ATILIM UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS MASTER'S PROGRAMME

IMPACT OF CHINESE INVESTMENTS IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC), ETHIOPIA, AND KENYA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Master's Thesis

Fahad Yasin MEHMOOD

Ankara - 2024

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ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This is to certify that this titled "Impact of Chinese Investments in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, and Kenya: A Comparative Study" and prepared by Fahad Yasin Mehmood meets the commitees' approval unanimously as Master's Thesis in the field of International Relations following the successful defense conducted on 08/01/2024.

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ETHICAL STATEMENT

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Date: 08/01/2024

Fahad Yasin Mehmood

ÖZ

Çin'in Afrika'ya yönelik doğrudan yatırımları (FDI), birçok Afrika ülkesini ekonomik olarak dönüştürmüştür. Çin, madenlere, yollara, demiryollarına, telekomünikasyona ve enerjiye yatırım yaparak birçok ülkenin hızlı gelişimine katkıda bulunmuştur. Kuşak ve Yol İnisiyatifi kapsamında Çin, Afrika ülkelerine bağlantıyı artırmak ve Çin ile ticareti güçlendirmek amacıyla çeşitli finansman ve teknik destekler sağlamaktadır. Ancak, birçok Afrika ülkesinde Çin'in kredilerinin ve yatırım modellerinin etkisi konusunda endişeler bulunmaktadır. Bu nedenle, araştırma Çin'in DRC, Kenya ve Etiyopya'daki yatırımlarının etkisini inceledi. Karşılaştırmalı analiz araştırma yöntemi kullanılarak, ekonomik raporlar, hakemli makaleler ve diğer güvenilir internet kaynakları, Çin'in yatırım modellerini karşılaştırmak ve bu modellerin DRC, Etiyopya ve Kenya ekonomileri üzerindeki etkilerini değerlendirmek için gerekli bilgileri sağladı. Araştırma, Çin'in DRC'deki odak noktasının genellikle çıkarılabilir sektör olduğunu buldu; burada Sicomines Anlaşması'nı imzalayarak DRC'nin kobalt ve bakır madenleri üzerinde önemli kontrol sağlamıştır. Anlaşma, Çin'e DRC'nin altyapısına yatırım yapma zorunluluğu getirse de, bu tür yatırımların madencilikten elde edilen kazançlarla orantılı olmadığı görülmektedir. Kenya ve Etiyopya'da ise Çin, ülkelerin altyapısının modernizasyonunu ve gelişimini finanse etmiştir. Bu nedenle, Çin, bu iki ülkede hızlı ekonomik büyümenin sorumlusu olmuştur. Bu bağlamda, makale Çin'in DRC, Etiyopya ve Kenya'daki FDI yaklaşımlarının karışık sonuçlarını doğrulamıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: FDI, Borç Bağımlılığı, Çıkarılabilir Sektör, Altyapı, Özel Ekonomik Bölgeler (SEZs)

ABSTRACT

Chinese FDIs in Africa have economically transformed many African countries. They have invested in mines, roads, railways, telecommunications and energy, resulting in rapid development of many countries. Under the Road and Belt Initiative, China provides financing and technical support to various African countries to enhance connectivity and trade with China. However, there have been concerns regarding the impact of Chinese loans and investment models in many African countries. Due to this, the research examined the impact of Chinese investments in DRC, Kenya, and Ethiopia. Following a comparative analysis research method, economic reports, peer-reviewed articles, and other credible internet sources provided the information needed to compare the Chinese investment models and their effect on the economies of DRC, Ethiopia, and Kenya. It found that China's focus in DRC is largely on the extractive sector, where they signed the Sicomines Agreement that has given significant control over DRC's cobalt and copper mines. Though the agreement requires China to invest in DRC's infrastructure, such investments have not been proportionate to the gains from mining. In Kenya and Ethiopia, China has funded the modernisation and development of the countries' infrastructure. As such, they have been responsible for rapid economic growth in the two countries. Due to this, the paper confirmed mixed results of Chinese FDI approaches in DRC, Ethiopia, and Kenya.

Keywords: FDI, Debt dependency, extractive sector, infrastructure, SEZs

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DRC	: Democratic Republic of Congo
FDI	: Foreign Direct Investment
AU	: African Union
Sicomines	: Lan Sino-Congolaise des Mines SA
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
ZTE	: Zhong Xing Telecommunication Equipment Company Limited
FOMAC	: Forum on China–Africa Cooperation
MONUSCO	: United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
UNMAS	: United Nations Mine Action Service
LAPSSET	: Lamu Port, South Sudan, Ethiopia Transport Corridor
SGR	: Standard Gauge Railway
SSA	: Sub-Saharan Africa
MNCs	: Multinational Corporations
SEZs.	: Special Economic Zones
NMTMP	: Nairobi Metropolitan Transport Master Plan
BRT	: Bus Rapid Transit
JKIA	: Jomo Kenyatta International Airport
NEMA	: National Environment Management Authority

INTRODUCTION

Sub-Saharan African countries' relationship with China has been mutually beneficial for years. As China grows, so does its economic ties with Africa. In Africa, many countries believe that the Chinese development model is the best path to minimise poverty incidence and spur long periods of economic expansion in the continent (Alden & Jiang, 2019, p. 650). According to Wen (2019, p. 199), many less-developed nations, especially in Africa, seek to emulate the Chinese model of development. The Chinese development journey inspires many developing countries that seek to beat poverty in record times. Developing and less developed countries worldwide admire China's rapid growth and how it has helped its influence grow globally (Alden & Jiang, 2019, p. 652). China's economic journey has undergone several stages, beginning with the export-oriented path to an era of rapid industrialisation. Like other Asian Tigers, China is now diversifying to other economic sectors and accelerating its growth rates at fast levels. Some of the main factors responsible for China's growth, which are also present in Sub-Saharan Africa, include labour supply, low wages, women's participation in the workforce, and an authoritarian political system (Osei & Kim, 2020, p. 157).

Like sub-Saharan Africa, China had many people moving from rural to urban areas to look for work. With the mechanisation of agriculture, many rural residents lost their jobs, thus creating a high demand for industrial work. Mathebula and Sekgololo (2023, p. 6) estimate that more than 500 million people moved from rural to urban areas in China in just 20 years. Rural-urban migration forced the government to invest in new plans where manufacturing settlements were constructed and rural villages were demolished. Also, China owes its success to the low cost of production, especially the low labour cost. The country suffered from high unemployment rates; thus, workers took available jobs at low wages (Osei & Kim, 2020, p. 157). It is estimated that wages in China in the 1990s were ten times lower than those in Asian Tigers. Low wages meant producers could considerably improve their profit margins and achieve tremendous success. Due to this, China attracted massive amounts of inward foreign direct investments (FDI) from Japan, Europe, and the United States (Osei & Kim, 2020, p. 159). In addition, China was making it easier for women to participate in the workplace.

Women's participation in the job market meant that China had access to many workers who could participate in economic progress. Africa has enormous numbers of cheap workers. In many cultures across Africa, women are allowed to participate in work (Mathebula & Sekgololo, 2023, p. 9). It considerably increases the number of cheap employees that Chinese companies can access. With many factors that sub-Saharan Africa can relate to, the two regions have dramatically strengthened their social, economic, and political relationship, especially since the turn of the century. Alden and Jiang (2019, p. 153) indicated that many African countries view China as the ideal social and political partner. Unlike African traditional partners such as former colonial masters, China does not seek to influence internal processes and cultures. For example, Nnajiofor (2020, p. 477) showed that many African political elites are tired of the constant warnings from the West on their human rights and democracy records. They explain that the West failed to understand that African cultures and circumstances differed from those in their countries.

Furthermore, many African countries can relate to the Chinese political system. For example, many African countries follow an autocratic system where the state's interests exceed individual interests (Nnajiofor, 2020, p. 480). In these systems, the state may violate or assume individual rights for stability and continuity. They can punish individuals in the name of preserving national security. These are issues that many Western countries have continued to talk about when it comes to relationships with Sub-Saharan African countries. Also, African political elites believe that Western nations are hypocrites regarding their relationship with African countries and people (Zreik, 2021, p. 59). For example, despite being the biggest beneficiary of African resources, the West has not invested enough in Africa's poverty eradication. Due to these factors, China has become a perfect social and political partner and the ideal economic partner for African countries (Zreik, 2021, p. 59). The good social and political relationships have opened the African market and investments for the Chinese government, companies, and investors.

While China is hungry for resources and a market for its goods, Africa needs foreign direct investments (FDI) to spur economic development. FDI is an essential factor in economic development. FDI encompasses transferring capital and technologies to a third country (Osei & Kim, 2020, p. 157). Capital includes finances to fund different projects or finance companies in the target countries. As the poorest continent in the world, Africa needs investments more than any other region. However, such investments have been hard to come by due to the conditions of different financiers. For example, IMF and World Bank loans come with political and economic reform commitment, while commercial loans come at high interest (Nnajiofor, 2020, p. 480). In this regard, African countries view China as the only viable alternative to their funding needs. China essentially transfers funds in the form of loans to build infrastructure and special economic zones in African countries. They also provide machines and equipment to build railroads, roads, airports, and mine minerals. They also open processing plants for the commodity (Morrison, 2019, p. 202). Therefore, Chinese investments in Sub-Saharan Africa allow the countries to gain new capital and better technologies and means of production.

Chinese foreign direct investments (FDIs) in Sub-Saharan Africa have considerably increased since 2000. For instance, Africa has become a leading destination for Chinese goods and assets. According to Oqubay and Lin (2019, p. 5), China-Africa bilateral trade increased from $50 billion in 2009 to $300 billion in 2015. During the period, they also witnessed a massive increase in FDI from China to Africa. The FDIs have been beneficial for the development of Africa. Besides, China provides huge financial resources through loans to many sub-Saharan African countries. Unlike other international financing institutions, Chinese loans had few restrictions (Zahoor et al., 2022, p. 4). Due to these loans, many countries are heavily indebted, with others already facing a real default risk.

The debt issue has raised many questions in Africa and other parts of the world. While China and the targeted African countries view their relationship as mutually beneficial, critics have argued that the model interferes with African countries' internal affairs and catalyzes the indebtedness of many nations (Wu et al., 2020, p. 1). These critics are often from outside the continent and may have biased views on China's growing influence in Africa. Tovar (2019, p. 1) explained that Chinese financial and political support to Africa and pragmatic economic cooperation result in mutual benefits. However, it is essential to note that Chinese investments in sub-Saharan Africa differ from one country to another. It is evident how the Chinese investment model differs in Africa when one looks at specific countries (Fituni, 2019, p. 17). For example, the Chinese investment model prioritises resource extraction for resource-rich countries. At the same time, for developing stable economies, China focuses on expanding trade relations and finding a market for their manufactured goods.

Also, Africa is rich in unexploited resources. Africa needs technology to exploit these resources. It requires the market to sell the resources to gain capital for developing its physical capital infrastructure and foreign reserves to buy manufactured goods that the continent needs. China is a significant partner of Africa in the extractive industry. For instance, China needs resources such as oil and other minerals to feed its commodity-hungry industries (Zou et al., 2022, p. 607). In exchange, many African countries receive massive funding from China, which they use to expand their roads and ports, invest in education and healthcare, and improve the overall quality of life. According to Zou et al. (2022, p. 608), Chinese investments in extractive sectors of countries such as DRC have provided resources to run the government, improved road networks, and created job opportunities.

Currently, China is the leading investor in the DRC's mining sector. In DRC, China invests in cobalt, gold, and oil and gas sectors. China needs these resources for its thriving manufacturing sector (Zahoor et al., 2022, p. 4). Though China needs commodities for its industries, they also need markets. In this case, they invest in expanding ports and transport networks in targeted countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia. Kenya and Ethiopia are the largest economies in East Africa, with a growing middle class and population; thus, they are ideal markets for Chinese manufactured goods. The modern infrastructure in Kenya and Ethiopia has increased domestic and international trade and opened up new industries in these economies. As such, China's FDI is having a positive effect on the development of African countries. It is undeniable that road and rail investments have opened Ethiopia and Kenya to more internal and international trade (Wang, 2022, p. 358).

Additionally, more studies on the China-Africa investment relationship will narrow the knowledge gap on the true impact of China's investment on African economic development. For instance, these studies did not compare appropriate financial performance indicators or consider the specific capabilities of various African countries in absorbing investments. Due to differences in countries' capacities to absorb China's investment, there is a need to investigate the impact on a country-by-country basis. Therefore, the research topic is the comparative analysis of the impact of Chinese investments in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, and Kenya. The three countries were selected due to the visible differences in their economic trajectories and priority areas of the Chinese investors.

China focuses on different sectors based on what the targeted countries can offer to the Chinese industry (Fituni, 2019, p. 23). For example, in resource-rich countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Chinese investments tend to target resource extraction. In contrast, the acquisition targets infrastructure and trade expansion in Kenya and Ethiopia. While many argue that Chinese companies taking Africa's raw materials back to China undermines Africa's ability to develop rapidly, the value of developments undertaken by the Chinese funds cannot be understated (Fituni, 2019, p. 24). Sino-phobic critics indicate that Chinese interests in Africa are only to extract her resources. The argument could apply to the USA and other Western countries that continue to depend on African resources to run their industries.

Nonetheless, there is no universal agreement on which model of FDI, Chinese or Western, has the most significant impact on African economies. According to Haifang (2018, p. 2), most Chinese investments in DRC are focused on extracting natural resources in exchange for infrastructure developments or loans, leaving these countries indebted to China with no leverage to pursue alternatives. In these countries, the impact of Chinese investments has been negligible or negative. However, in some countries, the assets have transformed their economic state with modern infrastructure facilitating economic development (Johnston, 2019, p. 49). For example, Kenya and Ethiopia owe their rapid growth over the last two decades to Chinese investments in their infrastructure sector.

The research examines the different investment models China adopts in Kenya, Ethiopia, and DRC and how these investments impact these countries economically. While conducting this study, it is essential to note that the impact of Chinese investments in these countries differs due to their varying circumstances. Therefore, a comparative study assessing the effects of Chinese investments in DRC, Kenya, and Ethiopia provides valuable insights into China-Africa investment relationships and the positive and negative effects of this relationship on the selected countries' socio-economic outcomes. The comparative study is effective in achieving the following research objectives: to critically examine the Chinese investment model for sub-Saharan African countries, to assess the positive impacts of Chinese investments on the economic development of DRC, Kenya, and Ethiopia, to assess the negative impact of Chinese investments on the economic development of DRC, Kenya, and Ethiopia and to compare the overall results of Chinese investments among sub-Saharan African countries of DRC, Kenya, and Ethiopia.

