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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

MA CHINESE STUDIES

**Two African countries, two strategic  
Chinese aid packages, two different  
outcomes**

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15<sup>th</sup> July, 2016

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# 1 | Introduction

Over the past decades, China has evolved into a major world power and moved away from being an isolated nation to one integrated into the international community. China's new role in the international community is based on important developments and enormous changes in the fields of economics, diplomacy, military power and cultural deployment.

After the Second World War, the Chinese economy was extremely weak and underdeveloped. However, with the success of its rapid economic development since 1978, China managed to turn itself around and to move to a higher position in the world order (Lampton, 2008). As a result of the growing economy and the subsequent increase of their power, the Chinese increasingly focused on a change in the traditional world order (Shambaugh, 2013). Furthermore, there was a huge change in the way the Chinese dealt with diplomacy (d'Hooghe, 2014). It shifted from an almost invisible position to an outward and public presence. China's new role in the world order consequently contributes to a shift in the balance of power.

This thesis will discuss how Chinese presence, power and interference have evolved and how this has impacted the international community with a focus on the African continent. Going more in-depth with two case studies in Africa, Ethiopia and Zambia, it will describe the reasons for China's cooperation with both countries and the differences in her strategic approach and outcome. These two case studies are selected, because in those African nations Sino-African relations have a long history and Chinese involvement is very much present. By analyzing both Western and Chinese scholars and media sources, this thesis will use Western perspectives and local Chinese viewpoints on China's changing role in the world order and specifically on the African continent.

## 1.1 Thesis outline

In the following chapter an overview of China and its changing role in the international community will be given.

Chapter 3 will present the first case study: Ethiopia. It will examine Chinese presence and involvement in this country. The strategic approach of Ethiopia has been focused on the Chinese demand for constantly opening new markets for their export driven economy. It is essential for the Chinese economy to grow and keep its focus on internal stability. China approaches Ethiopia on an equal basis and supports Ethiopia's overall development. Ethiopia receives investment and aid in multiple fields, like infrastructure, education and loans. Ministerial exchanges are also an important part of Sino-Ethiopian relations with a focus on training and the sharing of experience on developmental and governmental levels. China also supports the development of the African Union, with its headquarters in Ethiopia, as a political body striving for stability and unity in the region.

In Chapter 4, the second case study Zambia will be discussed. The strategic approach of Zambia has been focused on the resource extraction industry and on all actions associated with improving this process. Zambia is well-known for its copper reserves and when the copper price collapsed, China started to embed herself in the mining industry. The governmental structure of Zambia, combined with highly personalized linkages with the private sector, made it relatively easy for the Chinese to penetrate the mining industry; this was very important for the Chinese domestic market which in general lacks natural resources.

The final chapter will present the conclusions of the findings of the thesis.

## 2 | China's changing role in the international community

Looking back at history, China has evolved into a very important member of the international community. Nowadays, China's presence cannot be ignored on the world stage. China is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, a member of the G20 and a participant in all major international summits (Shambaugh, 2013).

### 2.1 What is power?

To answer the question what the consequences are of China's growing power for the traditional world order, first the term 'power' should be defined. According to Lampton (2008), power is the ability to define and achieve one's purposes or goals. Power is demonstrated when a leader or national leadership efficiently achieves goals throughout the entire cycle of policy making, from agenda setting to formulation, implementation, and subsequent adaptation. Lampton (2008) further defines different levels of power, which he calls the three faces of power: money, might and minds. Below, each of these cases will be investigated.

### 2.2 Economics (Money)

The Chinese government prioritised foreign trade as an important pillar of its overall development and growth strategy (Shambaugh, 2013). China's government showed incredible leadership in a very challenging environment and managed to achieve Growth Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates of 10 percent for decades. Key to sustained high speed growth is the fact that China has very high national savings and re-invests approximately half of its GDP per year (Holz, 2015). China has been able to use its currency reserves as a form of power to become a global economic powerhouse. China's hunger for raw materials resulted in growing imports of large quantities of commodities and in building up reserves in order to protect itself from market fluctuations and possible interruptions of supply.

China chooses its partners carefully and therefore looks at the needs of trade partners. Another aspect of power is therefore very important: the power of the investor and donor. China's capability to organize aid and investment, debt relief, tax adjustments and other trade policies come as a complete package and makes China a relatively effective competitor (Lampton, 2008). Another important point is that Chinese investment comes without the political, humanitarian and environmental conditionality that developing countries can find difficult. Chinese investment is interest based, it is a business deal. As Carmody and Taylor (2010) put it, China does not prioritize the responsibility to protect, but instead the responsibility to profit.

## 2.3 Politics (Minds)

It took China a long time to be accepted by the international community and to become integrated into the international system. China and its relations with its neighbors and other major powers have endured cycles of estrangement, ambivalence and normalcy. These different phases make China aware of the delicate relationship it has with all other nations.

China experienced an evolution in its behaviour and role in the international world order. From opposition to this order during the 1950s-1970s, to a general passive position in the 1980s-1990s when it sought membership in international institutions to learn the rules of the road (Shambaugh, 2013). In the early 2000s, China gained confidence and became more outspoken and took a more selective position in the international institutions. In 2008 China became more active and sought to alter rules, actors and the balance of influence in the existing institutions and also to establish alternative institutions.

This also resulted in a change in the diplomacy of China. Previously, China was isolated and had little representation in the rest of the world. In the present time there is an almost worldwide coverage by its diplomatic service (I. d'Hooghe, personal communication, April 4, 2016).

The foundation of this change lies mainly in the fact that the Chinese leadership is structured as a hierarchical vertical pyramid. In China foreign policy decisions are made by the senior leaders and the ministries; these are China's top leaders and the many institutions in which they interact. The quality of Chinese leaders has improved throughout the last decades and this is directly linked to the implementation of their training system: the cadre training system that grooms talented young people and guides them to power in corporations, the military and government. This educational system provides more skilled, professional and communicative political actors. Its diplomats are trained well and were able to quickly learn how the system works and have the strong capability to adapt and adjust to changing governmental structures and political changes; this is also visible in China-Africa relations (I. d'Hooghe, personal communication, April 4, 2016). China has a long history of African relations which started out on an ideological basis, but later changed to a more strategic interest, which are stated in the ten year plans made by the government.

## 2.4 Defense (Might)

There has been a change in Chinese military objectives during the last decades. China's military has had a long history of using its military force to maintain domestic stability and guard its territorial integrity (Holslag, 2010). However, the globalization of Chinese economics and security interests are driving a major change in China's foreign and security policies, and therefore, also in Chinese military objectives changing China's role and potential in the world order in a dramatic way.

### **China's military modernization**

China's basic objectives are transforming its massive army, from one originally designed to defend its own territory and to maintain domestic stability, to one capable of fighting and winning conflicts against high-tech opponents (Chen & Feffer, 2009). The Chinese military has invested heavily in military technology industries and it is predicted that by 2045 China will attain global leadership in a select number of technical disciplines, achieving parity with the West in a selection of niche areas (United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, 2015).

Zooming into the African continent, other changes in China's involvement become visible.

## 2.5 China-Africa relations

China's changing role is also evident in Africa. As previously mentioned, Chinese strategic search for natural resources and export markets is among others the most important motivation for external investment. One of the regions that received a lot of strategic Chinese investment is Africa.

According to Shambaugh (2013), after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, China engaged in Africa in six principal ways. First, China fought a diplomatic war with Taiwan for sovereign recognition and admission to the United Nations (UN). With the support of Africa they were able to join the UN and this was the start of China truly entering the global stage (Luo, 2011).

Second, China supported African anti-colonial and anti-imperialist 'liberation' struggles. This is also confirmed by Luo (2013), who states that the period of the Western colonisation of Africa gave the African people a feeling of inferiority and damaged their self-respect; this negative influence still has not been completely reversed. After gaining independence and facing many developmental issues, there was a common notion in Africa that Western forces could not solve Africa's issues. China approached Africa on the basis of equality and this resonated well with the African state leaders and countered the feeling of inferiority.

Third, they sought to spread communist revolution and Maoist ideology throughout the continent and did this by manners of supporting revolutionary communist groups with weapons, money and training (Carmody & Taylor, 2010).

