit her for survival.