A comparative study is essential in answering these research questions as it allows for consideration of multiple perspectives regarding the research issue. For instance, investigating Chinese investments in sub-Saharan Africa from a country-by-country perspective provides important insights into differences in Chinese FDI approaches in the region (Osei & Kim, 2020, p. 157). The burgeoning Chinese manufacturing sector needs massive amounts of commodity and energy. Therefore, China has an interest in countries with minerals such as copper, oil and gas, cobalt, iron ore, and others. Also, China needs a market for its manufactured products. In this regard, China uses various economic policies to open market opportunities for its products. While many have suggested that China is only interested in Africa's natural resources, other investments indicate this is not solely the case (Mathebula & Sekgololo, 2023, p. 4). For example, China invests in infrastructure, special economic zones, and ports in countries not heavily endowed with in-demand natural resources.

Since Chinese investment in Africa is not a universal approach that applies to all countries, a comparative study of Kenya, DRC, and Ethiopia establishes the differences in the investment approaches and the outcomes. The study helps to understand the differences in systems in these countries and how such differences impact the implementation of Chinese investment strategy. For example, Kenya is a low-middle income economy with relatively stable security and political systems but few natural resources. China has hugely invested in Kenya's transportation and logistics sector. However, there is no comprehensive synthesis of various reports on Chinese investments in transportation and logistics infrastructure in Kenya, including the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) corridor, or proper assessment of their impact on trade and regional connectivity. Besides, there is a need to examine the development of Chinese-backed special economic zones and manufacturing hubs in Kenya and their contribution to industrial growth and employment. Also, the study investigates the environmental consequences of Chinese investments in Kenya, especially in projects related to energy and infrastructure, and assesses sustainability practices and their implications.

Also, China has heavily invested in DRC's extractive sector. DRC is just emerging from one of the worst conflicts and remains one of the poorest nations in the world. Studies need to assess how these investments affect local communities, environmental sustainability, and the country's revenue generation. Additionally, the study assesses the role of Chinese-funded infrastructure projects in improving connectivity within the DRC and the potential for economic development in this vast country. Further, it examines the relationship between Chinese investments and conflict dynamics in regions with resource-rich deposits and assesses how these investments impact security and stability. In Ethiopia, China is investing in the country's infrastructure and manufacturing sectors. The study evaluates the impact of these investments on job creation, technology transfer, and economic diversification. In addition, the study assesses the role of Chinese-funded infrastructure projects, such as the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway, in enhancing Ethiopia's regional trade and economic integration. Also, the study sets Ethiopia's debt obligations to China and evaluates the country's financial sustainability in light of these loans.

Comparative studies help examine how socio-political factors determine countries' effectiveness at absorbing Chinese' FDIs. While Ethiopia is less stable than Kenya, its political and democratic institutions are much stronger than DRC. Also, Ethiopia and DRC have some of the largest populations in sub-Saharan Africa. These differences in political, governance, and economic circumstances make these three countries appropriate choices for investigating the differences in Chinese FDI approaches in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, the comparative study helps establish relationships among various investment phenomena and their impact on development and compares different Chinese economic interests in Africa. This study is important in providing valuable insights into China's interests in Africa. It focuses on the differences in the Chinese approach to investment in Africa. This study's findings assist in understanding China's economic role in Africa.

This study's findings help explain the cause and course of the expanding economic, social, and political relationship between China and Sub-Saharan Africa. It helps establish the extent to which the Chinese investment model in African countries goes beyond economics. While Sino-Phobic scholars and economists urge caution on China-Africa economic relationships, this study helps to determine if these concerns. It assesses Ethiopia and Kenya's debt distress and evaluates the role of the China-

Africa investment models' culpability. Therefore, it demystifies the claims of Chinese use of debt as a 'modern colonisation' tool in Africa.

Additionally, the findings of this paper help to understand the actual cost and benefits of China-Africa investments and relationships. The findings provide in-depth insights into the reasons for China's foreign direct investments in Africa. It discusses investments in sub-Saharan African countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, and DRC and whether these investments improve economic performance indicators. The study provides important insights into Africans' feelings about China's investment in Africa. It explains how these investments impacted people's livelihoods and whether they were helping African countries to address unemployment and poverty challenges. Also, the findings help us understand the African leaders' decisions on Chinese investments and enhance our understanding of the sustainability of the China-Africa economic relationship.

The rest of the dissertation comprises four chapters, i.e., Chinese Investment in Sub-Saharan Africa (Chapter 1), Case Study 1: Democratic Republic of Congo (Chapter 2), Case Study 2: Ethiopia (Chapter 3), Case Study 3: Kenya (Chapter 4) and Conclusion . In Chapter 1, the dissertation provides a comprehensive review of the Chinese investment approaches in Africa. It discusses theories of foreign direct investments (FDIs) and how they relate to Chinese investment in Africa. The final part of the chapter provides a discussion of the literature gaps and a description of the methods used to fill the gap. For instance, it provides a description and justification for the comparative case study approach, document analysis and secondary data collection methods, sampling strategy and selection criteria for case study countries, and ethical considerations in data collection and analysis.

Chapter 2 discusses the case study of the Democratic Republic of Congo, including the background of Chinese investments in the country, Chinese investment in resource extraction, Chinese-funded infrastructure projects, impact on conflict-affected regions, and environmental and social implications. Chapter 3 examines the case study of Ethiopia. It provides a comprehensive discussion of the background of Chinese investment in Ethiopia, Chinese investments in manufacturing and special economic zones, infrastructure projects in Ethiopia, debt burden and financial sustainability and technology transfer and employment generation. Chapter 4 discusses various Chinese investments in Kenya. It assesses Chinese-funded transportation and logistics projects, investments in manufacturing, environmental impact assessment, and the role of regional trade and connectivity. The final chapter is the conclusion chapter, which includes a discussion of analysis findings, summary, and implications. The data analysis encompasses a comparative analysis of findings from the three case studies, identifying common trends and differences in the impact of Chinese investments and discussing key factors influencing outcomes in each country. Finally, the chapter provides a summary of major findings and their implications, contributions to the existing literature on Chinese investments in Africa policy recommendations for the three case study countries, and broader implications for Sub-Saharan Africa.

CHAPTER 1: CHINESE INVESTMENT IN AFRICA

Chinese-Africa relations have been continuous for several centuries. The first Chinese presence in Africa can be traced to the trade with the East African coast cities and communities during the pre-colonial period (Nnajiofor, 2020, p. 480). However, this relationship has developed since the turn of the millennium as China has become a global economic power. These new relationships have taken multiple forms, from resource extraction to physical and financial capital provision and market access (Alden & Jiang, 2019, p. 650). This chapter evaluates the history of China-Africa relations, Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) models that China adopted in Sub-Saharan Africa, the impact of these FDI models on specific countries, and knowledge gaps from the existing theoretical and empirical studies.

1.1. Chinese FDI in Africa

Historically, FDI was viewed as a financing source of economic growth for the receiving country. The 'General FDI Theory' focuses on the reasons for certain entry models and locations. The theory explains that FDIs are influenced by the mobility of factors of production, such as capital, natural resources, technology, and labour (Tang et al., 2012, p. 3). It argues that when some factors of production move, they create location-based differences in the cost of production, thus attracting more investments in locations with low costs of production. Though this general theory cannot explain all aspects and motivations of FDI, it can explain how human capital differences, such as wages that foreign investors pay, can influence the arrival of new investments (Grieco, 2021, p. 49). This location hypothesis suggests that when a country has low relative wages, it becomes the preferred destination for FDI. However, wage is not only the human capital factor that the hypothesis considers. Additionally, the internalisation theory of FDI explains that companies seek to replace market attractions with internal transactions. The theory states that companies can minimise costs when they internalise some processes (Grieco, 2021, p. 53).

Internalisation theory explains why multinational corporations (MNCs) expanded to less developed and developing countries. Since markets are not perfect, internalisation theory offers the best explanation for firm-specific advantages demonstrating why companies voluntarily engage in FDI practices. According to Narula et al. (2019, p. 1235), businesses engage in FDI if it helps them exploit firm-specific advantages, which should be higher than operational costs abroad. The theory indicated that international investments reduced levels of competition by moving to countries with low competition. It allowed the company to expand its competitive advantages in a particular activity. MNCs organise their internal activities in a manner that generates specific advantages in foreign markets that they can exploit and maximise their advantages (Sutherland et al., 2020, p. 4). Therefore, the theory states that MNCs expand to develop their internal competitive advantages or gain monopolistic power in a foreign market.

Dependency theorists, for instance, believe that the long-term flow of FDI from advanced economies produces negative effects on the economic growth of developing countries due to economic activities such as market monopolisation, protectionism, and depletion of natural resources (Saidi et al., 2020, p. 281). Based on dependency theory, resource-rich, less-developed countries (LDCs) such as DRC experience poor compensation for their natural resources and thus are left in a state of perpetual poverty. The theory explains that for these countries to improve their economies, they must eliminate imperialism in their resource exploitation and negotiate better prices for natural resources (Joshua et al., 2020, p. 18021). While the theory has been criticised for not incorporating competitive factors in poor nations, it highlights the importance of evaluating the imperialistic features of resource extraction contracts that exist between poor and rich nations. Moreover, dependency theory emphasises the role of individual nations as suppliers of cheap labour, markets, and raw materials for industrialised nations' companies (Joshua et al., 2020, p. 18022). Dependency theory can explain the unequal relationship that exists between China and DRC as a potential contributor to poor economic growth in DRC.

Dependency theory and internationalisation FDI models help to explain how Chinese investments in Africa have evolved to influence other spheres, including critical infrastructure, national security, politics, and social influence. These theories contend that as large economies continue to grow, product heterogeneity resulting from complex market activities also becomes evident, specifically among African countries (Xinfeng & Chunyu, 2023, p. 222). Hence, stronger economies have formed an official partnership platform where African nations mutually cooperate to form economic activities and facilitate the flow of economic inputs under reduced tariffs. For many years, scholars and policymakers have studied the relationship between trade and economic development across many regions. Today, it is undeniable that trade is an important pillar of economic development. Wen (2019, p. 201) notes that international trade integration has facilitated development in many regions. Globalisation and trade liberalisation have opened new markets and opportunities for investment in less developed and developing nations. In addition, foreign direct investments (FDI) promote economic development. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) described FDI as investments made in a country by foreign governments, companies, or citizens (Thiombiano & Tulga, 2022, p. 11).

China makes foreign investments in developed and less developed countries. As such, China's FDI has become a major source of employment around the world. These investments support technological diffusion to developing nations, thus becoming an engine for economic growth (Xinfeng & Chunyu, 2023, p. 222). The impact of the FDI on a particular economy depends on the economy's absorptive capacity. Absorptive capacity refers to the ability of the economy to absorb social, economic, and technological opportunities that spill from FDI inflow (Usman & Lyu, 2021, p. 158). FDIs enhance economic growth depending on the domestic absorptive capacity of the recipient. Meanwhile, the Chinese approach to Africa seeks to expand the political and economic relationship between the country and the recipient. The relationship between China and Africa goes back several centuries and was built on the back of mutual benefits for the continent and China. Whereas Western nations consider the macro-economic and political situation in a particular country, China remains indifferent to the receiving country's domestic policies (Tovar, 2019, p. 14). As such, China has become a major economic partner in Africa.

The evolution and growth of the China-Africa relationship has been motivated by several factors. For example, China does not share the political liberalisation ideology with the West. Though it supports peaceful political transitions, it rejects intervention in the domestic policies of its partners. Several studies have confirmed that the Chinese model produces notable results, especially in Africa (Usman & Lyu, 2021, p. 157). In the last decades, the China-Africa economic relations have continued to receive massive attention among scholars. These debates and studies have focused on the implications of China-Africa economic relations and their relevance to African economic progress. These studies acknowledged the growing China-Africa trade and increased FDI flow to Africa from China. Oqubay and Lin (2019, p. 4) stated that the relationship is a win-win for China and Africa, while others consider it a new form of imperialism. The latter argues that the growing Chinese presence in Africa is for resource exploitation of the continent. According to Dreher et al. (2021, p. 2), most African economies have an appositive perception of Chinese investment into the continent. For instance, President Armando Guebuza of Switzerland defended China, saying that it is concerned with the well-being of the economy of the continent.

The positive contributions of China to the continent are prominent in different infrastructures across the continent. For example, these infrastructural developments can be witnessed in the restoration and construction of 1800 kilometres of railway projects connecting Tanzania and Zambia and the construction and restoration of the Rufaro stadium in Zimbabwe for free. China has also facilitated the construction of hydroelectric power projects, which have lit a larger portion of the continent (Dreher et al., 2021, p. 2). Other than offering job opportunities to many African youths, Chinese investment in the African continent promotes scholarship opportunities for over 100000 African students. These education opportunities have enabled African economies to bridge the gap of skilled labour in African nations. These countries can now consider local professionals who bring new ideas and knowledge to building their economies and the continent at large.

Increased trade ties between China and Africa have produced a sustainable export market for African products, such as agricultural produce, and other natural resources, such as copper, diamond, and aluminium. This trade relationship has helped the continent to map its companies, thus improving the economic conditions of the host countries. China, in this context, has played a significant role in mapping South Africa as the world's bourgeoning and various needs for natural resources (Wang et al., 2021, p. 900). Chinese presence in Africa changes financial access problems by providing low-interest loans to the developing economies in Africa. However, these loans remain problematic since most transactions surrounding them are never transparent.

Moreover, due to its cheap import products and the presence of China in African economies, China has grown extensively as the largest trade partner in developing countries. In return, this has facilitated advancement in technological innovation among the local companies so as to remain relevant in their respective industries through market competition. Relevant research such as Morgan (2019, p. 399) further provides that trade relations between Africa and China extensively produce a positive impact on the economic development of the host African economies. According to this author, trade between African countries and China has accelerated the growth of import and export activities, per capita national income, and employment rate. This scholar postulates that Chinese direct investment positively impacts the employment situation in South Africa as opposed to Northern Africa.

Political leaders and policymakers of some African countries have criticised Chinese donations as a trap and a skim to gain full access to Africa and to blend it with the needs of the Chinese Manufacturing sector – a source of natural raw materials. These countries maintain that China not only uses this tactic in Africa but also applies it to the US. For example, Foo (2020, p. 1) asserts that the Chinese acquired large values of treasury bonds with the primary aim of inflating the US dollar in favour of their currency, the Yuan. Therefore, leaders of some African economies believe that the Chinese might be applying the same tactic to inflate the continent's currencies. The Chinese make this vice possible through the provision of debt so as to settle equilibrium between the local currencies and the weakening Yuan.