Fourth, Mao saw Africa as an intermediate zone of the struggle between the two super powers, the United States (US) and Russia. Fifth, after 1960 China competed with communist Russia for followers in Africa. Last, Africa became a test ground for Chinese diplomacy and foreign aid principles.

In 1989 China experienced a period of isolation by the West after the Tiananmen incident, however Africa showed China its true support when it continued diplomatic contact with China (Luo, 2011). This was highly appreciated by the Chinese officials.

Around the mid-1990s the diplomacy showed a commercial shift towards the import of raw materials and the export of manufactured goods (Shambaugh, 2013). Generally, China uses Africa for three strategic goals: to acquire natural resources, to enter new markets and to enhance her own international influence (Luo, 2011).

The expansion of markets for Chinese products is essential for Chinese economic growth. The consumer market of Africa has significant potential and by entering the African market, China secures new possibilities for China's domestic production market, but also reduces the risk of dependency on the European and US markets, which have endured financial crises (Luo, 2011).

The Sino-African relationship is used to counterbalance the traditional world order and this is used by both parties (He, 2000). By building strategic bonds with the African countries, China received significant support and was able to improve its position in the world order. Africa also uses China's political power through the strengthened relations, to become more independent and proactive.

### **2.5.1 Chinese dealing with large political bodies**

The establishment of the Forum of China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000 emphasized the importance of Africa to China. This is a very good example of China's changing attitude towards Africa and the shift in China's foreign policy. The African leaders of 54 countries were royally welcomed to China as very important guests and China paid for all expenses. This was a major change and a big turnaround in Chinese foreign diplomacy. Since that time, China-Africa relations have fully blossomed. Trade increased from less than 5 billion USD in 1995 to 127 billion USD in 2010 (Shambaugh, 2013). Even if Chinese aid levels are relatively low compared to other countries, the entwining of aid with other financial flows and the market dynamic does result in a significant impact on the development of Africa and the deployment of influence and power of China towards Africa (Power, Mohan, & Tan-Mullins, 2012).

Politically and by means of diplomacy China negotiates with African countries on an individual basis (Lammich, 2014). China prefers to deal this way as it enables them to make tailor-made arrangements with single countries.

Of course bodies like FOCAC and the African Union (AU) are very important for China and receive support by means of funding, training and diplomacy. But until the moment these institutions act as true functional bodies, China will always be on a dual policy path and strategically looking to secure their investments in the best possible way.

This is also the case in Chinese dealing with Europe. China is certain that it is more easy to develop trade and economic relations with European Union (EU) member states on an individual basis (Fan, 2008). For the Chinese government, the EU is a special and complex system with many international actors. In addition to this, the rotating presidency of the EU makes it even more difficult to negotiate with the EU as a whole (Fan, 2008). China values the EU as a diplomatic gateway, but for hard policy they engage with countries on an individual basis.

Good examples of this policy are the intensified relations with Greece and several countries in the Balkan. During the last European financial crisis Greece received economic aid and debt relief from China. Big parts of the Piraeus port near Athens were purchased by China and she is now also looking to expand in Thessaloniki. Both ports serving as a gateway into Europe (Chang, 2014).

In the eyes of China, the Balkans have a very important geopolitical position as they serve as a gateway into South-East Europe. The Balkans have potential to join the Asian and European logistics market and create a possibility to increase China-EU trade cooperation. After transferring into a market economy, countries in South-East Europe were in need for foreign investment. China stepped in and by doing so, bypassed Brussels causing concern to influential European leaders, like Angela Merkel (Xiao, 2015).

### 2.5.2 Changing security issues

As Chinese business expanded across the world, the Chinese government had to cope with global risks for its overseas interests. Traditionally constrained by the long-standing principle of non-interference in other states' affairs, Chinese foreign policy had to adapt, as protecting its overseas interests with a hands-off approach is an impossible task (Duchâtel & Parello-Plesner, 2014). The Chinese government needs to come up with new policies to prevent and manage crises, and at the same time protect its power and influence. However, not only have Chinese companies expanded overseas, there also has been an increasing number of Chinese living overseas, who need protection. Estimates put the number of Chinese nationals overseas at more than 5 million, including up to 2 million in Africa (Duchâtel & Parello-Plesner, 2014).

#### **Chinese immigrants and migration**

The massive migration to Africa has a number of reasons. Due to the fierce competition in China's domestic market, Chinese business men had to look for opportunities in Africa as they were in need for new markets (Li P. , 2010). After setting up business they employed mostly Chinese workers instead of local African people. African development and projects supported by the Chinese government also gave Chinese workers a chance to migrate to Africa (Li P. , 2010). The main reason being the decreasing number of job opportunities in for example road construction and general infrastructure. These labour contracts enabled Chinese migrants to support their families back in China.

Also socio-economic pressures became a reason for intensified Chinese migration to Africa.

It was firstly motivated by considerations of business and trade, but now it is also seen as a means to solve financial problems at home. With China's mass population, job opportunities are scarce and salaries are low; overseas job opportunities, on the other hand, often come with better conditions. This makes migration an attractive prospect for young citizens who have to cope with socio-economic pressures (Driessen, 2015). Miriam Driessen (2015) describes a group of those migrants as 'mortgage slaves' (fangnu, 房奴). In Chinese society, the ownership of a house is a crucial asset in the competitive marriage market and it takes one higher up the social ladder (Driessen, 2015). These 'mortgage slaves' are young men with a rural background and they migrate to Ethiopia on five year contracts to be able to earn sufficient money for the purchase of residential property.

That the increased number of migrants to Africa forced the Chinese authorities in a dramatically changed role is shown by the recent events in Libya. During the time of the Arab Spring in 2011, a series of popular uprisings against the authoritarian governments in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya created a hostile and dangerous environment. Before 2011, Chinese companies had an expanding footprint in Libya, with investments ranging from oil to construction and telecom. After the unrest began, the Chinese citizens were to be rescued by the Chinese government, state-owned companies and military, working jointly in the largest evacuation mission the PRC had ever mounted (Duchâtel & Parello-Plesner, 2014).

With Chinese companies and projects spread out across an area three times larger than France, workers were evacuated by land, sea and air. The Chinese government speaks of around 35,860 evacuees, who were taken out through up to eight different countries, with the highest numbers returning home via Tunisia, Malta and Greece (Duchâtel & Parello-Plesner, 2014). The evacuation task force decided to immediately deploy chartered civil aircraft, cargo ships in nearby waters, and Chinese fishing vessels carrying needed living and medical supplies. The operation was successful: by the 3rd of March 2011, 35,860 Chinese had been evacuated. The Chinese state covered the cost of the operation, which was according to the Chinese press, 152 million USD in total, or 4238 USD per evacuee (Duchâtel & Parello-Plesner, 2014).

Zooming into the African continent, other changes in China's involvement become visible.

### **Concentrating on changes**

A particular case of the changing role of China is the conflict in Darfur. Firstly it is only business, then it slowly changes into a more humanitarian viewpoint and lastly it becomes a situation where a nation is sending armed troops for a UN peace keeping mission.

China has a strong trade relation with Sudan, however the mass killings in Darfur brought tensions to these trade relations. The UN Security Council has been trying to find a solution for this conflict, in which China has long obstructed any real outcomes, since it follows a non-interference policy and does not wish to engage in a country's internal affairs. However, this stance changed slightly as China began to realize that the case of Darfur could cause them harm: their engagement with Sudan presented a bad image of China. In 2007 China began to advise Sudan to be more open towards UN peace support personnel and, behind the scenes, Chinese diplomats influenced the Sudanese government to change their involvement in Darfur (Carmody & Taylor, 2010). China reminded Sudan of the importance of Chinese investment and their intimate economic relationship. This was emphasized in 2010 when Chinese companies were the largest investors in Sudan and the Sudanese government could collect around 30 billion USD in oil revenues (Carmody & Taylor, 2010). The tension that accompanied Chinese investment in Sudan, could also become a constraint for further economic engagement. However, China still firmly adhered to its non-interference policy abroad. The Chinese large State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) in Sudan, for whom the Chinese state can guide decisions and proscribe them, are an important tool, as they give the Chinese state flexibility and power in its relations with Sudan and throughout Africa (Carmody & Taylor, 2010). Finally, the Chinese played an important role in the peace negotiations with Darfur. The threat of declining or pulling investment out of a country gives China a lot of influence as is demonstrated in the case of Sudan.