Chinese investments increased in the 21st century as China overtook the West as the main source of funds for most African countries. China-Africa is influenced by the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), established in 2000 when 44 African countries signed strategic partnership agreements with China (Nnajiofor, 2020, p. 480). In 2015 and 2018, China pledged $60 billion in support for African economies at the FOCAC. In 2021, it pledged additional $40 billion in support. It also committed to increasing imports from Africa to more than $300 billion in the three years succeeding 2022 (Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2022). Currently, the annual Sino-Africa trade is worth more than $200 billion, making China the biggest trading partner in the continent. More than 10,000 Chinese companies are operating in Africa, where the value of Chinese businesses has increased to more than $2 trillion. These companies add more than $300 billion of investments to the continent (Zreik, 2021, p. 59). Also, Chinese loans are playing an important role in the development and shaping of the socio-economic future of the continent. Since 2000, Chinese financial institutions and African governments have agreed to more than 1200 loan commitments worth more than $160 billion (Zreik, 2021, p. 59).

These Chinese loans have been invested in the mining, energy, transportation, and telecommunications sectors. The leading loan recipients from China include Kenya, Ethiopia, Zambia, Angola, Nigeria, and Cameroon (Alden & Jiang, 2019, p. 650). Other large loan recipients are Cote d'Ivoire, South Africa and Ghana. Besides loans, China seeks to build good relationships with African countries. They have opened embassies in 43 African countries while increasing their influence on international organisations that focus on addressing African issues (Fituni, 2019, p. 17). Reports indicate that 39 African countries prefer the Chinese approach to maritime conflict resolution. The majority of African countries are now choosing to vote with China on international issues at the UN instead of supporting the United States and the West. For example, in 2020, 25 African countries voted with China at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on the controversial Hong Kong national security law. Also, 37 African countries signed an open letter of support to China on her treatment of the Uighur population (Wang, 2022). Some of the investments in Africa have been strategic, with considerable political and economic implications in Africa and globally.

The development of the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is one of the main strategic investments China has made on the continent. China funded the construction of the AU headquarters at a cost of $200 million (Mathebula & Sekgololo, 2023, p. 7). China has also committed to constructing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria, in 2018 and the African Center for Disease Control in Nairobi, Kenya. Studies indicate that China has funded and renovated more than 20 presidential and prime ministerial residences across the continent. They have invested in police and military installations and developed intra-governmental telecommunication networks. Besides, China is investing heavily in Africa's infrastructure. For example, China invested $4.7 billion in the construction of the Nairobi-Mombasa Standard Gauge Railway (Osei & Kim, 2020, p. 157). They plan to invest in Mombasa port expansion and development of special economic zones.

China has invested in more than 400 projects in Ethiopia, costing more than $4 billion. More than 70 per cent of the Ethiopian roads are under construction by Chinese companies (Alden & Jiang, 2019, p. 650). However, the most strategic investment in the country is the construction of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti rail line linking the country to the Doraleh Multi-Purpose Port. Ethiopia is a landlocked country; thus, investment is essential for its imports and exports. While these investments have been necessary for the country's economic development, they have left Ethiopia at a high risk of external debt distress, with the government debt-to-GDP ratio increasing above 60 per cent of its GDP (Zreik, 2021, p. 59). Politically, China has sided with Ethiopia on the Tigray crisis. China voted against the resolution on human rights abuses committed during the crisis.

Furthermore, China is expanding its military presence in Africa. In 2021, the Wall Street Journal reported that the country was constructing military bases around Africa (Wang, 2022, p. 11). The latest military base is in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. According to 2020 estimates, Equatorial Guinea's debt to China is more than 49 per cent. In 2006, China funded the construction of the Port of Bata and Malabo, where Chinese state-owned companies enjoy strategic access. 2021 reports indicated that China was considering constructing other military bases in Seychelles, Kenya, Tanzania, and Angola (Mathebula & Sekgololo, 2023, p. 9). In Djibouti, a Chinese company, China Merchant Port Holdings, has a 25 per cent stake in the port. Also, China State Construction Engineering Corp. is developing a multipurpose cargo facility to facilitate the handling of steel, livestock, cars, and other goods. Reports indicate that there are more than 400 Chinese soldiers in Djibouti. Further, China is partnering with African countries such as Sudan, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Egypt on space programs (Osei & Kim, 2020, p. 157). They have ground-based satellite tracking stations in Kenya and Namibia. It is building a continental satellite data receiver station in Ethiopia.

1.2. Chinese Cultural Investment into Africa

China has invested in several soft power and exchange programs in Sub-Saharan Africa. Since 2011, China, under the Sino-Africa Political Party Leaders program, has been organising programs to support the empowerment and development of young political leaders in Africa (Zenglein & Holzmann, 2019, p. 3). The program began with 200 members. In 2015, the program expanded to include 1,000 young leaders. In 2022, China's CCP funded the development of the party school in Africa. In addition, there are 61 Confucius Institutes in Africa administered by the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban). These schools are built by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, which also deploys teachers to offer professional training (Zou et al., 2022, p. 611). China has also supported several scholarship programs that have seen many young Africans receive vocational training in China. Chinese State-owned enterprises (SOEs) offer professional training to Africans in their areas of expertise. According to studies, the number of African students studying in China increased 26-fold under the Hanban scholarship between 2008 and 2020. In 2021, only France hosted more African students than China. In 2021, the FOCAC Summit announced that the country would provide 10,000 training and seminar opportunities to talented Africans (Zou et al., 2022, p. 617).

Moreover, China is investing in connecting Africa to the rest of the world. It is the leading investor in African Smart Cities and 5G in Sub-Saharan Africa. Committee on Foreign Affairs (2022) indicated that a Chinese company, Huawei, has been responsible for the construction of more than 70 per cent of the African information technology infrastructure. ZTE and Huawei have built more than 40 telecom networks in more than 30 African countries. They have also built national and government networks in 20 African countries. For example, Uganda has a $126 million agreement with Huawei to construct a smart city surveillance technology project. The project includes the development of the country's digital surveillance unit of the police and the installation of street cameras around Kampala (Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2022). Safe city systems have been deployed in more than nine African countries. Countries using such systems include Zambia, Uganda, South Africa, Morocco, Mauritius, Kenya, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and Botswana.

Additionally, China is increasing its surveillance and media influence in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2009, China invested $6.6 billion in funding to expand its state media in Africa. Some have argued that the investment is to increase external propaganda (Zenglein & Holzmann, 2019, p. 3). Further, China has invested more than $10 billion in media presence in Africa. The Chinese media broadcasts largely positive news about China and relationships between China and African countries. The media rarely broadcast negative news about China. Chinese technology companies have also become friends with African Presidents and top leaders. For example, Huawei helped the Ugandan government hack Bobi Wine's digital communications in 2018, leading to the arrest of Mr. Wine and some of its supporters (Fituni, 2019, p. 22). Also, Zimbabwe enlisted the services of Cloudwalk to provide facial recognition technology. The same company provides similar services to those of the Chinese police. ZTE was involved in the provision of technologies that were used to monitor the citizens' telecommunications activities.

The use of Chinese technologies to clamp down on opposition politicians and anti-government activists is common throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, in Zambia, Huawei assisted the government in accessing the phones and Facebook pages of opposition bloggers who were running pro-opposition news or criticised President Lungu (Wang, 2022, p. 6). Huawei technicians helped the government in locating opposition bloggers for arrest by the Zambian police. In South Africa, Chinese-linked companies acquired a 20% stake in Independent Media, the country's second-largest media group. The group publishes 20 prominent newspapers. Due to Chinese investment, the newspaper cancelled a column that emphasised the plight of the Chinese Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang (Wang, 2022, p. 7). Also, Kenya's Huawei Integrated Control and Communications Center provides technical support to more than 9,000 police officers and 190 police stations.

Also, China provides different kinds of security assistance and arms transfers to many Sub-Saharan African countries. In 2017, China provided the African Union with $100 million in military assistance (Zou et al., 2022, p. 610). Reports indicated that China sold three times more arms to Sub-Saharan countries between 2017 and 2020 than the United States. The main recipients of these arms were Zambia, Tanzania, Seychelles, Namibia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. In 2017, China constructed its first foreign military base in Djibouti. China uses the base to monitor their interests at the Port of Djibouti (Wang, 2022, p. 380). However, they have also been accused of using the base to interfere with international airspace. Moreover, China is training militaries of several African nations, including the DRC and Namibia. It built a military training centre in Tanzania. China deployed peacekeepers to Mali and South Sudan between 2005 and 2020 (Zou et al., 2022, p. 616).

Chinese presence in Africa has always been met with mixed reactions. Though a number of African governments have viewed Chinese investment into the continent as positive, a greater portion of the African population maintains that the Chinese presence in the continent is more of neo-colonialism (Thiombiano & Tulga, 2022, p. 3). Others have reported a number of concerns on infrastructure projects handled by the Chinese contractors as an extensive commitment with a hidden agenda to exploit African natural resources. Conversely, other scholars argue that Chinese investment in

African economies adversely impacts the growth and development of the host African economies. Morgan (2019, p. 12) argues that China only commits to African nations so as to gain from natural resources such as oil, gold, and diamonds to sustain its industrial growth. In addition, the author explains that the speedy growth of the Chinese manufacturing sectors has significantly produced higher demand for multiple natural resources such as copper, aluminium, oil, gas, and other valuable minerals such as platinum, diamond, and gold, most of which African economies have in plenty.

Chinese technologies have improved the productive capacity of many African countries, especially in the agriculture, manufacturing, and construction sectors. Biryukov and Dyuzheva (2021, p. 16) showed that manufactured goods exports by sub-Saharan African countries increased, revealing that trade relations positively and significantly impacted African economic development. However, the trade impact has been greater in African economies exporting natural resources such as minerals. Thiombiano and Tulga (2022, p. 11) suggested that the economic impact of China-Africa trade has been negligible or even negative as these economies become dominated by China's economic interests as China gains access to critical African resources. According to Usman and Lyu (2021, p. 9), the Chinese model promotes China's interest while undermining Africa's, leading to a net negative impact on African economies. Usman and Lyu (2021, p. 9) indicated that the Chinese influence on Africa's economic growth is controversial as FDI inflows seem to have no significant role in Africa's economic growth. Johnston (2019, p. 66) added that the Chinese model extracts Africa's natural resources in exchange for infrastructure. They do not empower Africans to leverage on the infrastructure projects despite the projects being funded by debt.

China's presence in Africa has not only been about the exploitation of resources. In some countries, such as Kenya and Ethiopia, which are not endowed with massive natural resources, Chinese investments in infrastructure have considerably improved inter-trade, thus improving their overall economic output (Biryukov & Dyuzheva, 2021, p. 430). In such countries, one can conclude that the Chinese FDIs are massively transforming African economies. In addition, the Chinese, being resourceful in technological know-how, have brought highly advanced equipment to the local projects. This has promoted the sale of unprocessed products at relatively lower prices. These products are then processed and boosted through value addition before re-selling at reasonably fair prices. The Chinese have significantly applied this strategy in Zimbabwe's mines, Sudan, Nigeria, and Angola's oil fields. Chinese Foreign Direct Investment facilitates the development of infrastructure and industrial zones of the host African countries. According to Acquah and Ibrahim (2020, p. 320), China's FDI positively impacts African economic development through various factors, including employment opportunities and trading activities such as the importation and exportation of raw materials, among other business products.

Chinese firms positively contribute to the economic development of African countries through the industrialisation process. Through Chinese investment in the manufacturing sector, the host African countries have managed to upgrade their production skills, labour regimes, as well as their corporate social responsibilities. China has also initiated simpler technologies that work best in the context of the developing economies of Africa, such as Kenya, Egypt, and Nigeria. Besides, Zahoor, Khan, and Hou (2022, p. 3) explain that Chinese firms directly channel financial resources that rapidly facilitate both the growth and development of infrastructure and industrial activities of the host African economies. The scholars argue that in Ethiopia and Kenya, for instance, China has played significant roles both in funding and physical construction of their dominant infrastructures.

1.3.Debt Dependency and Financial Risks Due to China-Africa Relations

Many African countries are currently enduring massive debt problems, with many countries at risk of defaulting on their loans. The debt distress on the continent has largely been attributed to the Chinese unconditional loans (Tarrósy, 2020, p. 111). According to Xinfeng and Chunyu (2023, p. 213), the total African debt was estimated to be around $1.8 trillion, which is 13 per cent above the 2010 debt levels. The report showed that African debt almost doubled in the ten years after 2010. The debt growth rate has been 300 per cent above the continent's GDP. In 2023, it is expected that the debt-to-GDP ratio will exceed 60 per cent, highlighting the difficulty that African governments face in managing their financial resources. China has been one of the main contributors to Africa's indebtedness, with total credit estimated to be more than $170 billion (Xinfeng & Chunyu, 2023, p. 218). Regional institutions, multilateral organisations, other countries, companies, and individuals contribute to African debt. While studies show that China is not the main cause of debt distress in Africa, they raised concerns regarding the lack of transparency and clauses that impact local industries. In addition, Chinese debts do have collective restructuring options on the contracts.

Chinese loans act as the primary source of capital for infrastructure projects in many African countries. The finances stimulate economic growth in these countries. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic and changing Chinese priorities, the loans have considerably dried up. Nevertheless, Brautigam et al. (2020) have accused China of implementing debt trap diplomacy in Africa. According to critics, China uses loans to woo African countries into unsustainable debt burdens, resulting in sovereignty losses. Though these claims are unproven and disputed, Chinese lending patterns in Africa still require in-depth assessments. Another concern arises from the considerable differences between Chinese loans and those of international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. According to studies, Chinese state-owned lenders prioritised profits over the interests of the borrower. The loan contracts often include clauses that put various constraints on African economies, including a lack of collective restructuring (Zajontz, 2022, p. 177). They also include extensive confidentiality clauses, thus limiting the ability of the country to make independent financial decisions.

Many African countries are exposed to financial risks resulting from a lack of government transparency on debt status. Tarrósy (2020, p. 16) explained that government transparency is helpful for financial engagements with external creditors. Government transparency ensures that citizens and lenders access accurate information on debts. However, there are increasingly high levels of hidden debts from Chinese state-owned banks, thus complicating the ability to estimate debt levels. These hidden debts pose serious financial management and accountability challenges. Asongu et al. (2013, p. 2) showed that almost 50 per cent of Chinese loans to African countries are not disclosed in their sovereign debt records. The lack of transparency in Chinese debts adversely impacts Western private sector lenders to the countries. The private investors cannot accurately gauge the safety of African bonds or financial markets. Other sources of opacity in Chinese financing are in the many infrastructure projects that China funds in Africa (Brautigam et al., 2020, p. 4). These infrastructure projects are awarded to Chinese companies that do not face the normal procurement processes, thus enhancing the risk of corruption given the weak governance structures in many African countries.