In December 2014, China made another unprecedented move. It announced that it was contributing 700 combat troops to UNMISS (a United Nations mission) in South Sudan, to join the 350 Chinese unarmed peacekeepers already present and this became China's largest mission abroad (Duchâtel & Parello-Plesner, 2014). Thus, China has enhanced the protection of its oil interests and citizens, working through and enhancing its involvement in the UN system. Chinese experts generally believe that remaining within the UN framework bestows international legitimacy, while providing China with the opportunity to secure its own interests overseas (Duchâtel & Parello-Plesner, 2014).

### **Going more in-depth with Ethiopia and Zambia**

This thesis will discuss Chinese involvement and its strategic approach in two African countries, Ethiopia and Zambia. The reasons for Chinese involvement in these two countries differ, as they both serve a different purpose in China's foreign policy and trade.

Ethiopia is a strategic choice for China; home to the African Union, the political body that represents the whole of Africa, Ethiopia serves as a gateway to the rest of Africa. China uses Ethiopia as a showcase for the possibilities of China's investment and cooperation on the African continent, thus providing China with the opportunity to secure new markets.

Zambia is a resource-rich country with massive copper reserves, whereas China herself lacks natural resources; this was the reason for Chinese investment in the natural resource extraction sector in Zambia. All Chinese involvement is focused on an efficient export chain.

# 3 | Ethiopia

## 3.1 Introduction Ethiopia

In terms of size and population, Ethiopia is one of the largest countries both in the region and in Africa as a whole. Besides a brief period of Italian occupation during the Second World War, Ethiopia is the only African country that does not have a colonized history. Ethiopia is an ethnic federal republic, made up of 9 ethnically based provinces, and it is home to the headquarters of the African Union. The development of improved Sino-Ethiopian relations was subject to a slow start until President Meles Zenawi accelerated the process after he came to power. The Chinese offered Ethiopia a complete package of aid, trade, investments, loans and education. One very important aspect of Sino-Ethiopian relations is the strategic exchange of officials and education on a ministerial level. Chinese involvement aims to contribute to the overall development of Ethiopia, which is very important to China in creating an export market for its products. From a shared ideological basis, Ethiopia made a strategic choice that provided China with the gateway to the rest of the African continent. Ethiopia gave China the opportunity to promote its going-global-strategy and to serve as a showcase for other African nations in relation to her continuous search for new export markets.

## 3.2 History of Sino-Ethiopian relations

During the imperial period of 1923-1974 China was not perceived well by the ruling monarchical regime under Haile Selassie. This was largely a consequence of China's aspiration to introduce the 'Chinese revolutionary model' to African countries (Gofie & Venkataraman, 2015). Haile Selassie had close relations with the US and China was viewed in a relatively negative way; this image persisted even in the wake of Prime Minister Zhou Enlai's visit to Ethiopia in 1964, the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1970, and Emperor Haile Selassie's visit to China in October 1971 (Adem, 2012). One of the major events in 1971, and a real game changer in Sino-Ethiopian relations, was the moment that Ethiopia supported China in their efforts to join the UN. Before this China had strongly and openly opposed the short Italian occupation during the Second World War and in exchange for this support they sided with China to support their application as a member of the UN (Gamora & Vekatarman, 2009).

In 1974 Ethiopian military officers (The Dergue) overthrew the emperor and seized political power. During that time China and the Soviet Union were in a power race over communist leadership on the African continent and in 1977 Ethiopia swore loyalty to the Soviet Union. To Ethiopia's disgust, China provided its enemy Somalia with arms and provided Eritrea, which sought independence from Ethiopia, with assistance (Shinn, 2005). This was for the reason

that China sought to counterbalance Soviet presence in Ethiopia and limit Soviet international activities (Gamora & Vekataraman, 2009).

China strategically approached Moscow in 1982 to reinforce the bilateral ties. China's relations with the Soviet Union took a positive turn and this also improved Sino-Ethiopian relations. In 1988 China reappeared on the diplomatic radar of Ethiopia to which it extended a loan of 15 million USD for the design and construction of a national stadium and ring road in the capital of Ethiopia Addis Ababa (Adem, 2012). This was initiated shortly after the leader of Ethiopia visited China and signed the Sino-Ethiopian Agreement for Economic and Technological Cooperation. This development did not last long as the government was overthrown in 1991 by the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) with the support of the US and Meles Zenawi became Prime Minister. The Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the smaller organization that created and dominated the EPRDF, had long-standing affiliations with leftist ideology, including Maoism (Adem, 2012).

In light of the decline of leftism and the ideological triumph of the West (and considering it was the West, that blessed and even facilitated EPRDF's march to Addis Ababa in May 1991), EPRDF deferred any ideological solidarity with Beijing when it assumed power (Adem, 2012). But this changed in the years after.

In 1995 the Ethiopian leadership debated on the foreign policy direction of the nation with regards to increasing pressure from the West. The EPRDF decided that they wanted to resist these pressures from the West by looking into the direction of other countries that did not impose the same policies and ideology as the West. China was regarded as a strong power with an anti-Western ideology and this suited the EPRDF. Representatives of the Ethiopian government were sent to China to initiate a new relationship and to show its wish to learn from China's experience in market-led socialism and agricultural development (Adem, 2012). Prime Minister Meles Zenawi visited China for the first time in late 1995.

### **1996-2005**

When President Jiang Zemin visited Ethiopia in 1996, Sino-Ethiopian relations acquired new and greater significance. This is an important moment in time as the foundation for the Sino-Ethiopian relations was laid and consolidated. From this time on, relations between the two countries expanded and flourished. In 2003 the Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited Ethiopia and concluded various agreements.

## **Elections of 2005**

In 2005 elections were held in Ethiopia and even though the EPRDF scored poorly, they managed to form a new government, with Zenawi again as Prime Minister and continue as the ruling party of Ethiopia. However, their re-election was accompanied by a crackdown on the opposition who had scored really well in the elections and this resulted in criticism from the West, including the suspension of a new lending program of the World Bank (Adem, 2012).

After the crackdown, donors decided to suspend direct budgetary support in order to pressure the Ethiopian government to reconcile with the opposition. However, donors did not reduce funds but channeled them through other programs with stricter monitoring and earmarking procedures attached (Hackenesch, 2013). This was done to provide a basis to continue cooperating with the government. By stopping the funds completely, the donors risked being excluded and there would be a risk that Ethiopia's government would further deepen its relations with China.

## **2006 and after**

Furthermore, in late 2006 Zenawi visited China and after this event a number of arrangements followed. These included the noteworthy agreement on the establishment of a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in 2008. This SEZ was primarily aimed at the construction of the manufacturing industry. Furthermore, China's Export-Import (Exim) Bank also agreed to provide 170 million USD for the building of condominiums to address the housing problem in Ethiopia's major cities. Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Ethiopia increased from virtually zero in 2004 to an annual amount of 74 million USD in 2009, according to the Chinese Ministry of commerce (WorldBank, 2012).

Ethiopian Prime Minister Zenawi played a very important role in the Sino-Ethiopian relations. He is regarded by Chinese leaders as an effective expositor and defender of China as a model and partner for Africa (Adem, 2012). His active engagement on the international level further enhanced his effectiveness for China. For example under his leadership, the Ethiopian parliament issued a resolution to support China's Anti-Secession Law, a law strongly criticized in the West as it provided China with the legal basis to take military action against Taiwan in case of unilateral declaration of independence (Thakur, 2009). One year later, Ethiopia, together with other African countries, prevented the passing of a resolution condemning China's human rights record at the United Nations Human Rights Commission (Gamora & Mathews, 2010).

For China, Ethiopia is an important political and economic ally in its African policy. Chinese officials see Ethiopia as a relative pole of stability in the region and having a government with a clear development vision and this provides it with a strong base for Sino-African relations (Hackenesch, 2013). China's engagement in Ethiopia goes beyond aid, consisting of a comprehensive package of political cooperation, official flows, investment and trade (Hackenesch, 2013). Technological cooperation between Ethiopia and China also plays a considerable role in China's engagement with the whole continent as a promotor of development. Through its important position in the African Union and the South-South Cooperation, a UN initiative for cooperation between developing countries, Ethiopia demonstrates the benefits of Sino-Ethiopian relations

(Guo & Zhang, 2016). These forms of engagement come with limited political conditions and this is all largely welcomed by the Ethiopian government. In the next paragraph the different forms of Chinese engagement in a number of important sectors will be discussed.

### **3.3 Chinese involvement in agriculture, infrastructure, telecom and manufacturing**

#### **Agriculture**

As mentioned before, the agricultural sector is extremely important to Ethiopia. From 1970 onwards, China started to engage in the Ethiopian agriculture sector and throughout the years multiple projects for agricultural cooperation were implemented (Brautigam & Tang , 2012). The official African Policy White Paper of 2006 emphasized the cooperation on land development, agricultural technology and food security (Brautigam & Tang , 2012). On 18 December 2006, the two countries signed economic and technological cooperation agreements. Significant developments followed from this: the construction, at the request of the Ethiopian government, of the Ethiopia China Agricultural Technological Demonstration Center, and the provision of Chinese instructors on agricultural training for various parts of the country (Alemu & Scoones, 2013).

#### **Infrastructure**

Chinese firms are dominating both rural and urban road construction in Ethiopia. This dominance has been accelerating since 2006. Observations made by Geda (2008), reveal that this dominance is partly due to low bids offered by the Chinese firms and partly to the diplomatic and political ties the Chinese government has made with the Ethiopian government.

The decline in local Chinese infrastructure contracts has forced Chinese construction companies to search for contracts abroad (Driessen, 2015). The construction sector in Africa offers many possibilities for Chinese companies. In Ethiopia most road work projects are not profitable, but Chinese contractors, most often SOE's, absorb the losses made in the Ethiopian road building sector. These companies are backed by company savings and state banks loans; and so by taking up such projects in Ethiopia, the Chinese government can create job opportunities abroad for Chinese road workers, who would otherwise be unemployed in their own country.

#### **Telecom**

Chinese firms are also winning large projects in the telecom sector. In 2009, the Chinese telecom company ZTE announced that it was working in partnership with the China Development Bank to venture abroad. This successful collaboration resulted in the company winning Ethiopia's Millennium Telecommunication Projects contracts (Brautigam, 2010). The increased involvement from China in the telecom sector, pushing out competitors or just making it impossible for other companies to step in, created a monopoly situation in favour of the Chinese entrepreneurs (Geda, 2008).

## **Chinese manufacturing and export**

China is constantly seeking increasing export possibilities and Ethiopia is a good market for Chinese products; the level of trade between the two countries has seen an enormous increase since 2003 (Geda, 2008). Manufactured goods are among the most important products imported by Ethiopia from China. This is partly beneficial for the domestic market, as more Ethiopians are able to buy the cheaper Chinese goods. However, on the other hand, this influx of Chinese manufactured goods, undermines local business and can have a negative effect on the local Ethiopians market share.

All the above mentioned sectors are being promoted as an example of Chinese entrepreneurship and opportunities and China uses Ethiopia to export this line of thinking and working across the borders into the rest of Africa (Geda & Meskel, 2010).

## **3.4 Chinese tools**

### **3.4.1 FOCAC**

According to Li (2014), the African state leaders were the most important factor that contributed to the establishment of the FOCAC. They had on many occasions proposed an official Sino-African cooperation mechanism. However, this was denied by the Chinese government until 1999, because China's policy was formerly based on unilateral contacts with individual nations. The Chinese government then realized the urgency of reinforcing Sino-African cooperation because in China's view it was necessary to improve overall ties with Africa. China felt the increasing expansion in relations, on the part of US and other developed countries, with Africa through official mechanisms and by reinforcing their own relations they saw an expansion in their influential position and control over Africa's resources (Li A. , 2014).

From 2000 onwards, Chinese cooperation with Africa has expanded and intensified at immense speed. From the FOCAC forum in 2006 it was obvious that China was seeking alternative ways from aid for partnership with African countries. The fact that Ethiopia is the one country in Africa that has benefited from all projects mentioned in the FOCAC of 2006, shows the importance of Ethiopia to the Chinese (Guo & Zhang, 2016). Such projects are the establishments of rural schools, the Malaria Prevention Centre, The Technical and Vocational Training Centre, the Agricultural Demonstration Centre, and scholarships for students to study in China (Hackenesch, 2013).

### **3.4.2 Ministerial exchanges**

Ministerial visits were often at the request of the Ethiopian government, with ministers stating that they were seeking inspiration from China on economic reform policies and other governmental issues. These exchanges could last from ten days up to one month and since 2006 about 200 Ethiopian officials annually have taken part in these programs (Hackenesch, 2011).

These types of visits have not only helped to transfer general knowledge about China and create a positive environment for Sino-Ethiopian relations, but have also provided an opportunity

to show the results of China's opening-up policy and Chinese development (He, 2007). This has had an impact on Ethiopian views on reform policies (Hackenesch, 2013), helping to foster a positive attitude towards China amongst Ethiopian officials, which Adem (2013) defines as Sino-optimism. Sino-optimism is prevalent amongst the rulers of Ethiopia, who see in China a partner to help overcome the challenges of modernity. The Ethiopian government sees China's model as similar to their own strategy, focused on a strong centralized government and political party, which is strongly involved in economic development and growth (Thakur, 2009).

### **3.4.3 Party-to-Party relations**

China is viewed as a special developmental partner and Ethiopia can learn extensively from China by experience sharing. The interstate cooperation between China and Ethiopia goes even further than government relations: there are also party-to-party relations that play a leading role in bilateral relations (Liang, 2013). Relationships between China's and Ethiopia's ruling parties serve as an important channel to strengthen bilateral relations. The cooperation between the EPRDF and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has intensified since 2005 and has institutionalized its relations by signing a Memorandum of Understanding in 2010. For the EPRDF the CCP became the most important international partner and meetings between the parties provide a channel to discuss developmental experiences, the role of the party in the state and party succession strategies (Hackenesch, 2013).

## **3.5 China's interest in Ethiopia**

Although Ethiopia lacks natural resources, it is still of strategic interest for the Chinese. China recognizes the geostrategic importance of Ethiopia and wishes to use it as the gateway into the rest of Africa. China positions itself as a developing country with an understanding of African needs due to its own history and experiences. China treats Ethiopia with different principles and perceptions compared with other traditional donors and this is very much appreciated by the Ethiopian government.

### **3.5.1 African Union**

Facing the new era of globalization, the African state leaders realized that African countries had a weak position in the economic environment. To meet the challenges of economic globalization, they saw the need to establish a political entity capable of unification on the continent and having one unified voice to speak in the international community (Huang, 2002). Therefore the African Union (AU) was established, with its headquarters in the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. The AU is the political body that represents the whole of Africa and promotes cooperation among the independent nations on the continent. The AU created a common identity and awareness among the African people and restored Africa's self-confidence and dignity (Luo, 2013).

China's choice for making a stronghold in Ethiopia will help and allow them to extend their influence in the rest of Africa. As former president Hu Jintao stated: "Ethiopia could play a pivotal role in enabling China to consolidate its cooperation with other African countries"

(Adem, 2012). Leggett (2005) also confirms the building up of political clout in the region. One of the most striking examples of this build-up is to be found in Addis Ababa. The Chinese constructed the African Union Conference Center as a prestige project that is regarded as the ‘rise of Africa’ (d’Hooghe, 2014). The building is the tallest structure in the whole of Ethiopia and the largest Chinese government construction project since the Tanzania-Zambia railway project. As the host of the AU, the visibility of Chinese engagement in Ethiopia and Addis Ababa has a multiplier effect throughout the continent.