Concessional loans are another important component of Chinese loans, increasing debt distress levels in Africa. Concessional loans fund infrastructure projects in Africa and are used to facilitate engagement between China and Africa (Asongu et al., 2013, p. 2). Whereas they have considerably reduced the infrastructure gap in the continent, the terms of these loans tend to favour China over the poor African countries. These loans could have better terms than standard loans but have hidden challenges (Brautigam et al., 2020, p. 11). For instance, these loans are attached to terms of the contract of the funded project, which often stipulate that Chinese companies get priority in these contracts. These contracts end up suppressing local industries and end up not stimulating the local economy as was intended. Elements of the Chinese loan contracts also pose collateral risks, which could hinder the financial flexibility of the country (Zajontz, 2022, p. 175). For example, the contract may indicate that the project becomes the property of the Chinese banker in case of default. Also, the banker can take control of key national assets until they recover the loan.

Debt distress has exposed the African continent to massive credit risks. According to Zajontz (2022, p. 178), African countries were paying a high price for their poor credit ratings. It is estimated that Africa pays more than $28 billion in interest payments. The high credit risk means the continent loses at least $46 billion in potential financing. These losses negatively impact the continent's ability to fund healthcare, education, and other investments that could help them in poverty eradication. For example, the financing losses could reduce malaria cases by around 90 per cent (Shinn, 2023, p. 229). These findings underscore the need to establish a fair and transparent credit rating system consistent with the African nations' development goals. Further, Lippolis and Verhoeven (2023, p. 166) indicated considerable disparities in credit ratings for African countries by various global rating agencies compared to those generated by the Trading Economics algorithm. These ratings suggest that many African countries are not creditworthy, thus raising the cost of capital.

Also, low earnings from trade and strict credit ratings made it difficult to address the continents' investment challenges, making it vulnerable to conditional credit from China. Chinese concessional loans have become the only opportunity for countries to get financing for their major projects (Shinn, 2023, p. 230). These loans come with conditions that place some of the African resources and assets under the Chinese authorities, thus reducing their flexibility in accessing funding from other markets. Lippolis and Verhoeven (2023, p. 167) suggest that this problem can be addressed through credit rating transparency and standardisation of the rating systems. Credit rating standardisation will ensure informed decision-making in investing.

In conclusion, the chapter highlighted that the Chinese FDI impacts different African economies both positively and negatively. For instance, compared to other larger international organisations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which are considered conditional loan providers, Chinese presence in Africa changes this situation by providing low-interest loans to the developing economies in Africa. However, these loans remain problematic since most transactions surrounding them are never transparent. Moreover, due to its cheap import products and the presence of China in African economies, China has grown extensively as the largest trade partner in developing countries. In return, this has facilitated advancement in technological innovation among the local companies so as to remain relevant in their respective industries. Therefore, analysis of Chinese investments in specific sub-Saharan African countries would provide in-depth insights on how Chinese investments have become essential to Africa's socio-economic future.

CHAPTER 2: DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (CASE STUDY I)

2.1. Background and Context

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is an expansive East and Central African country. It is home to most of the Congo rainforest, more than 100 million people and vast untapped natural resources. DRC has some of the world's largest oil and gas, gold, platinum, diamonds, cobalt and copper resources (Jansson et al., 2009). 62 per cent of DRC is within the Congo tropical rain forests. However, the country has experienced several decades of conflicts that left the country hugely impoverished. It is one of the poorest countries globally. DRC conflicts began immediately after independence in 1960, after the assassination of the independence Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba (Maiza-Larrarte et al., 2019, p. 429). The conflicts sandwich the many years of Mobutu Ssesseseko's dictatorship that ended in 1997 when the military removed him from power. Due to a lack of economic progress, the population relied on subsistence agriculture. Today, more than 70 per cent of the population is dependent on subsistence farming, contributing to 55 per cent of the country's GDP (Morake et al., 2016, p. 228). Artisanal mining is another sector that employs thousands of Congolese. Almost 100,000 people work as cobalt and copper collectors in Katanga Province, while over 12 million people engage in other forms of small-scale mining for their livelihood.

Working conditions in DRC are poor. In many mines, children are working for low wages and unsafe conditions. Many children working in these mines do not have an education. Since the global economic crisis between 2008 and 2011, artisanal miners' opportunities to earn a living reduced considerably. The mining sector lost more than 300,000 jobs during that period. Since then, unemployment rates in DRC have remained considerably high. Jansson et al. (2009) showed that DRC lacks the appropriate infrastructure to spur it to periods of high economic growth. For instance, many parts of the country have no roads, railways or electricity. Despite being the main revenue earner, the country's extractive industry remains hugely unexploited. Increasing fuel prices are increasing the operational costs in these mines. Currently, Congolese mines rely on small-scale addition generators to fuel their operations (Maiza-Larrarte et al., 2019, p. 433). In recent years, DRC has partnered with international partners such as China to expand its infrastructure, power generation, and distribution capacity to the mining regions.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) entered diplomatic relations in 1961, a few months after DRC gained independence from France. However, the Congo Free State had contacts with the Qing dynasty as far back as 1887 (Jansson et al., 2009). While the Congolese recognition of China shifted between the PRC and the Republic of China (Taiwan) in the 1960s, they finally settled on the PRC in 1971. Also, DRC supports a one-China policy that recognises only the PRC as the legitimate authority over the PRC and Taiwan (Rapanyane, 2023, p. 51). However, before the Chinese increased their economic engagement in the early 2000s, the country was a hotbed of conflicts, with major economic powers accused of using the conflicts to exploit the country.

From the 1960s, DRC experienced several conflicts under the brutal dictatorship of Mobutu Ssesseseko. Under Mobutu, Western nations leveraged ineffective governance systems to exploit Congolese resources, especially minerals and timber (Vlassenroot & Romkema, 2002). In the 1990s, the country was immersed in two major wars, the First Congo War, which ended in 1997 after the deposition of Mobutu and the Second Congo War, which began in 1998 to 2003 and ended with the formation of the transitional government. During these wars, Western powers such as France, Belgium and the USA supported different rebel groups, enabling them to illegally mine and export Congolese resources. As millions of Congolese people died or were displaced, Western nations made billions of dollars from the war (Vlassenroot & Romkema, 2002). The conflict resulted in a total collapse of law enforcement, dereliction of infrastructure and low community support.

Since 2003, DRC has witnessed the continuous establishment of governance structures and enforcement of laws. While conflicts persist, especially in Eastern Congo, China's entry has changed contractual engagements as China has chosen to engage with the government rather than the rebel groups. Further, Chinese investments in Congo have increased rapidly, with the DRC joining the Belt and Road Initiative in 2021. In 2007, DRC and China signed the Sicomines Agreement, which gave China mining rights in copper, cobalt and other minerals. Many critics have argued that the contract is unbalanced and has been more beneficial to China than DRC (Rapanyane, 2022, p. 51). However, defenders of the deal explain that it has allowed the DRC to gain infrastructural developments such as roads, rail lines and power stations. Nonetheless, DRC still lacks infrastructure despite the more than 15 years of the Sicomines Agreement.

Sino-Congolese cooperation is intended to spur DRC's modernisation path and allow the country to focus on specific projects due to the availability of finance. China's infrastructural and energy projects are the core pillars of the China-DRC agreement. The cooperation allows the DRC to engage in sustainable modernisation processes (Malm, 2020). It also allowed DRC to access technologies and products they did not have. The cooperation also narrowed the financing gaps left by the Western donors. However, the World Bank and IMF expressed concerns about the China-DRC agreements as they did not cater to local interests. Critics argue that China undermined the international community by putting pressure on the Congolese government to adopt democratic and humanitarian values (Morake et al., 2016, p. 229). On the other hand, proponents of these agreements explain that China has allowed DRC to access low-interest loans and provided debt relief. It allowed the country to make economic progress without external interference in its processes. It fostered good governance ideals.

China has delivered multiple aid programs for the DRC people and government. One form of aid is financial assistance to the Congolese government in building institutions, governance structures, and offices. The assistance goes directly to the government to enhance its capabilities to operate and govern. Another form of aid is linked to the Chinese companies operating in the DRC, especially in the extractive and infrastructure development sectors (Maiza-Larrarte et al., 2019, p. 431). Another form of Chinese aid to DRC supports infrastructure expansion and access to key economic regions, such as linking Katanga Province with Kinshasa. In this regard, China is funding roads and bridges (Jansson et al., 2009). China is also investing in human infrastructure, such as the construction of schools and hospitals, presidential palaces and stadiums. However, critics have argued that these investments are linked to China gaining mining concessions in the DRC.

Chinese investments in DRC have come under scrutiny due to their approach, which many people have viewed as unfair. Therefore, it is important to examine their capitalist motivation and evaluate the impact of their cooperation with Congo in extractive and infrastructure development. According to Jansson et al. (2009), the

Chinese-DRC win-win cooperation idea is ineffective in Congo due to high levels of corruption and political instability. China is a beneficiary of the corrupt system and is thus unwilling to push for governance changes. There is a need for the DRC government to adopt a more inclusive development agenda that favours the local population and not the elites. The local population is seeing little benefits from the billions of dollars that DRC receives from China. According to Malm (2020, p. 1), China is leveraging DRC's weaknesses to gain from the agreement rather than helping DRC fix the loopholes on its side. Malm (2020) noted that Sino-Congo Cooperation can only be effective when DRC have democratic, transparent and accountable institutions. The minerals for infrastructure model under the Sicomines Agreement only benefited China's appetite for minerals to sustain its huge manufacturing sector.

2.2. Chinese Investment in DRC's Resource Extraction

China's investments in global extractive industries increased considerably after the 1990s, when the country experienced a boom in the manufacturing sector. The three factors influencing Chinese demand for minerals include the increasing demand for metals to feed their persistent economic boom, high metal prices attracting Chinese investors for speculative purposes, and government policies supporting outward FDI. In Africa, the investors targeted raw metals for production in China (Ericsson et al., 2020). For instance, Chinese companies control over 28 per cent of copper production and 41 per cent of cobalt production in Africa. While Chinese companies such as Gecamines invested directly in DRC and other African countries, they also had control of other companies such as Euroasian, First Quantum, Glencore and China Moly. China is the main player in the DRC's mining sector, controlling more than 70 per cent of the sector. The Congolese Chamber of Mines indicates that DRC has significant gold and industrial diamonds. DRC's diamonds contribute to 21 per cent of the global production (Rapanyane, 2022, p. 51). Despite the huge wealth of natural resources, DRC is still one of the poorest populations globally.

China has several mining sites and dredger assembling sites in Kisangani to facilitate their mining operations. The copper and cobalt sales to China have been linked to the recent high growth in the DRC. According to Kabemba (2016), DRC registered an average 7.4 per cent growth rate between 2010 and 2014. The country registered an 8.7 per cent growth rate in 2014. These growth rates were considerably higher than the average in sub-Saharan Africa (Alden, 2017, p. 417). The growth figures indicate that the extractive sector has positively impacted DRC's economy. The sector is dominated by Chinese companies. In DRC, China follows a 'resource for infrastructure investment model.' The model encompasses China funding infrastructure projects in the country in exchange for mining permits. The model became operational in 2007 when the Chinese and Congolese governments signed the Sino-Congolais des Mines (Sicomines) agreement. The deal gave Chinese companies favourable access to DRC's cobalt, copper and other minerals (Morake et al., 2016, p. 228). In exchange, China offered to finance the development of DRC roads, railways and other infrastructural projects. The infrastructural projects linked the country's regions and enhanced access to the mining sites.

Sicomines Agreement bartered Congolese cobalt and copper for infrastructure deals worth $9 billion. Following pressure from the IMF, the deal between China and Congo was revised downwards to $6 billion (Jansson et al., 2009, p. 9). The contract allocated mining concessions to China for the Mashamba, Dikuluwe and Dima mining blocks. These blocks are estimated to have 10.6 million tons of copper and 626,619 tons of cobalt. It is estimated that they could hold more reserves. The total value of these concessions could be established due to the opacity nature of the contracts (Jansson et al., 2009, p. 16). Though some documents indicated that the deal had created jobs for Congolese people and facilitated technology transfer, the opaque nature of these contracts makes it difficult to ascertain the accuracy of such claims. Further, the infrastructure developments in Congo have not been proportionate to the value of minerals that Chinese companies have extracted from the country. For example, studies showed that 77 per cent of the mining component of the agreement had been implemented with investments worth $2.4 billion. However, only 27.5 per cent of the infrastructure component was implemented as of 2020. It translates to only $969 million invested in infrastructure out of the phased budget of $3 billion (Malm, 2020, p. 17). Further, the infrastructure component of the deal was capped at $1.053 billion, which is considerably lower than the value of extracted minerals.

China's control of DRC cobalt production has become of particular concern to competitors. Cobalt is an important ingredient in electronics and green economy. As such, China's control of DRC's cobalt gives them considerable control in the transition to a fossil-free global economy. It is the main component in the battery technologies

(Ericsson et al., 2020). Though China is the main player in cobalt production, there are many artisanal small-scale miners that sell to Chinese traders and small companies. As such, Chinese control of the cobalt sub-sector could be larger than first thought. In 2017, China got an estimated 82 kt of cobalt from DRC. Comparatively, non-Chinese companies such as Euroasian and Glencore had a total production of 27 kt. This is less than a third of the amount of cobalt that went to China. According to studies, European production has dropped to less than 3 kt. Indian companies produce 7kt while George Forrest Company produces 11kt (Ericsson et al., 2020). These figures show Chinese total domination of cobalt production. In 2014, there were 14 Chinese mining projects in DRC. These projects focused on exporting the minerals back to China. These investments included $3.72 billion in mining projects and $320 million for hydroelectric power stations. The completion of these projects will increase DRC's copper production from 100,000 tonnes to 250,000 tonnes (Kabemba, 2016, p. 11). These copper production projects will be powered by the Busanga Dam hydropower.