In 2007 the first formal strategic dialogue meeting of the AU was held at its headquarters in Ethiopia’s capital, Addis Ababa (Lammich, 2014); from the start of the AU, China was the first country to have permanent representation with China’s Ethiopian ambassadors (Luo, 2013). This provided China with an important strategic position in the AU, as they had a front-row seat. The second meeting was held in Beijing in 2009, which illustrates the strategic exchange of officials. The number of high-level visits between the AU and China has increased in recent years (He, 2007).

China attaches great importance to conducting exchanges with the AU to share developmental experiences and governance methods. China has learned how to achieve political stability and economic development and is willing to share her experiences with the African countries (Luo, 2013). Furthermore, China is providing the AU with financial support and therefore enables the AU to improve its ability to act as well as strengthening its position in the region (Gao J. , 2012).

In 2011, China provided about 4 million USD in direct assistance and organized training workshops for various officials in the fields of public governance, diplomacy and poverty reduction. These workshops can be summed up under ‘What Africa can learn from China’, as they focused on the Chinese approach to these topics (Lammich, 2014). In this way, China positions itself as a mentor for African officials and finds itself having direct access to important strategic representatives. Girma Birru, Ethiopia’s Minister of Trade until 2010, agrees as he claims: “China has become our most reliable partner and there is a lot we can learn from Beijing, not just in economics but politics as well” (Leggett, 2005). The prospect is that the AU has the potential to become a crucial actor on the continent and that it has a lot to gain from an intensified relationship with China. This works both ways, as China emphasizes the importance of the relations by investing in the AU’s infrastructure and capacity (Lammich, 2014).

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang stated in 2014 that the AU is exerting an ever bigger influence in Africa and the world at large (Mu, 2014). The organization has served as a banner in leading African countries toward solidarity and progress. He claimed that China has always supported the AU in playing a guiding role in the African integration process, a leading role in safeguarding peace and security in Africa (Mu, 2014).

Cooperation between China and the AU has enhanced Sino-African relations. To constantly upgrade this process between China and the AU in the future, it is necessary to introduce new cooperation mechanisms and frameworks to keep momentum (Luo, 2013).

One of these initiatives was announced in 2015 by Zhang Ming, China’s Vice-Foreign Minister

(Mu, 2015). To further strengthen its diplomatic relations with African countries, China has officially opened a permanent mission to the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa. The mission, set to have political, economic, cultural, peace and security departments, is said to benefit comprehensive cooperation and exchange between China and the AU.

The importance of the AU was also highlighted by Chinese President Xi Jinping, who pointed out that China attaches great importance to developing relations with the AU to support the development of the African integration process and its role in international and regional affairs (Chen Y. , 2015). Xi announced that China will always support “African solutions to African problems in the African way,” and enhance the principle of non-interference in internal affairs (Chen Y. , 2015). He further stated that China and the AU should strengthen communication and coordination on major international issues, to safeguard the common interests of developing countries at the UN and other multilateral fora.

A united Africa is very important to China. A stable African continent has significant potential for the Chinese. In the economic aspect, a unified African market could expand economic and trade cooperation for China (Li A. , 2014). By participating in the economy of Africa, China not only plays a role in Africa’s development, but creates economic possibilities for the Chinese people. This is an important motive for the Chinese government to be involved in Ethiopia, as its strategic location provides China with possible new markets.

By investing in African infrastructure and industrialization, China has been able to win the confidence of the African leadership and to obtain strategic support from African countries in international issues through the political influence of the AU. For instance, the AU supports China’s stance in the South China Sea dispute (China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016). AU officials pledge that the countries involved should enter negotiations with China to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea region.

The AU might enable China to deal with Africa in bulk (Amosu, 2007). The big setback is that until now, the African continent lacks a coordinated mechanism and most of the African leaders negotiate with China on an individual basis, pursuing individual interest (Lammich, 2014). It is therefore very important for China to upgrade the role of the AU, because it could provide a very efficient entrée to the other African countries.

### **3.5.2 The showcase-case**

The intensification of Sino-Ethiopian relations and the considerable volume of Chinese officials visiting Ethiopia compared to other African states can be explained by China’s political and, to some extent, economic interests. Ethiopia has thus become a reflection of China’s wider ambitions in Africa and the changes it foresees for the region (Gamora & Mathews, 2010 ; Xinhua, 2016). In return for China’s economic support, China receives what it was expecting from Ethiopia: unabashed diplomatic support for deeper Chinese involvement in Africa (Adem, 2012).

Chinese entrepreneurship and influence are being used in this Ethiopian showcase to increase interest from other African nations and as a result it shows that influence has expanded beyond

Ethiopian borders. That even the West is being affected by this way of working and cooperation becomes clear in the next paragraph.

### **3.6 Influence beyond borders**

The Ethiopian government is increasingly using its cooperation with China and other emerging economies as a bargaining chip in negotiations with European donors (Hackenesch, 2013). The Chinese engagement therefore strengthens the ability of the Ethiopian government to implement its development strategy, increasingly more independently of traditional donors' preferences. Ethiopia uses China as an alternative to traditional donors and can therefore manipulate traditional ways of assistance.

There has been a change in these forms of aid. Previously, the Ethiopian government worked with China and European donors on separate terms. China rarely took part in donor coordination rounds or donor meetings with the government, so there were limited contact points between European donors and China (Hackenesch, 2013). China approached the Ethiopian government by itself and did not liaise with other donors about their strategy. This is also because of the different concepts about and content of aid that China has in contrast to traditional donors.

However, according to Hackenesch (2013), this shift became clear in 2010 when the Ethiopian government presented its development strategy to its international partners. Ethiopia invited its traditional donors, but also representatives from China, India, Brazil and Russia. For the first time, they were directly facing each other at this event. During the meetings representatives from China not only supported Ethiopia on sensitive issues, they also pledged to increase their financial support for Ethiopia's developmental plans. This was a direct confrontation and this increased the pressure on traditional donors to make reforms in their aid system. Traditional donors now understand that they have to make greater efforts to remain attractive partners for Ethiopia. In other words, China is forcing traditional donors to change the policy and manner of their aid programs; for China this results in a form of expanded influence on the world stage.

This is also confirmed by Li (2008), who states that international aid and organizations were based previously on Western models and principles, but with China's involvement in Africa, this is gradually changing. In Africa the vision concerning aid from foreign countries is shifting and the Western aid concept is slowly being demolished.

With the help of China's rapid development, opportunities and increasing international influence, the AU and African countries not only received a substantial amount of money, technology and developmental experience, but were also able use China's influence to elevate their own international status. This created a situation for Africa in which they could distinguish themselves and acquire a more competitive position in the global economy (Luo, 2013). For example, China's investment in Ethiopia helped the country to develop products for the international market, and improve its export capacity, thus improving Ethiopia's overall development (Liang, 2014). This is a strategic choice for China, as a wealthier and better-off Ethiopia, creates an expanding market for Chinese products and provides more opportunities and wealth for the Chinese people.

China also uses its influence to draw more attention to the development of the African continent. For example, China's permanent representative to the UN, Liu Jieyi, recently pledged for more support and assistance from the UN for the AU (Hua, 2016). He stated that the UN should further support the AU in the peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue, consultation and mediation on the basis of respecting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all the African countries (Hua, 2016). He also noted that China supported the African Peace and Security Architecture Roadmap (2016-2020) created by the AU, which prioritises regions for conflict prevention and post-conflict building. Liu claimed that China urged the UN to strengthen cooperation with the AU and support the AU in implementing this Roadmap. A stable and peaceful African continent is in China's best interest, so she will use all her influence to maintain and improve this situation in Africa.

# 4 | Zambia

## 4.1 Introduction Zambia

Zambia was a former British colony, which gained its independence in 1964 and is historically well-known for its copper reserves. China herself lacks copper resources; she is dependent on the import of these natural resources to make full use of both domestic and foreign markets and Zambia was selected for this motive (Gao S. , 2004). China's changing role in Zambia can be seen in its progressive involvement throughout the decades. It has changed from a role based on ideological principles and similarities to one whose basis is investment and trade. It is China's priority to safeguard Zambia's natural resources to ensure the development of China's domestic production market. Chinese diplomacy shifted to a more outgoing stance which promoted investment, thereby exporting its Chinese business mentality to Zambia. Zambia's political structure further enabled China to embed itself into Zambian society. This all led to an increasing Chinese business involvement and China made sure that economic development in Zambia created dependency on Chinese support and contributions.