The Sicomines Agreement transferred mining rights to minerals worth over $90 billion for less than $3 billion of infrastructure deals. The Chinese mines are found around Kolwezi in southeastern DRC. It is one of the country's mineral-rich regions, with some experts claiming that the mineral value in the region could be upwards of $500 billion (Chakrabarty, 2016). Apart from the favourable mining terms, the Chinese have no responsibility to protect the local environment and uphold the rights of the local communities. As such, many people believe that the model is doing more harm than good to DRC. Many mining contracts were not sufficiently benefitting the country, and there was no way to ascertain how much minerals were extracted from the operating mines (Alden, 2017, p. 417). In addition, the model prevents DRC from selling mining rights to bidders with lucrative offers in terms of price and other non-monetary benefits. It means that DRC is forced to stick to this agreement even if it is unfair.

Another export from DRC to China is timber. In 2014, China imported 2.9 million cubic meters of timber from the Congo basin, making 47.5 per cent of total exports. Though China invests billions of dollars in DRC mines, all these commodities are exported to China in raw forms; thus, the sector does not create quality jobs for the local population. DRC ranks below Gabon and Congo-Brazzaville as China's main suppliers of logs from Africa. Available data shows that DRC exports more than $20 million of timber to China (Putzel et al., 2011). Most of these logs are illegally obtained; thus, accurate data cannot be established. The argument that the resource for infrastructure model has been a win-win for both countries has come under intense criticism. Academics and civil society have argued that the deal was poorly structured and denied DRC governments billions of dollars in potential mining revenues if a more transparent process was used to award mineral rights. One report indicated that DRC has lost between $6.4 billion and $20 billion in revenues (Maiza-Larrarte et al., 2019).

2.3. Chinese-funded Infrastructure Projects in DRC

DRC is attracted to China due to its civil engineering and helping reconstruct the shattered infrastructure. DRC view China as a perfect partner for enhancing its productive capacity and funding infrastructure development, including mining, railway, and road infrastructure. DRC and China are strengthening their partnership in information and technology investment (Kabemba, 2016, p. 11). China has invested in more than 40 major infrastructural projects in the DRC. In 2000, DRC leadership attended the Beijing Ministerial Meeting of the First Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). In the same year, Chinese telecommunications giant China Zhongxing Telecommunications Co. Ltd (ZTE) collaborated with the DRC government and, funded by the China EXIM Bank, set up a telecommunication company in DRC. China also funded the construction of the le Stade des Martyrs (The Martyrs' Stadium), the People's Palace and the National Parliament (Mathebula & Sekgololo, 2023).

The Chinese-funded projects cost more than $825 million and cover roads, water supply, offices, electricity, etc. Inga III Dam is one of the hydroelectric power projects that China is financing in DRC. The project is part of the larger Grand Inga Project, which should harness the full potential of Congo River power generation (Gnassou, 2019). When completed, the Grand Inga Dam will generate and supply 40,000 MW of electricity, making it one of the world's largest and most economically influential dams. It can potentially supply the entire DRC and the neighbouring countries with electricity. The project will cost over $80 billion and meet up to 40 per cent of Africa's energy needs. Apart from the dam, the construction of power stations and transmission lines will create jobs for the local population (Gnassou, 2019). The third phase, or Inga III, will cost over $14 billion. The project is a priority of the DRC government. However, the progress of this project has been marred by corruption allegations and environmental and social concerns.

Currently, DRC leaders are negotiating with a consortium of Chinese companies and financiers for the final phase of the project. The consortium includes Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) such as Sinohydro and China Three Gorges Corporation. The SOEs have been involved in the construction of multi-billion dollar projects like the Grand Inga Dam (Leutert et al., 2023, p. 221). These companies are involved in other projects, such as smaller and flashy water projects. The Chinese government is also investing in water taps and treatment facilities in Goma and Bukavu. These projects are intended to realise access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene objectives in the cities. China supports road construction projects in DRC, including expanding transportation networks such as highways and enhancing connectivity within the country (Gnassou, 2019). The projects include highways linking DRC with neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Tanzania. DRC still rely on a pre-independence railway line that has become ineffective and slowed the movement of people and goods around the country. China is supporting DRC's plans to develop its railway infrastructure and connect major economic regions of the country, such as Kinshasa and Katanga Province, in the southeastern region of the country (Leutert et al., 2023, p. 223). The railway will play an important role in the transportation of minerals from the interior regions to the ports for export.

As the main investor in the DRC's mining sector, China is interested in building the mining infrastructure to get minerals from the mines to the ports. The mining infrastructure projects include railways, ports, and mining facilities that facilitate mineral transportation (Mucuuthi, 2020, p. 43). China is also investing in the DRC's telecommunication infrastructure. They seek to improve the country's mobile network and develop other communication technologies to make trade more productive. Also, Chinese investment in DRC has followed regional objectives and goals. For example, DRC is a member of the East African Community (EAC), which has specific objectives to eliminate borders and connect the seven member states (DRC, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Kenya and South Sudan) through railways, roads and ports (Mucuuthi, 2020, p. 49). In this regard, China is responding to DRC's infrastructure challenges by considering the structural layers underlying China's interaction in the region. In relation to the global infrastructure race, China is following through with its Belt and Road Initiative. The Belt and Road Initiative helped to expand and modernise road networks in poor countries and open these countries for global trade (Otele, 2020, p. 3). These roads and railways should link the country's interior with the international ports to facilitate the export and import of goods between the region and China.

The second consideration in investing in DRC is the pan-African connectivity. DRC is home to some of the highways which are planned to connect the African continent. DRC hosts Trans-African Highway 8, linking Mombasa and Lagos and Trans-African Highway 3, linking Tripoli and Cape Town. DRC has the most missing links on these highways; thus, China seeks to help make these continental plans become a reality. Third, China considers an intra-regional infrastructure race. As the latest member of the EAC and the least advanced economy in terms of infrastructure, DRC is home to several incomplete connecting roads within the EAC (Otele, 2020, p. 7). The regional leaders seek to complete these roads to ensure smooth movements of goods and people within the bloc.

Additionally, China is funding bilateral regional projects. Otele (2020, p. 11) showed that Chinese investments in infrastructure were acting as a catalyst for regionalism and supporting the implementation of region-centric infrastructure projects. Chinese infrastructure investments are consistent with Pan-African continental connectivity and China's Belt and Road Initiative. Regionalism also helps fast-track intra-regional infrastructure races and enhances regional connectivity. Several other projects are still under implementation. However, implementing these projects faced many problems, such as inadequate payment mechanisms, lack of feasibility studies and poor project planning (Mucuuthi, 2020, p. 67). Another challenge to infrastructural development is the huge influence of the Chinese on the Sicomines Agreement and the poor allocation of funds. The government of DRC has become a mere consultative voice. Studies showed that capping the Chinese investment to $1.053 billion is unjustifiable, given the expected rise in prices and mining production costs.

The Sicomines' convention framework should change to realise the projects as planned. Studies indicated several projects under the agreement have stalled or failed to take off. For example, a hydroelectric power project signed in 2009 has struggled to take off (Xu, 2020, p. 615). During the same time, copper extraction has increased to more than $1.5 billion. Upon completion, studies indicated that the power projects will double power production. Sicomines Agreement should review the cap and resolve the constraints associated with infrastructure development implementation and improving the lives of the local population (Xu, 2020, p. 615). To sum up, the Chinese involvement in DRC infrastructure has improved trade and economic relations between the countries. It will open the market for DRC's commodities and promote the economic development of DRC and China. As the cooperation evolves, the study showed that the current investment approaches favour China over DRC and its people.

2.4. Impact of Chinese Investments On DRC's Conflict-Affected Areas

There are four main factors influencing Chinese engagement with Africa. These factors include China's need for strategic resources, avoiding confrontation with major powers, need for a market for the Chinese enterprises and acquiring external expertise. For this type of engagement to succeed, the country must have a stable government, an opportunity to promote sustainable peace and vast resources (Lohalo, 2021, p. 70). While DRC has been a ground for many conflicts in Africa, its vast resources provide an opportunity for Chinese companies. Initially, China paid rents to Congolese national elites in exchange for security to their mines. The country has so far realised that the approach is not sustainable; thus, there is a need to strengthen government institutions. China wants to ensure a legitimate government and sustainable security for its mining operations and the growing number of its citizens in the country. As such, China has become more involved in the DRC peace process (Lohalo, 2021, p. 70).

China is a major player in addressing the ongoing conflicts in Eastern Congo. They have funded the peace process in the country. Since the 2007 Sicomines Agreement, China has followed a different approach in relation to conflict and instability in the DRC (Victorovna, 2019). Unlike the Western-led liberal peace-building and development processes, China offers unchecked rents to the DRC's national elites (Curtis, 2013). This approach aims to ensure stability and an environment that will enable market-driven activities. Curtis (2013) noted that the approach does not provide a sustainable pathway to peace, security and development of the DRC. Rather, it is a temporary measure that allows China to continue extracting resources from the DRC. Also, China has contributed to the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the DRC, known as the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The mission supports the DRC's objective of maintaining peace and stability (Cook, 2019).

MONUSCO followed the United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in 2010. Under Security Council resolution 1925 of 28 May, MONUSCO's mandate was defined to include civilian protection, humanitarian assistance, and defending human rights (Lohalo, 2021, p. 70). The force was to deter the threat of physical violence and conflict escalation in conflict-inflicted areas. Chinese peacekeepers who were part of MONUSCO ensured that there was stability and peace consolidation in the region. Chinese peacekeepers in DRC are part of the larger multinational force under the United Nations mandate. The responsibilities of this peacekeeping mission are to monitor and report the region's security situation, protect civilians and support the enforcement of peace agreements. China's contribution shows the country's commitment to sustainable peace and security. Rapanyane (2022) noted that as the security situation in the country evolves, China has been forced to revise some of its security commitments. However, it remains a major partner in DRC's attempts to improve governance and ensure that the people enjoy peace and an enabling environment for investments and prosperity. Also, China is the main financier of the peace mission in DRC.

2.5. Environmental and Social Implications of Chinese Investments in DRC

China has large-scale investments in DRC. While these investments are largely in the mining sector, there have been considerable Chinese investments in trade and infrastructure. These investments have many positive and negative social and environmental implications (Xu, 2020). However, the impact differs from one project to another. The positive impacts can be generalised in terms of infrastructure development, job creation, and economic prosperity. The Chinese government has funded the construction of railways, roads and energy projects. The developments result in economic progress, connectivity and access to different parts of the country (Lisimba & Lisimba, 2020). They allow people to freely move from one place to another, thus improving the overall living standards. The infrastructural and extractive projects have created employment opportunities for the local population. The employment opportunities contribute to poverty reduction and economic progress at community levels (Rapanyane, 2022, p. 51). Chinese investments in DRC have facilitated technology transfer in the country. DRC has been able to access the latest technologies, which empower local industries and enhance knowledge exchange. Investments in the extractive sector have helped DRC to access the financial resources necessary to diversify the economy.

Consequently, these investments have contributed to adverse social and environmental implications. The extractive activities of the Chinese in DRC have raised numerous environmental concerns. These activities have disrupted the natural habitats of many species, resulting in water pollution and deforestation. Lisimba and Lisimba (2020) have also shown that Chinese investments in DRC have been marred by labour practice issues. For instance, there has been inadequate adherence to safety standards, and there is also inadequate worker rights protection. Also, there is a lack of transparency in China's investments in DRC. Lack of transparency, especially with the mining concessions, has hindered scrutiny and public engagement. These factors undermine the ability of these projects to address problems that Congolese people face. Chinese investments are disrupting social and cultural cohesion within the society (Lisimba & Lisimba, 2020). Large-scale projects displace local communities, undermine cultural heritage, and adversely impact the social fabric. There is a need for DRC and China to strike a balance between reaping the benefits of foreign investment and mitigation of adverse social and environmental impacts.

Chinese companies often come with their labour, thus undermining the local workforce. Some Chinese people are not only employees of these companies but have also been found to engage in small businesses, thus competing with the locals. The companies were employing Chinese in jobs that locals could do. Further, the locals in the project were poorly paid and sometimes disrespected (Rapanyane, 2023). In the meantime, there is no sufficient data to conduct an adequate evaluation of the Chinese investments in DRC. However, historical data could help to decide whether DRC is getting a good deal from the Sicomines Agreement. For instance, Chakrabarty (2016) used the historical data from Gecamines and the revenues that the government received as the baseline. Extrapolation of these figures showed how Sicomines is a much worse deal than previously thought. Also, the prices of minerals are expected to continue rising, thus outweighing the value of infrastructure development even with a greater percentage (Alden, 2017, p. 417). Moreover, China was taking the largest share of the profits, thus making Sicomines an unequal exchange that is unfavourably balanced to favour the Chinese companies.

Also, the Sicomines Agreement provided Chinese companies with a 100 per cent hedge against political and economic risks. Chinese are operating mining businesses in DRC, where they are cushioned against risks and losses. While the agreement was compatible with the two countries' needs- DRC's huge productive capacity and China's excess appetite for natural resources, it did not adequately address the DRC's infrastructure deficits. After enduring conflict for several decades, DRC needs huge amounts of financing to meet its infrastructure needs. They need to invest in their roads, railways and ports. Therefore, the agreement with China is an opportunity to bridge the infrastructure gap that they currently have (Alden, 2017, p. 417). Chakrabarty (2016) explained that as a post-conflict country, DRC needs massive reconstruction financing. Alden (2017) suggests that the agreement should address contentious issues if it is to make a bigger impact on the country's infrastructure. The deal fundamentally differs from other mining investments and has the risk of plunging the country into a resource curse phenomenon as the population proportion remains considerably poor. China's engagement in infrastructure projects has been significant, but the country can be confident of recuperating these investments through mining proceeds.

In summary, the case study shows a complex relationship between DRC and China. While DRC sees China as a better option for its development needs after breaking away from Western colonial exploitation, China seems to leverage the opportunity to exploit minerals from the resource-rich country. China is rehabilitating infrastructure in the country by improving road networks and enhancing power generation. These projects are implemented in an environment where there is no sufficient information to assess them. The available studies have suggested that the Sicomines Agreement allowed China to extract DRC's resources in exchange for infrastructure development, which has been more beneficial to China than Congo. While China has effectively implemented the mining component of the agreement, the investments in infrastructure are still below 30 per cent of the agreed amount. The agreement suggests that China's resource for the infrastructure model is purely an economic and strategic move with no risks on its part. The model allows China to get enough resources from Congo and maintain a dominant position in the DRC's extractive sector, thus denying potential competitors an opportunity to invest in the sector.

The study shows that China's investment model in DRC is more about resource exploitation. However, it is undeniable that China has invested in some major infrastructure developments in DRC. For example, they have invested in roads, power generation and expanding the mining infrastructure. These infrastructure developments have opened up the country, especially major business centres in Kinshasa, to mining regions such as Katanga province. China is also investing in power generation in DRC. These investments come with social and environmental concerns. For example, some Chinese companies have been accused of labour malpractices. In addition, there is a lack of concern for environmental issues, transparency and corruption.

CHAPTER 3: ETHIOPIA (CASE STUDY II)

3.1. Background and Context

Ethiopia is one of the largest countries in Africa in terms of land area and population. While the countries have experienced different conflicts throughout its history, it has enjoyed rapid economic growth since 2000. Between 2004 and 2012, the country's growth rate reached an average of 10.6 per cent, thus becoming one of the top 10 largest economies in Africa (Adem, 2012, p. 154). The growth was supported by the modernisation of the agricultural sector, increased exports, increasing global commodity demand and government-led development investments. Also, FDIs have boosted the Ethiopian growth rate. Chinese FDI is one of the largest contributors to Ethiopian investments, especially in the export-led manufacturing, infrastructure, and construction sectors (Endaylalu, 2018). Also, Chinese economic support for Ethiopia has ensured that various economic activities are upgraded and transformed. Ethiopia has become a major attraction of FDI due to improved political stability, a large population, and many opportunities for multinational companies. According to Venkataraman and Gamora (2009), attracting FDI is an important first step for any low-income economy to develop as it ensures effective redistribution of technologies, productivity and capital.

East Asia countries such as China and Japan are some of the leading FDI providers to Ethiopia. The Chinese-Ethiopia relationship has faced some barriers in the recent past due to the high cost of land, strict regulations and increasing labour costs (Endaylalu, 2018). Ethiopia is also facing competition from other low-income countries in Asia and Africa to become the hub of global manufacturers. In this regard, the country is investing in special economic zones that provide favourable production factors. These zones have abundant labour at low cost. It is also an important FDI host due to its high population (Chakrabarty, 2016). Due to these factors, Ethiopia and China's cooperation has expanded considerably. For instance, in 2011, China became Ethiopia's largest import and export trading partner. In 2009, the trading volume between Ethiopia and China was $74 million, and it was $58.5 million in 2010 (Adem, 2012, p. 154). China's business community has grown considerably with the establishment of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Addis Ababa, which is tasked with looking into the interests of Chinese businesses and businesspeople.

Structural economic changes happening in both China and Ethiopia have also contributed to the expansion of trade between the two countries. The countries recently adopted a market-oriented economic system that has contributed to the attraction of new capital and expansion of the domestic market (Endaylalu, 2018). As such, these countries experienced long periods of high economic growth. For example, the world was stunned by the Chinese economic miracle that moved more than 300 million people out of poverty in less than 30 years. However, the rising labour costs in China and reduced competitiveness are forcing China to consider alternative production sites. In this regard, they shift low-skilled manufacturing jobs to countries such as Ethiopia (Mulugeta et al., 2023). Unlike China, which has moved to technology-based sectors, Ethiopia is still in the labour-intensive production stages. In this regard, it is an ideal location for Chinese manufacturers that require large numbers of low-skilled workers. These low-skilled jobs are creating tens of millions of jobs in Ethiopia. Comparatively, more than 100 million people still work in this low-skilled manufacturing sector, though the number is dropping (Venkataraman & Gamora, 2009). Economic cooperation between China and Ethiopia has supported the need to anchor Chinese-African investments in Ethiopia. Ethiopia is leveraging insights from the Chinese economic miracle to push its development agenda.

3.2. Chinese Investments in Ethiopia's Manufacturing and Special Economic Zones

Ethiopia has enjoyed an upward trajectory in manufacturing investments since 2010. For instance, the country recorded US$ 570 million in new manufacturing investments. 78 per cent of these investments originated from China. Ethiopia Investment Commission (EIC) showed that 1,022 Chinese projects were registered in the country for the period between 2007 and 2017 (Gebrehiwot et al., 2020, p. 1). During the same period, there were 440 projects from USA and India and 387 from Sudan. There was no other country with more than 250 projects in the country. These Chinese projects produced a wide variety of products, including garments, textiles and plastic products (Fei & Liao, 2020). There were leather companies, furniture makers and plastic recyclers. The report indicated that China was also investing in advanced skills manufacturing segments such as pharmaceuticals, electronics, metal and machinery and chemicals. According to EIC, at least 14 companies had invested US$

15.15 million, while another 15 invested less than $1 million (Gebrehiwot et al., 2020, p. 1).

Chinese construction companies are largely present in Ethiopia's infrastructure sector. Chinese FDIs are making positive contributions to technology transfer and employment creation. According to Tesfaye (2020), there are four primary drivers of FDI inflow into Ethiopia from China. First, Chinese firms seek to leverage the good investment climate in Ethiopia and build strong social networks. The study notes that the social networks of Chinese investors act as an important factor in making investment decisions in Ethiopia. Second, Chinese investors are looking for opportunities to bring new products into the Ethiopian economy. The opportunities result from market competition and capacity (Gebrehiwot et al., 2020, p. 1). There is still less competition and huge market capacity in the Ethiopian market. Chinese firms seek to have a competitive edge in the market by entering Ethiopia. Other factors supporting Chinese FDI inflows include an expanding market, low land prices and low labour costs (Chakrabarty, 2016). These firms are opting for Ethiopia due to the increasing competition, increasing labour costs and cost appreciation in China. Further, Ethiopia's production capacity is low, given that the market is expanding at an increasing rate.

Third, Chinese firms are looking to take advantage of the cross-border investment incentives that the Ethiopian government provides. The Ethiopian government continues to provide tax holidays and tariff-free policies in relation to Chinese FDI. The government provides tax credits that act as a major motivator for Chinese businesses to enter the Ethiopian market (Gebrehiwot et al., 2020, p. 1). Moreover, Ethiopia is an ideal strategic location for the Chinese parent companies to expand into the African market. Ethiopia offers a stable political environment that supports manufacturing activities. Another factor that promotes manufacturing is the efficiency of customs clearing. Since Ethiopia lacks a developed local supply network, it relies on imported materials and supplies (Chakrabarty, 2016). Therefore, the current customs clearance is designed to help local manufacturers, including Chinese firms, enter the market.

Also, Chinese firms provide multiple construction services and other greenfield investments. These construction investments are largely done by state-owned companies. Chinese private sectors are playing a vital role in the Chinese FDI contributions to Ethiopia (Mulugeta et al., 2023). Unlike other African countries where Chinese state-owned enterprises control many trading and manufacturing activities, in Ethiopia, the Chinese private firms are investing in mining, construction and manufacturing sectors. The Chinese private companies in Ethiopia come from diverse sectors, signifying the dynamic relations between the two countries. Chinese manufacturers shared similar expansion motivations as other global manufacturers. Oya and Schaefer (2023) indicated that these firms were pursuing profits and market expansion. However, these companies have distinct characteristics when compared to international private companies (Tesfaye, 2020). For instance, Chinese private companies tend to be small- and medium-sized family-owned, focusing on the domestic market; traditional, original equipment manufacturing focuses on the export market; and owner-operated, especially in the mining sector.

Chinese manufacturers in Ethiopia follow a similar trend. They start small in the major cities before expanding to the regional towns and rural areas. In addition, Chinese firms in Ethiopia originated from specific regions of China, especially the coastal areas of Guangdong, Jiangsu and Zhejiang (Chakrabarty, 2016). These firms already enjoy region-specific characteristics in China. They seek to replicate these success factors in Ethiopia. They want to take advantage of Ethiopia's emergence as a destination for light industry. As such, small and medium-sized Chinese companies are investing in Ethiopia's footwear, apparel and textiles. Ethiopia is attracting transnational suppliers from China and India. However, some of the large global brands from Europe and North America are also relocating to Ethiopia due to low labour costs (Fei & Liao, 2020).

Chinese companies have found Ethiopia's labour market to be characterised by reasonable productivity levels, which translates to higher firm output. Chinese firms' entry into Ethiopia is driven by factors such as stable political leadership, proactive industrial policies and low water and electricity costs (Ying et al., 2021). Ethiopia also has access to other international markets. Ethiopia is strategically infusing outward FDI towards its national development and structural transformation agenda. Also, Ethiopia is a highly dynamic country. As such, factors such as the policies of the newly structured Prosperity Party under Dr Abiy Ahmed, which has been in power since 2019, an ongoing and escalating civil war between Tigray People's Liberation Front and the federal government, increasingly tense Sino–US relations, the US's termination of the trade agreement-the African Growth and Opportunity Act from Ethiopia on 1 January 2022 and the outbreak of COVID-19 have all affected Ethiopia's FDI in different ways (Chu & Fafchamps, 2022). Another weakness of the FDI in Ethiopia is the lack of resilience in some of the major sectors of Ethiopia's economy.

Furthermore, special economic zones (SEZs) or industrial parks are important pillars of the Ethiopian development plan. According to Ying et al. (2021), Ethiopia's industrialisation strategy is based on building infrastructure that targets specific production. In line with this strategy, China has helped Ethiopia to build 14 industrial parks through the Industrial Park Development Corporation (IPDC) (Ying et al., 2021). For example, the Hawassa Industrial Park, located 275 km from Addis Ababa, is a 300-hectare facility that is powered using hydro-electricity. The park is developed based on energy and water conservation principles and focuses on textile and garment production. Other Chinese interests in manufacturing include textile and garment firms of Shanghai Textile, JP Textile and San Sheng Pharmaceuticals. Also, phone maker Tecno is located in Addis Ababa. These companies have employed more than 7,500 Ethiopians (Tesfaye, 2020). While Ethiopia lacks adequate infrastructure, SEZs or industrial parks concentrate first-class facilities in specific areas, thus minimising infrastructural challenges. The concentrated industrial areas result in the streamlining of bureaucracy, thus reducing investor burdens. According to Ethiopian authorities, these industrial parks have been successful in attracting FDI into Ethiopia.

One of the most successful SEZ projects developed in China is the Eastern Zone project. Ethiopia's government collaborated with the Eastern Zone in developing similar SEZs in the country. The zone's strategy was to buy land, develop infrastructure and lease spaces to factories for profits (Chu & Fafchamps, 2022). Following the lessons learnt from the slow take-off of the Eastern Zone projects, Ethiopia created the Ethiopian Industrial Parks Development Corporation (IPDC) in 2014 to help with the professionalisation of running the zones. IPDC planned to develop 11 new industrial parks in cities around Ethiopia. These industrial parks will be located at Hawassa and Bole-lemi. Concentrating investments in one location helps in forging value chains and facilitating interconnections. Industrial concentration helps enhance manufacturers' competitiveness and reduce transaction costs. Industrial clustering also facilitated technology diffusion between China and Ethiopia. These companies transfer technology and knowledge through the workers. According to

Ying et al. (2021), more than 50 per cent of the workers in the factories moved to local competitors, thus transferring their skills and knowledge to these local firms.

Additionally, the industrial parks created new opportunities for local firms. With low cost of operations and possible technology transfer, local garment makers were able to become more competitive. Before the establishment of these industrial parks, Chu and Fafchamps (2022) show that the export-oriented garment makers imported most of the fabrics, and there was hardly any backward linkage with the Ethiopian suppliers. Today, these fabrics can be made locally. For example, Hawassa Industrial Park attracted several garment makers. Also, textile maker Wuxi Jinmao was established in the zone, supplying the garment makers with high-quality fabrics. Wuxi Jinmao sources sodium carbonate and caustic soda from local suppliers, creating a link between local firms and garment makers (Mulugeta et al., 2023). The company also seeks to use locally produced yarn and to improve the quality of locally produced fabrics. These initiatives seek to help in building a complete local supply chain from cotton and yarn to fabrics and garments.

3.3. Infrastructure Projects in Ethiopia

Infrastructure development is an important pillar of FDI attraction into Ethiopia. FDI is improving Ethiopia’s air transport, road and railway networks. Since the turn of the 20th century, Ethiopia invested heavily in infrastructure development. Ethiopia's government believes that having a good infrastructure will improve its FDI attractiveness (Thiombiano & Tulga, 2022). In this regard, they are linking the infrastructure projects to the export-processing zones, thus enabling ease of transport of goods to ports and export markets abroad. Consequently, China is financing large transport infrastructure projects in several parts of Ethiopia. Some of the signature infrastructure projects include the $4 billion, 750 km Ethiopia–Djibouti Standard Gauge Railway and the $345 million Bole International Airport Expansion Project (Huang & Goodfellow, 2022). Between 1992 and 2015, Chinese operational infrastructure projects were worth more than $773 million, more than any other country. However, these figures have gone up almost ten-fold as other major infrastructural projects near completion. In 2021, Ethiopia unveiled the Alexander Pushkin Square-Gotera Interchange Road Project, which aimed to decongest one part of Addis Ababa city (Huang & Goodfellow, 2022). The interchange is a 3.8 km road integrating three sections, including a two-lane, 320-meter tunnel.

Telecommunications infrastructure is another area where China is investing huge resources. For more than 15 years, ZTE has been in Ethiopia, providing technical support to Ethiopia Telekom. During this time, they have helped to increase Ethiopia's mobile network coverage from 900,000 people in 2006 to more than 20 million people (Huang & Goodfellow, 2022). They have helped to establish 3G data networks. It is important to note that Ethiopia's telecommunications industry is largely under the control of the national government, with few private players. However, since 2000, the state has been expanding its infrastructure to meet its development strategies (Lauria, 2023). Under the Millenium Plan, the government launched construction of the backbone network, which included laying 2,259 km of fibre-optic cable and enhancing telecommunications capacity in Addis Ababa and 13 other cities. Several Chinese companies, including ZTE and Huawei, participated in the project (Thiombiano & Tulga, 2022). ZTE was selected to continue with the partnership as it offered low prices and training of local personnel.

ZTE commissioned a communication college in Addis Ababa that has so far trained more than 3,000 Ethiopian Telecom employees, especially engineers. Ethiopia's ICT infrastructure has cost more than $1.9 billion in loans from China. ZTE and Huawei are partnering to expand Ethiopia's network (Lauria, 2023). Also, Alibaba Group is working with the Ethiopian government to enhance digital capacity. They have also constructed a digital hub in Addis Ababa. Ali Baba's digital hub provides smart logistics and other digital solutions to small and medium-sized businesses in Ethiopia. Chinese companies are leading investors in Ethiopia's Sheba Valley, where many Chinese start-ups are setting up shop. Sheba Valley also hosts a Tecno phone manufacturing facility. In 2019, the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa signed a digital cooperation with Huawei (Thiombiano & Tulga, 2022). In this deal, Huawei provided many technologies to the building and staff, including artificial intelligence, 5G, cloud computing and broadband services.