## 4.2 History of Sino-Zambian relations

Zambia's mining industry was established in the late 1920s by the British who discovered large copper deposits (Thurlow & Wobst, 2004). The British left Zambia as one of the poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with high inequality. After gaining independence from Britain, there was considerable hope for the future among the Zambians, because it was felt Zambia could start building itself up as a result of its copper reserves (Kopiński & Polus, 2011).

Zambia achieved independence in 1964, with Kenneth Kaunda as its first president starting his decolonization and 'Zambinization' of the Zambian economy. Kaunda was a well-known supporter of the African liberation movements as well as a strong supporter of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) (Kopiński & Polus, 2011). In 1955 the NAM was created during the Bandung conference in Indonesia and was aimed at the promotion of African and Asian economic and cultural cooperation as well as opposition to colonialization. It was attended by a large number of third world countries and China was an important actor in this organization. After this conference, cooperation between Zambia and China commenced and this can be seen as the first visible network in Sino-African relations and thereafter also the Sino-Zambian relations (Kopiński & Polus, 2011).

## Copperbelt

Historically, Zambia was most well-known for its large reserves of copper. Throughout the 1960s-1970s Kaunda and his party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP), profited from favourable copper prices. However, this dependence on copper was also the heart of the country's future economic problem, and gaining control over the copper industry played an important role in internal politics (Kopiński & Polus, 2011). To guarantee maximum revenue from the resource extraction sector, Kaunda nationalized the two large copper companies into state-owned *Zambian Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM)* (Kragelund, 2009). This had beneficial aspects for the *Zambian* employees working in the mines, as nationalization brought them welfare provisions like health care, education, subsidized housing and pensions (Negi, 2011). In 1960 Zambia achieved middle-income status and it was expected to grow further (Thurlow & Wobst, 2004). The *Zambian* government was highly dependent on copper revenues for its legitimacy and ability to stay in power. However, this rise in middle-income status was short-lived and the unstable economy of Zambia had to face a huge hit with the commodity crisis of the 1970s. Between 1974 and 1994, Zambia witnessed its per capita income decline by 50 percent, and 80 percent of the country fell into extreme poverty (Spilsbury, 2012). Thus after more than 50 years of independence, Zambia still is one of the world's poorest states and two-thirds of the *Zambians* live below the poverty line (Kopiński & Polus, 2011).

In order to receive developmental assistance from the IMF and the World Bank after this great economic decline, the *Zambian* government was obliged to privatize the ZCCM but the government repeatedly stalled this process (Lungu, 2008). Eventually, the privatization of the ZCCM was ensured through the *Mines and Mineral Act* in 1995 and it was sold to a number of different parties, including investors from Canada, Britain, India, Switzerland, South Africa and China. At that time, Zambia's economic condition was critical and this left the *Zambian* government in a weak position to negotiate good terms. According to the act of 1995 the *Zambian* government was to enter *Development Agreements (DA's)* with third parties and to negotiate the terms of sales for each individual case (Lungu, 2008). These were shrouded in secrecy and often the people responsible for the selling of the mines were accused of corruption (Spilsbury, 2012). The DA's mostly exempted companies from the paying of pensions for employees, taxes and from many national laws. Additionally, companies were assured of stability periods varying from 15 to 20 years (Lungu, 2008).

During this time, the *Zambian* government had experienced a change in leadership. In 1991 the *Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD)* won the democratic elections and Frederick Chiluba became President of Zambia (Negi, 2011). However, the increase of poverty after the privatization made Chiluba implement anti-democratic restrictions over the party during the multi-party elections of 1996 and a purge on the MMD cabinet (Spilsbury, 2012). The MMD was even charged with the misuse of state resources to its own advantage (Von Soest, 2006), which clearly shows the corrupt nature of Chiluba's government. Either way, Zambia was in the need of financial assistance and had to open itself up to foreign investors.

### **Sino-Zambian relations**

There is a long history of Sino-Zambian relations. Even prior to Zambia's independence, China had a presence in Zambia and all of Zambia's post-independence presidents referred to China as an 'all weather friend'. It was Zambia who made an important contribution to the resolution in the United Nations General Assembly to restore China's seat in the Security Council (Carmody, Hampway, & Sakala, 2012).

Since independence Sino-Zambian relations have blossomed and often the historical links that have their roots in the personal friendship between Kaunda and the Chinese leader Zhou Enlai, who visited the country multiple times after it gained independence, are mentioned (Kragelund, 2009). The friendship and the Sino-Zambian relations in the early days were based on a shared ideology and changed over the years in a strategic bond focused on export of commodities to China.

These good relations found expression in the construction of the Tanzania-Zambia railway (TAZARA or TANZAM), which was completed ahead of schedule in 1970. This railway line links Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, to Kapiri Mposhi in Zambia and was built to facilitate Zambian copper exports following the closure of the traditional southern route as a result of sanctions on South Africa (Carmody et al., 2012). Recently, China waived some of the debts relating to the construction of the railway: as China is the world largest consumer of copper, it is eager to cultivate good relations with the Zambian government. This example clearly shows that the development of the host country is not the priority of the Chinese; it is the business deal and the fact that local people benefit from the railway as a means of transportation, is secondary. The construction of the railway also established a long lived Chinese business engagement with Zambia and served both symbolic and practical functions. By this geographical infrastructure China was able to project its power and expand its influence throughout Zambia (Carmody et al., 2012).

## **4.3 Zambian political structure and Chinese involvement**

### **Governmental structure**

After independence in 1964, the first free elections were held in 1991 and the MMD won on the basis of a promise to enhance structural adjustments and to provide more transparent and accountable governance (Thurlow & Wobst, 2004). However, centralized control over state affairs remain a hallmark of the African countries and this certainly applies to Zambia. Many African countries are presidential, in the sense that power is personalized in the figure of a president, who has significant influence over policy making. In Zambia, the permanent secretaries of the ministries are political appointees, rather than career civil servants, who represent the 'institutional memory' of a ministry and are periodically reshuffled by the President (Haglund, 2008).

This governmental structure, combined with highly personalized linkages with the private sector, enables an informal and non-transparent political culture. These structures open up channels for firms and their executives to engage in personal relationships with policy makers. This also applies to Chinese firms who engage in Zambian business. This business environment

suits the Chinese well, as their way of working is characterized by personal and network relations (Gadzala, 2010). Because Zambia is organized like this it has been relatively easy for Chinese diplomats and entrepreneurs to get a foothold in Zambian society and this combination has ensured that the Chinese have been able to penetrate the Zambian resource extraction industry.

### **Growing Chinese involvement in the mining industry**

The privatization process of the ZCCM was finalized in 1997 and the Chinese state-owned Non Ferrous Metal Mining Group (CNMC) bought the Chambishi mine in 1998, investing 150 million USD in the mine (Spilsbury, 2012) and an initial 800 million USD in the zone of NFCA mining surface (Haglund, 2009). Their mining company in Zambia operates under the name of Non Ferrous Company Africa (NFCA) and is the largest of the eight Chinese mining companies operating in Zambia. The negotiations of its term of entry into the zone was conducted by Chinese and Zambian government officials (Haglund, 2009). Although the NFCA has the ‘unspoken’ approval of the Zambian government, local Zambians did not always have the best experience with the Chinese. Yet, the government prioritized the investment and the local people were forced to deal with them, adding to the fact that Chinese influenced local business. This is a clear example that the Zambian government was in favour of increasing Chinese investment. The administration was keen on working with the Chinese, because they were also attracted to the total package consisting of trade, aid, investments, loans and education presented by the Chinese. According to Haglund (2009), these practices point to a politics of extraversion, whereby political elites secure financial support by providing external capital interest with protection.

In the developing world, economic globalization has created greater pressure and incentives for cross-national policy convergence (Carmody et al., 2012), suggesting that developing countries are more likely to be impacted by other governments policies. For example, weak labor regulations can be a way of attracting FDI, while on the other hand it can also imply a governance failure. Carmody et al. (2012) argue that it can be explained as a mode of governance that involves a degree of self (under) regulation. In dangerous working conditions such as mining, where state capacity for monitoring is weak, this can have fatal consequences.