3.4. Debt Burden and Financial Sustainability

Ethiopia relies on multiple sources of funding for its projects. These funding sources include debts and revenues. The country's dependence on debt is high as it has low levels of savings and capital accumulation. In this regard, Ethiopia needs lots of external funding to meet its growth objectives (Abate, 2023, p. 4). Therefore, Ethiopia relies on debts to finance the expensive infrastructure projects. Currently, Ethiopia owes more than $29 billion to multiple lenders, including China, the World Bank, and others. China is Ethiopia's largest lender, accounting for 32 per cent of the country's external debts. Due to the high-interest rates associated with Chinese loans, 42 per cent of debt servicing costs go towards payments of Chinese debts (Debelo, 2022). These debts helped Ethiopia to achieve the highest growth rates in Africa during the pre-pandemic periods. However, the COVID-19 pandemic compounded the debt problems, thus making it difficult to pay. Further, low exports and limited investments in other sectors mean that Ethiopia cannot raise enough money to meet all its debt obligations, thus causing the country to apply for restructuring some of its debts (Debelo, 2022). In 2023, Ethiopia, China, IMF and other lenders agreed on a debt restructuring package that will enable Ethiopia to pay the debts under new terms.

China-Ethiopia financing relations go back to at least three decades. According to Abate (2023), China committed to disburse $13.7 billion worth of loans targeting different sectors between 2000 and 2018. In 2018 alone, China invested $2.5 billion in different small projects (Amare & Tekea, 2023). However, these investments were lower than the loan commitments for that year. In addition, many infrastructure projects, including roads and railways, were funded using debts. The leading Chinese lending institutions to Ethiopia include China Export-Import Bank (Eximbank), which accounts for 56 per cent of the debts. Chinese telecommunications companies ZTE and Huawei accounted for 17% and 6% of the debts, respectively (Amare & Tekea, 2023). Other Chinese lenders include China Development Bank (CDB), commercial banks and Chinese SOEs.

3.5. Technology Transfer and Employment Generation

The arrival of Chinese foreign investors in Ethiopia has created new opportunities in terms of skill and knowledge acquisition. The foreign investors helped in creating linkages between the local businesses and the Chinese market. Chinese companies created learning-by-working opportunities, which not only created employment for the Ethiopians but also facilitated technology transfer between the two countries (Oya & Schaefer, 2023, p. 9). They taught Ethiopian managers and employees to adapt Chinese production models to address local production challenges. These Chinese productions have been applied to processes in firms such as Huajian shoes, where the 15 workers were taught simplified production processes involving dividing tasks into smaller steps (Kalko et al., 2023). Breaking down the tasks made them easier and enhanced the efficiency of the factory. Similarly, Chinese factories adopted systematic and advanced training that focused on developing and producing products for the international market. For example, the Huajian Group's Ethiopian company conducted multi-level training for the workers (Tang, 2019). The training also included a pre-work training program that took place for a week.

Furthermore, the Chinese company conducted military-style drills to help cultivate a culture of strict discipline. In these drills, workers learned to use various machines, such as sewing machines. In the garment factories, the workers were retrained in stitching, sewing and developing new patterns (Kalko et al., 2023). They were also trained to test the garments and other products to ensure appropriate quality for the international markets. The production line supervisors acted as trainers and evaluators of the workers' performance. Other companies adopted a 'theory training centre', which included workshops where employees could gather for instructions on what they should do. These workshops offered technical training and enterprise management courses. Also, the company sends selected employees to China, where they receive further training on the production line activities. Since its establishment in Ethiopia, Huajian Group has sent more than 500 employees to China for further training (Tang, 2023, p. 9).

Also, global supplier Wuxi Jinmao has employed and trained 30 Ethiopians who have received different kinds of training on various aspects of the company's operations. Wuxi Jinmao is a supplier of different products, including textiles, information technology and chemicals, to different companies. However, their main buyer is the US-based PVH Group (Tang, 2019, p. 11). Company employees receive seven months of training in the Chinese language from the company headquarters in China and another six months of technical training. The employees who have been trained in China helped in the performance of management tasks and the training of local workers. The trained workers helped the company set up a textile mill in Hawassa Industrial Park. These training programs highlight the value that Chinese investors place on knowledge sharing and technology transfer to achieve their goals. According to Kalko et al. (2023, p. 23), knowledge and capability at the management level are vital for attaining successful company operations. In this regard, Ethiopians participate in various enterprise management programs that help them learn management and operational skills. The report highlighted how it is important for Ethiopian employees to hire local managers and build a sustainable and efficient workforce. Due to these training programs, the majority of the Chinese firms in Ethiopia have resorted to having local managers and supervisors.

Additionally, owners of the Chinese firms in Ethiopia consider them part of the family. However, due to their inadequate knowledge of the Chinese processes, they are considered incapable of managing others. Therefore, they have to be supervised throughout the entire process. When Ethiopians gain sufficient experience, they are allowed more responsibilities, including managing workers in the production line. Reflecting on the Huajian Group's knowledge management processes, Tang (2019, p. 8) noted that Ethiopians who had received training in China or at the company workshop were appointed team leaders. They were placed in charge of production teams that included between 15 and 25 employees. The team leaders were usually one Ethiopian and one Chinese worker. Ethiopian team leaders are expected to demonstrate their capabilities and enhance their skills during on-the-job training (Tang, 2023, p. 4). The Chinese managers ensure that they are ready to handle their tasks diligently. The team leaders need to work together to solve emerging problems and decide ways to improve them. The team leaders are also responsible for ensuring that there is a good attitude in the workplace.

Furthermore, there have been successful knowledge and skills transfer from China to Ethiopia. The knowledge transfer has been largely in the field of science and technology. In relation to science, China is partnering with Ethiopia in many research and development activities, including healthcare and agriculture (Li & Xue, 2022, p. 62). China is helping Ethiopian scientists to realise their science and research aspirations. Consistent with the research and development objective, China developed the Luban Workshop to help with science and advanced technical skill learning activities (Tang, 2023, p. 10). Luban Workshop is modern machinery whose objective is to empower aspiring Ethiopians and support the country's development journey with a skilled workforce. Luban Workshop has equipment that meets the standards of international vendors, helps train students with new technologies, and serves the industry’s best interests.

Institutions such as Luban Workshop serve as centres of excellence in Ethiopia. It admits students from all over the East African nations, thus helping to build their strength in science and technology (Li & Xue, 2022, p. 62). It helps build capacity for East African employees and experts and empowers them to participate in operational activities that require advanced skills. Luban Workshop is a result of the Africa-China cooperation framework that results from stronger cooperation between the two regions in science and technology. Rashidov et al. (2023) identified Ethiopia as one of the African countries that have launched Luban Workshop programs to promote vocational skills and build China-Africa cooperation. Other African countries that have launched similar programs include Egypt, Uganda, Kenya and Nigeria. These workshops provide quality vocational training to young people seeking job skills.

China impacts employment in Ethiopia in different ways. Apart from training managers and production line employees, Chinese companies have become leading sources of employment for thousands of Ethiopians. According to Li and Xue (2022), there are at least 15 Chinese companies in Ethiopia with more than 500 employees each. Huajian shoe factory has 6300 employees, while there are several other smaller companies with less than 50 employees. Chinese training programs and employment practices differ considerably, leading to Ethiopians being employed at different levels (Rashidov et al., 2023). While there are fewer Ethiopians at management level jobs, more Ethiopians continue to get employment in less skilled factory floor jobs. In total, studies reported that Chinese companies had employed more than 28,000 Ethiopians. There were also 1,400 expatriates employed in these companies (Tang, 2019). The expatriates were largely from China and tasked with the management and technical responsibilities. In the garment sector, less than 5 per cent of the employees were expatriates. The leading Chinese employers in Ethiopia were plastics, textiles and cement factories.

In summary, China and Ethiopia have had long diplomatic, social, political and economic relationships. Ethiopia has often expressed their traction for China’s economic model. China-Ethiopia's economic relationship has been in the areas of manufacturing and special economic zones, infrastructure, technology transfer, employee generation, and funding. Regarding manufacturing, Ethiopia has been a destination for both major Chinese companies and small and medium-sized enterprises. The large companies include a phone maker, Tecno and several construction and engineering firms. Small and medium-sized firms that have invested in Ethiopia come from diverse industries, including textiles, chemicals, and plastics. To support her manufacturing ambitions, Ethiopia is following the Chinese model of special economic zones (SEZs). SEZs have a special infrastructure network and other services that make them attractive to manufacturers. One of the most successful SEZs in Ethiopia is Hawassa SEZ, which has attracted more than 100 Chinese companies so far.

Also, China is the largest investor in Ethiopian infrastructure. Since 2000, China has provided more than $4 billion in infrastructure development loans. These loans were used to construct the Djibouti-Addis Ababa rail line with plans to expand the line southwards. The Chinese government has also helped Ethiopia to decongest Addis Ababa with the construction of link roads and interchanges. Further, China is the largest provider of loans to Ethiopia. Reports indicated that more than 70 per cent of external debts were from China. The more than $4 billion debts have helped Ethiopia to modernise her infrastructure, resulting in rapid economic growth in the decades between 2000 and 2020 when the country maintained a growth rate of around 10 per cent. However, these debts have left the country on the brink of debt distress. Finally, Ethiopia has also benefitted from technology and skills transfer. Ethiopians have learnt Chinese models of management and production either through local workshops or learning opportunities in China. As such, more Ethiopians are getting employment in Chinese companies in Ethiopia. Others have received employment in supervisory and management roles.

The China-Ethiopia relationship has also been rocked by different scandals. The main scandal was the AU Spy scandal. In 2017, it was reported that China government spied on the events and meetings at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa (Council on Foreign Relations, 2018). The reports indicated that China's government used bugging equipment and digital backdoors on the building's electronics. These Huawei-manufactured cameras were installed during the construction of the building (Council on Foreign Relations, 2018). While the Chinese government denied these allegations, they have raised concerns regarding the cyber safety of some of the buildings in Africa.

CHAPTER 4: KENYA (CASE STUDY III)

4.1. Background and Context

China-Kenya relations can be traced back to the 1950s before Kenya gained independence. The two countries established diplomatic ties immediately after Kenya gained its independence in 1963. However, the relations were suspended in 1967 before being reinstated in 1978 (Chege, 2008). Daniel Moi's administration sought to repair the broken relations between Kenya and China with efforts that included high-profile visits and agreements promoting trade, technological exchange and investments. In addition, the countries expanded their security cooperation with General Liu Jingsong, commander of the Lanzhou Military Region, who led a Chinese military delegation to Kenya in 1996 (Kioko, 2011). In 1997, Major General Nick Leshan, commander of the Kenya Air Force, led a military delegation to China. Under Presidents Kibaki and Kenyatta, Kenya adopted a 'Look East' policy focusing on development partnerships and financing for infrastructural projects (Kariuki, 2022, p. 8). The policy provided an alternative to the previous foreign policy that had depended on Western loans and investments.

The 'Look East' foreign policy expanded access to Chinese loans and provided funds for various transport and energy infrastructure expansions. In 2005, President Kibaki visited China, with the Chinese President also visiting Nairobi afterwards (Kioko, 2011). After these bilateral engagements, the two countries started working on oil exploration and infrastructure deals. In 2006, Chinese President Hu Jintao signed the first oil exploration contract in Kenya. Under the deal, the Chinese state-owned offshore oil and Gas Company, CNOOC Ltd, was licenced to prospect oil in Kenya. In 2007, Jinchuan Group bought a 20 per cent stake in Tiomin Kenya, becoming the first Chinese state-owned metal manufacturing group to enter Kenya's mining sector (Chege, 2008). The Chinese-funded infrastructure projects are important components of Kenya's Vision 2030, which seeks to turn the country into a rapidly industrializing middle-income economy by 2030. In 2010, China and Kenya signed 10 agreements that included partnerships in education, construction, trade, healthcare, tourism, energy and telecommunications. Presidents Kenyatta and Xi Jinping held talks in 2013, resulting in deals worth more than $5 billion (Kariuki, 2022, p. 8). Part of these deals included 17 multi-billion shilling deals for various infrastructural projects.

Trade and infrastructural investments have been the main pillars of China-Kenya relations. The countries also established the China-Africa Development Bank. Between 2003 and 2013, the trade between China and Kenya grew rapidly, increasing by 30 per cent every year. Since 1978, China and Kenya have expanded their economic relationships, with China becoming its largest trading partner in 2020 (Abdirahman, 2020, p. 34). In 2018, the size of the bilateral trade volume between Kenya and China was $5.8 billion. In 2022, the trade deficit increased to $7 billion due to developmental assistance, trade deals, and investments it received from China. Nonetheless, the volumes of Kenya's tea, avocados, herbs and coffee have increased considerably since 2010 (Kariuki, 2022, p. 8). Chinese firms are efficient and affordable and offer employment opportunities to Kenyans. However, some of these firms have been criticised for problematic tendering processes and low-quality goods.

Importantly, China has supported Kenya's infrastructural projects under the Belt and Road Initiative and other programs. China has also extended vast loans to Kenya and has opened its market to some Kenyan products, especially fruits and horticulture products (Kariuki, 2022, p. 8). One of the most significant Chinese infrastructural investments that China financed in Kenya was the Standard Gauge Railway that links Mombasa and Nairobi. The project was planned to link Uganda, Rwanda and DRC. However, the financial implications of the project have left the country in debt distress, and questions regarding the legality of the contracts have been raised (Plummer, 2022). It is alleged that Mombasa Port was used as collateral in case Kenya defaulted on the loans.

4.2. Chinese-Funded Transportation and Logistics Projects

China has provided financing for some of the primary infrastructural investments in Kenya. These projects include the multi-billion-dollar Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) linking the cities of Mombasa and Nairobi. SGR phase 2, which links Nairobi and Naivasha, has also been completed. These two phases were financed by a Chinese loan of $3.75 billion (Ogutu, 2020). The SGR sought to improve railway transportation, reduce cargo transit time and ease passenger travel between the two cities. Phase 2A, linking Nairobi and Naivasha, connected two economic zones and facilitated cargo transport. It was intended to facilitate the growth of an industrial park in Naivasha and attract investors into Kenya's manufacturing sector. While the phase has not been as successful as Phase 1, it is believed the completion of Phase 2B, which links Naivasha and Kisumu, will help it realise its full potential. Currently, China has ended the funding of phase 2B. Apart from financing, the SGR project received technical support from China with the Chinese company China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), which developed and constructed the railway (Plummer, 2022). SGR has enhanced the transport of goods from the port of Mombasa to inland destinations, while passenger transport has become faster and more efficient.