### **Accidents and follow up**

In 2005, there was an explosion in the Chinese BRIGMM explosive factory that killed over 50 Zambian workers, indicating the lack of safety regulations in Chinese factories (Power et al., 2012). However, the Zambian government did not respond appropriately to this accident and this caused considerable anger in the community. The explosion did not come as a surprise since the employees at the plant were casual workers that were not trained properly and there were no safety regulations nor separate areas for making dynamite and explosives (Carmody et al., 2012).

The BRIGMM accident exposed the failure of the Zambian government to inspect and enforce safety and labour standards (Haglund, 2008). The government of Zambia never held the Chinese firm, NFCA, to account over the BRIGMM scandal, although an investigation concluded that it

was the result of negligent safety measures. It was raised in parliament, but NFCA never received a suitable punishment. The findings of the investigation, containing information such as the degree of NFCA negligence or the inadequacy of laws, were never made public (Haglund, 2008). This shows the political embeddedness in investment practices, enabling the Chinese investors to get away with malpractices. It is interesting to note that shortly after the BRIGMM explosion, the establishment of the SEZ in Chambishi was announced (Carmody et al., 2012); moreover in 2007, Zambian President Mwanawasa during a visit to Chambishi, gave the go-ahead for the re-establishment of BRIGMM as an explosives manufacturer, despite much protest against this (Haglund, 2008). This illustrates that the Zambian government gave priority to Chinese investment and that the Chinese investors could just continue their business, without any real interference from the Zambian administration.

#### **4.4 Zambia's Special Economic Zone**

As previously discussed, China presented a helping hand for Zambia by taking over many of the copper mines, including the Chambishi mine, and tightened its cooperation in various agreements and treaties. The Chinese investments in the mining sector account for 89 percent of all Chinese investment in Zambia (Spilsbury, 2012). These investments were welcomed, since many people were unemployed and the government was keen on the creation of jobs.

The establishment of the SEZ was announced in the 2006 FOCAC forum hosted in Beijing. Zambia's importance in China's foreign policy, specifically targeted at resource extraction, can clearly be seen from the fact that the first of five SEZ's were established in Zambia. These SEZ's are meant to deliver material and network support to develop and facilitate a good working environment for investors, and also provide investors with multiple incentives. Chinese companies are able to receive state support when they invest in Zambia's SEZ and in this way the Chinese government creates a supportive environment for Chinese companies to venture overseas (Brautigam, 2010).

In 2007, the first SEZ in Zambia was established in the Copperbelt town of Chambishi: this serves both economic and political purposes, as it contributes to industrialization and also promotes good relations between the Chinese and Zambian governments (Carmody et al., 2012). The tax incentives are diverse in the zone, varying from paying no tax in the first five years, to paying different amounts in the following years (Carmody et al., 2012). In addition to this, raw materials and capital can be imported into the zone duty free.

When one examines the Chambishi SEZ closely, one finds that the NFCA has established many sister companies, such as the Chambishi Copper smelter, Sino-Metal, Sino-Acid etc.; these all provide input to the production process. Their entrance into the zone was facilitated by the NFCA and it became a large production network, making linkages with local economies limited. This leads to a total control of the copper value chain by the Chinese.

With the global economic slowdown, China took the opportunity to embed itself further in the Zambian economy by buying assets from Western and other investors. In 2009, the Luanshya Copper mine was purchased by the CNMC for a bargain price of 50 million USD (Carmody et al.,

2012). This continuous investment by the Chinese created considerable goodwill among Zambian government officials. Goodwill results in increased influence on the Zambian government, and by means of this the Chinese were able to extend their grip throughout the Zambian elites and business.

### **Networks**

In Zambia, the Association of Chinese Corporations in Zambia (ACCZ) and the Chinese Centre for Investment Promotion and Trade (CCIPC) are good examples of the importance of network ties in Chinese business. The ACCZ is intended to serve as a platform where Chinese investors can discuss and resolve issues with the relevant Zambian departments and as a manner in which relations can be enhanced. In reality though, the ACCZ directly serves the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Zambia, answering to the interests and demands of Chinese investors, communicating and promoting Chinese investment and providing education on the rules and laws of Zambia (Gadzala, 2010). The CCIPC also provides support for newly established Chinese companies. The ACCZ and CCIPC support the Chinese investors both socially and economically, rather than that they facilitate linkages with their counterparts in the host countries. Associations like these facilitate the Chinese business mentality and emphasize the interpersonal relationships and the lack of trust outside the networks. Chinese companies and their management display an inability to escape their own national corporate culture and business practices (Shambaugh, 2013). These personal connections work horizontally across different businesses, but within them they work in a strict vertical hierarchy. On top of that, Chinese companies have strong links to the Chinese Communist Party with Communist Party cells, secretaries and members embedded in the companies (Shambaugh, 2013). This further shows the entwinement of the Chinese government in these processes.

### **Monitoring, or the lack of it**

The Zambian agencies also face difficulties in monitoring Chinese mining companies. The ministry responsible for the mining sector in Zambia is the Ministry of Mines and Minerals Development under, which the Mines and Safety Department (MSD) is mandated to monitor the health and safety performances of the mining companies (Haglund, 2008). Collection and verification of taxes and duties payable by the mines are the responsibility of the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA). The effectiveness of the regulation in the mining sector is hampered by an extreme shortage of skilled inspectors. The MSD is suffering from chronic underfunding and the salaries of the inspectors remain low which makes them vulnerable for Chinese influence.

However, the heart of the problem also lies in the structure of the Zambian government which provides direct links between the private and the governmental sector. For instance, the permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Mines has direct insight into the finances and performances of the foreign mining companies through a seat in the privatized copper mines Board of Directors (Haglund, 2008). This was arranged by the government to retain close links with the privatized mines. This is understandable, as the mines are the backbone of Zambian prosperity; however, this also opens up a channel for firms who wish to engage with senior political decision-makers through personal and informal relationships. This resonates

well with the Chinese business mentality and is another example of businessmen and politicians influencing each other.

The NFCA constrains the MSD from monitoring effectively and its business model with shattered business entities makes it even more complicated (Haglund, 2009). With minimal oversight, it enables its smaller sister companies to flaunt law and regulation.

Although Chinese companies have broken the laws with regard to labour many times, the Zambian government has not actively prosecuted them (Spilsbury, 2012). Moreover, due to logistical difficulties, the Zambian Ministry of Labour rarely monitors working conditions: thus Chinese failure to comply with labour laws can have fatal consequences in a dangerous industry like mining (Carmody et al., 2012).

## **4.5 Zambia’s political revolution**

The Sino-Zambian relationship changed from an ideological to a more strategic economic one. It started with Kaunda and his friendly ties with Zhou Enlai, then evolved to a more tensed relation with Michael Sata, which turned around to China’s advantage.

Chinese engagement in Zambia did not come without criticism and the investment by China caused ill-feeling among the local population. For many years, Zambians have been frustrated with the way their government has conducted its relationship with China, with many believing that they have allowed Chinese companies to flout national laws to the disadvantage of the local people (Spilsbury, 2012). As previously discussed, the DA’s and the special treatment for Chinese companies in the SEZ, that exempted them from paying social welfare, harmed the local people and fed their anger. This led to heavy anti-Chinese sentiment during the 2006 elections of which the leader of the Patriotic Front, Michael Sata, made good use (Negi, 2008).

### **4.5.1 The importance of Michael Sata and his turnaround**

Following four election attempts, Michael Sata and the Patriotic Front (PF) finally secured presidency in Zambia on 23rd September 2011 with 43 percent of the votes (Spilsbury, 2012). Promises made during the election campaigns further renewed hopes for many, especially the poor. With the previous government courting the Chinese through a close bilateral relationship, China had been able to build up a large portfolio of investment throughout the country, particularly in the mining sector. Even though there was much unrest and discontent over Chinese involvement in Zambia, Chinese FDI undoubtedly holds the potential to contribute to Zambian development if only it was channeled correctly by the Zambian government.

Michael Sata and the PF rose to prominence following their challenge to the 2006 election campaign. The campaign reflected popular urban frustrations in the run up to the election and the PF exploited these frustrations, while also further fueling them (Negi, 2008). Sata focused on anti-Chinese mobilization and claimed in his campaign that he would expel all Chinese investment from Zambia if he came to power (Yuan, 2011). “We want the Chinese to leave and the old colonial rulers to return. They exploited our natural resources too, but at least they took care of us”, Sata stated in an interview (Hairong & Sautman, 2009). He solicited funds

from the Taiwanese government to travel to London and Boston where he argued that European colonialism was more benign than Chinese presence in Zambia and stated that he would recognize Taiwan once elected (Hairong & Sautman, 2009). Sata shifted his attention to Taiwan to frustrate the Chinese and in the heat of the election campaign, the Chinese ambassador threatened to pull Chinese investment from Zambia and stop Chinese support if the PF came to power (Negi, 2008): a clear example of entanglement between politics and business. However, the PF did not win the elections of 2006 and the MMD remained in power. The MMD did react to these uproars and altered its policy position on tax reforms and labour law. Also the Chinese acted upon these events and emphasized its intention to comply with health and safety regulations in the mining industry (Spilsbury, 2012).

In 2008 there were new elections, followed by the death of Mwanawasa. These elections were not subject to the same amount of anti-Chinese sentiment as in 2006: this could be attributed to the continuing investment made by the Chinese in the face of the declining copper prices which created goodwill among the Zambian government officials as well as the PF (Carmody et al., 2012). Previously, during the administration of Jiang Zemin, China adhered to the One-China Policy which was aimed at the eventual unification of China and Taiwan. At that time China pursued a policy whose aim was to isolate Taiwan politically from the rest of the world, and the Chinese authorities increased their military build-up against Taiwan. However, from 2004 onwards, under the Hu Jintao administration, the Chinese stance on Taiwan softened and in 2008 high-level contact between China and Taiwan was officially resumed. Together with the intensifying Chinese involvement in the Zambian natural resource extraction industry, which became too big for the politicians to ignore, Sata found his justification for his turn-around on China (Hairong & Sautman, 2009).

Again an MMD candidate, Rupiah Banda, won the elections of 2008, and he had a difficult start in the face of the global recession. This had a huge effect on the Copperbelt region, since many mining companies closed down. However, Banda's three years in power was marked by economic growth of 6 to 6.5 percent and was largely a result of his continuation of favourable investment policies and the 2.8 billion USD generated from trade with the Chinese since 2000 (Spilsbury, 2012). The goodwill built up by the Chinese paid off during this time.

Even though there were improvements regarding Chinese compliance to labour laws, there still was an dissatisfied feeling amongst the Zambians who wanted more developmental gains from the foreign owned mines. This was illustrated by an incident in 2010 which took place at a Chinese owned coal mine (Collum Coal Mine). The workers had gathered outside to demand higher pay and better conditions, whereupon the Chinese supervisors opened fire and shot 13 coal miners (Bearak, 2011). The government declared that the incident would be thoroughly investigated; however, while the shooters were taken to court, the case was dropped (Spilsbury, 2012). This caused outrage among Zambians over the influence that China had over their country.

In the 2011 election, the PF challenged the MMD by stating that they were responsible for the mismanagement of Zambia. They blamed the MMD for the condition of the mining sector instead of foreign investors and mentioned nothing about Chinese investors in their manifesto of 2011 (Spilsbury, 2012). Sata switched his focus and he therefore emphasized an anti-corruption campaign. He stated that during the privatization period, the state developed political relationships with certain mining groups, especially Chinese companies, which allowed those companies to evade laws while the government turned a blind eye (Spilsbury, 2012). During his campaign Sata promised to end these corruption practices and reinforce greater transparency.

Michael Sata further argued that Zambia had a lot to learn from the Chinese and nothing from the anti-Chinese sentiment of 2006 was left in this election. He had accepted China's growing influence and potential and saw the importance of Chinese FDI for the development of Zambia. As for his previous anti-Chinese remarks, he commented that he was unaware at the time "just how important China was for the prosperity of Zambia" (Spilsbury, 2012).

After gaining the office of presidency, in 2011, Sata continued to recognize the importance of Chinese investment in Zambia and sought ways to attract investment. He invited Chinese investors to the National Palace and claimed in his speech that if he expelled the Chinese from Zambia, China would make sure he would lose power (Gao J. , 2012). This offers a clear example of how deep Chinese involvement in Zambia had become over the years.

This was again confirmed in 2013, when Sata attended a meeting with Xi Jinping, at which Sata stated that "Zambia hopes China will continue helping develop its agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandry, industry and commerce, as well as infrastructure to boost cooperation in trade and investment" (Wu & Zhang, 2013). President Xi announced that China would continue providing aid as capacity allowed and hoped that Zambia would create more favourable conditions for Chinese businesses. Chinese aid and involvement is thus linked to domestic economic growth and, as long as this is the case, China will continue investing. Xi's remark shows a strong signal that the two countries' bilateral ties have evolved into an advanced political relationship, from which both China and Zambia benefit (Wu & Zhang, 2013).

### 4.5.2 China learns from Africa

According to Liu Guilin, former Chinese ambassador in South Africa and Special Representative of the Chinese Government for African Affairs, Zambia and Michael Sata's election process provides a very good example of China's difficulties with African multi-party systems and their Western parliamentary system (Gao J. , 2012). Previously, African leaders were often political strongmen and China set up friendly relations with them, which later turned into a close relationship. However later, African politicians with a Western educational background became leaders. The consequent adherence of most African countries to Western electoral systems brought tensions and difficulties to the Sino-African relationship. For China it was a challenge to deal with the people in power and at the same time maintain contact with the opposition. Ambassador Lui Guilin's solution to this problem was this: "by strengthening economic aid and trade with those countries, one develops a good basis for cooperation, not affected and influenced by a regime change. Any elected person will prioritise development and this is inevitably linked to China's support and contributions, above that, Chinese non-interference policy is also attractive to state leaders. Even though China does experience some difficulties with leaders that are influenced by the West, in the long-run they all see the benefits" (Gao J. , 2012).

By means of closely linking Zambian economic development to Chinese involvement, the Chinese government ensures that the Zambian authorities are tied to China. In Zambia the emphasis is on the natural resource extraction industry and the optimization of all processes linked to the mining sector.

## 5 | Conclusion

Over the past decades, China evolved into a major world power and moved away from an isolated nation to one integrated into the international community. With strategic leadership it became an important economic part of the world. China's growing presence and influence, brought a change to the traditional balance of power and led to a redefinition of China's relations with other important players.

China's role in Africa also experienced a change. Previously, China-Africa relations were primarily based on a shared ideology; later Africa turned into a strategic partner for China's new objectives, markets and resources.

China offers Ethiopia a package of aid, trade, investment, education and politics. With the help of Ethiopia's location and having the headquarters of the African Union within its borders, China tries to transform Ethiopia into a strategic spearhead for the rest of the continent. With investments in infrastructure, telecom, agriculture and manufacturing the Chinese utilize the country as a showcase for the rest of Africa, with a primary focus on expanding export markets. The Chinese involvement in Ethiopia has an effect that goes even beyond African borders and influences traditional Western donors or traditional international partners with an interest in Africa into altering their approach to the developing continent.

China's main interest in Zambia is focused on its copper reserves. Because of Zambia's political structure, with personalized linkages, it was relatively easy for the Chinese to penetrate the fabric of Zambian ruling society and built a strong foundation and presence in the country. The offered aid package here is primarily targeted at resource extraction. By investing in infrastructure (railways and Special Economic Zones) and using its diplomatic and political ties, China is constantly looking to improve and optimize this process.

By looking into these two specific African countries, this thesis concludes that the intentions and outcomes of Chinese presence, strategic choices and involvement offer important variations and results for each targeted country.

China is by means of its increasing power able to define and achieve its strategic goals in different African countries and has been able to built a strong foundation on the continent, therefore challenging the old balance of power, forcing the traditional world powers to rethink and alter their approach on the African continent.

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