SGR is the key pillar of a major intermodal transport network in Kenya that includes ports, roads and airports. For instance, it was to connect the ports of Mombasa and Kisumu, international airports such as Moi International Airport in Mombasa, Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi and Kisumu International Airport in Kisumu (Ogutu, 2020). When complete, it will also complement the water transport on Lake Victoria and road networks in Western Kenya. The project's objectives are to open up trade between Kenya and the African Great Lakes region that includes Uganda, DRC, Rwanda and Burundi and also ensure seamless and efficient transportation from the Coast to Western Kenya. The railway reduced traffic congestion on roads thus improving the overall transportation and logistics sector in Kenya. When complete, Kenyan and Chinese economists believe that the project would enhance trade, reduce transportation costs and enhance connectivity (Plummer, 2022). However, critics have raised concerns regarding the economic viability and sustainability of this project. Further, there are concerns about whether this project could repay the loans which were used to fund its construction.

Thika Superhighway was the first major infrastructure project undertaken by the Kenya and Chinese governments. The goal of this project was to enhance the efficiency of transportation and efficiency in the Nairobi Metropolitan area. The highway links Nairobi and the industrial town of Thika and is part of the A1 highway linking Kenya and Ethiopia (Abdirahman, 2020, p. 34). The road was constructed using a $360 million loan from China and other multilateral financial partners. The road improved the existing highway and expanded it to 12 lanes to enhance safety and connectivity. The project was done by three Chinese companies, including China WuYi, Sinohydro and Shengli Engineering (Ogutu, 2020). Other works that these companies did include street lighting and construction of overpasses and underpasses.

The road was completed and commissioned in 2012 and has since improved traffic flow and considerably reduced travel time between Nairobi and Thika.

Additionally, the Mombasa-Nairobi Highway is another project that has been funded by Chinese loans. The project reduced traffic congestion on the busy Mombasa Road and enhanced connectivity between Nairobi and adjacent areas such as Machakos (Farooq et al., 2018). The road reduced travel time and made transport between Nairobi and Mombasa more efficient. The Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor includes several infrastructure projects, such as the Lamu Port, Isiolo Airport, and a network of roads linking Ethiopia and South Sudan. It is estimated that the Chinese company spent $478.9 million to construct three berths at the Lamu Port. The LAPSSET project is also expected to include a railway line. China companies and financers are involved in the financing and construction components of the projects (Ogutu, 2020). In 2022, Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta launched the JKIA-James Gichuru Expressway, which linked the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) to the business district of Westlands on the western part of Nairobi city. The road was constructed based on a Public Private Partnership (PPP) model and cost more than $700 million to complete.

Chinese have also been partners with the government of Kenya in the delivery of the Nairobi Metropolitan Transport Master Plan (NMTMP). NMTMP includes several infrastructural projects designed to improve transportation, logistics, and trade within Nairobi. Chinese funding has been vital in the delivery of projects such as the bus rapid system (BRT) systems and various link roads in the city (Farooq et al., 2018). The infrastructure projects have had economic implications as they have enhanced access to businesses and industries while making it easier for commuters to access their workplaces and markets. Further, projects such as Thika Road, NMTMP, and JKIA-James Gichuru Expressway have modernised and expanded transportation infrastructure around Nairobi (Plummer, 2022). However, it is important to note that Chinese investments in infrastructure have created opportunities but have also been marred by controversies.

4.3. Investments in Manufacturing

China has been investing in areas that support Kenya's industrial and manufacturing capabilities. In the last two decades, Chinese FDIs in Kenya have increased rapidly. It is estimated that the Chinese FDIs in Kenya tripled between 2000 and 2013 (Abdirahman, 2020, p. 34). In 2015, Chinese FDIs in Kenya amounted to US$ 1.1 billion. For example, China is helping to establish industrial parks or special economic zones. Here, they fund the government to establish manufacturing facilities that can help stimulate local production and create employment for the local population. Mainland Chinese investors currently own three EPZ firms, i.e., Erdemann, Future Garments, and Hui Commercials. Erdemann produces mineral water and building materials for the local market (Calabrese & Tang, 2023). They also produced different products for the export market. Future Garments and Hui Commercials are located in the Athi River industrial park. They process and export plastic flakes to China. Anyang Batteries Co. is operating a battery assembly business at the same park. While Kenya's manufacturing sector has suffered several drawbacks in the last few years, it is still one of the most competitive in Africa. Kenya draws its manufacturing competitiveness from good infrastructure and market demand (Carmody & Murphy, 2022). However, high production costs and weak supply chains are major obstacles that are denying Kenyan manufacturers an opportunity to compete with the best in the world.

Chinese aluminium companies are major players in Kenya's metals sectors. Currently, there are three Chinese aluminium producers in Kenya, including Creation Aluminum, Great Wall Manufacturing, and Future Industries. These companies are located in various industrial parks around Nairobi. Other companies are Ganglong International, which produces steel plates and roofing materials in Nakuru, and Lever Stone, which manufactures bricks in Western Kenya (Calabrese & Tang, 2023). The majority of the Chinese companies in Kenya are small and employ less than 20 people. Beijing Electricity Transmission & Transformation Co. (BETT) is making concrete poles. KEDA is investing in the energy sector by producing and distributing power products to the Kenyan market. According to studies, Twyford Kenya employs around 500 workers. CWAY Group produces peanut snacks and bottled mineral water. There are several companies in Kenya's light manufacturing employing less than 50 Kenyans per company (Carmody & Murphy, 2022). These companies range from battery manufacturers and beverage makers to automotive and machinery assembly plants. For example, Foton East Africa assembles televisions.

Consequently, China and Kenya signed several agreements that improved their economic cooperation. The agreements included opening the Kenyan market to Chinese manufacturers. Chinese companies are cooperating with Kenyan companies to promote manufacturing (Calabrese & Tang, 2023). These partnerships help in the development of infrastructure that supports manufacturing processes. They support technological transfer and the development of people's skills. Chinese companies are hugely engaged in businesses that manufacture construction materials. These materials include aluminium products, bricks, and roofing materials. The main Chinese players in the construction materials business include Twyford Ceramics. Many high-profile construction projects in Kenya are sourcing their building materials from these companies. Chinese investors also invest in repair and logistics. Other companies include the Golden Lion, which produces batteries and tissue paper. There is also Yocean, which focuses on repairs of electric transformers. Yocean is one of the two transformer repair service providers in Kenya (Carmody & Murphy, 2022).

4.4. Environmental Impact Assessment of Chinese Investments in Kenya

Kenya is strict on the environmental outcomes of the companies that operate in the market. The National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) develops and enforces various policies to ensure that the companies operate in a manner that results in minimal pollution (Farooq et al., 2018). NEMA oversees a comprehensive assessment of the sectors and specific projects. Chinese companies have invested in several areas, including manufacturing, energy, and infrastructure. These areas have different environmental expectations that the firms must respect. Therefore, there is a need for NEMA to make special considerations when evaluating the environmental implications of the company or business. Regarding infrastructure, NEMA has to evaluate and determine the actual impact of various Chinese-constructed roads and railways (Hu et al., 2022). The focus should be on their impact on the local ecosystems, disruption of wildlife habitats, and deforestation. In the last couple of years, there have been concerns regarding the destruction of forests and riparian lands in Chinese infrastructure and construction. However, there is no project that has been blocked for flouting environmental requirements.

The environmental impact of China on Kenya can be seen in their energy sector. For example, Chinese firms are investing in thermal energy production. While these firms contribute less than 10 per cent of Kenya's energy use, they contribute more than 50 per cent in carbon and greenhouse emissions. These companies are crucial to narrowing the energy supply gap that exists in Kenya. According to Bouraima et al. (2023), NEMA is assessing the environmental impact of power plants and renewable energy installations to ensure improved local air and water quality. Also, it seeks to ensure communities are not displaced from their homes. Also, Chinese manufacturers have been accused of contributing to an increase in pollution in many cities and towns as they tend to violate NEMA regulations. For instance, the local community protested against the establishment of the coal power plant as they accused the Chinese investors of not taking the environmental implications seriously (Kiremu et al., 2022, p. 5). Following the protests, some of its financiers, including the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), pulled out, resulting in the collapse of the project.

Waste management is another issue that Kenyan authorities have raised against foreign companies, including Chinese manufacturers. Some of the Chinese companies have been found to not follow the NEMA recommendations in handling waste disposal and adherence to environmental regulations (Hu et al., 2022). In some cases, Chinese companies have been accused of using unsustainable resources. Nevertheless, no company has been reprimanded by the authorities on their manufacturing processes and how they impact the impact. In recent years, many Chinese companies have been involved in various disputes with local communities for mining and extractive activities (Bouraima et al., 2023). For instance, one of the Chinese companies had to pull out of the coal project after the local community and environmentalists protested against the project. The local community argued that the project would considerably impact on the ecosystems, air quality, and water sources.

In the meantime, Chinese companies have contributed to the positive impact on the environment in Kenya. For example, a Chinese company, Twyford Ceramics, produces high-quality poles from renewable substances. These poles are useful in electricity transmission, street lighting, and home and factory fencing (Bouraima et al., 2023). They also promote different recycling processes, which have also been adopted by Kenyan companies engaged in plastic and paper recycling. In addition, Chinese companies have made available green technologies that support the transfer of environmental production processes and skills to the local industry, thus promoting sustainability (Hu et al., 2022). While there are many Chinese manufacturing companies operating in Kenya, no adequate studies have been done on how they impact the environment. Usually, NEMA conducts an environmental assessment before construction projects begin. In addition, these projects often involve collaboration with Kenyan investors, the government, and Chinese investors (Kiremu et al., 2022, p. 5). As such, there is no transparency and accountability when it comes to the overall environmental outcomes of Chinese investments.

4.5. Role of Chinese Investments in Kenya in Regional Trade and Connectivity

Accessibility and connectivity within Kenya is vital for the regional trade dynamics. China's involvement in Kenya's regional trade can be observed through various initiatives and activities. Some of the key investments that Kenya and China have partnered with the objective of promoting trade within the East African Community and the rest of the region include improving the transportation network. These projects include the construction of the Lamu Port and roads under the LAPSSET project, which are intended to connect the country with Ethiopia and South Africa (Kimari & Lesutis, 2022). When the LAPSSET projects are complete, it will enable trade in a region with more than 150 million people and enhance connectivity within the Horn of Africa region. The SGR project, when complete, will link the port of Mombasa to Uganda, Rwanda, and Eastern Congo. It was designed to become the main route for the import and export of goods within the Great Lakes region (Olubandwa & Zamani, 2022). The expanded port of Mombasa will be open for trade and will reach new markets beyond the East Africa Community.

SGR was partially financed by China and has already improved domestic trade. Today, most cargo transport from the port of Mombasa to Nairobi and other interior towns is transported using the SGR. SGR has proved to be affordable and efficient in the long run. When completed, it will provide an effective means of transport for goods to Uganda, Rwanda, and Eastern Congo (Kimari & Lesutis, 2022). Also, Thika Superhighway is the first phase of the A1 highway, which is designed to link Nairobi to Ethiopia. The road will facilitate trade between Kenya and Ethiopia. These highways, ports, and railways were not only constructed but also funded by China. As such, China has played a major role in enhancing the connectivity of Kenya to the neighbouring countries, thus facilitating the movement of people and goods in the regions (Olubandwa & Zamani, 2022).

Chinese infrastructure and manufacturing investments is promoting trade and economic partnerships between Kenya and the neighbouring countries. Since 2000, China and Kenya have entered multiple bilateral agreements that have fostered economic cooperation and trade with their neighbours. The agreements have facilitated trade, resulted in tariff deductions for capital goods, and enhanced market access (Olubandwa & Zamani, 2022). These agreements allowed Kenyan companies to access technologies that allowed them to produce cheaply and sell to the regional market. As such, Kenya has become the biggest exporter of manufactured goods in the East African region. The agreement also supported Kenya's establishment of special economic zones and industrial zones that have promoted manufacturing in the economy (Zhang et al., 2022, p. 4). Chinese investments in industrial parks and special economic zones in Kenya contribute to the development of manufacturing and trade (Majune et al., 2022). These zones often serve as hubs for production and can boost exports to regional markets. Some of the goods that are produced in these industrial parks that Kenya exports to the regional market include fabrics, aluminium foils, ceramics, and batteries, among others. The zones also assemble cars and machines that Kenya exports to the entire regional market.

China-Kenya trade agreements have also facilitated trade financing and investment in the Kenya and East African markets. For instance, China has provided financial support for various development projects in Kenya, facilitating economic activities and trade. This support includes loans, grants, and investments in key sectors like energy, infrastructure, and technology (Olubandwa & Zamani, 2022). For example, the Chinese provided loans to develop special economic and industrial parks in Kenya. These zones have resulted in goods that Kenya exports to Africa and international markets. Garments are the common commodities that Kenya produces in these zones (Zhang et al., 2022, p. 4). Kenya sells garments to China, the United States, the EU, and the rest of the EAC market. In addition, Kenya has gained from China in terms of technology transfer and capacity building. Chinese investments often involve technology transfer and skills development programs, which can enhance Kenya's capacity to engage in regional trade by improving the quality and competitiveness of its products (Kimari & Lesutis, 2022). Also, Kenyan employees are receiving training in various colleges in China. The training is intended to make them better managers in the international market. They also are learning technical skills on how to oversee production line operations.

Additionally, Kenya and China are cooperating in agricultural production and expanding the market for fresh produce. For instance, Kenyan University, Egerton University partnered with the Chinese university, Nanjing Agricultural University on research and programs that seek to enhance the quality of farming in Kenya. Since then, farmers in Nakuru County have benefitted from the research that the universities conducted (Kalu et al., 2022). The farmers received better seeds and learnt how to efficiently use their farmland. The new farming technologies helped them to boost their crop yields. Farmers were also able to address challenges such as poor seeds, the high cost of fertilizer, and erratic rains. The new farming technologies resulted in booming crop yields. It resulted in an increase in vegetable, legumes, and maize yields (Zhang et al., 2022, p. 4). Farmers indicated that their bean yields had increased. The universities developed a demonstration centre where they applied new technologies to manage bacterial wilt disease. The Chinese laboratory helped the farmers to refurbish their greenhouses. Farmers were educated on grafting tomato shoots onto the disease-resistant rootstocks. These innovations enabled farmers to increase their yields, minimise crop damage and reduce pesticide imports (Majune et al., 2022). Further, China has shown interest in supporting Kenya's agricultural sector, including agribusiness and food processing. This can contribute to increased regional trade in agricultural products.

Also, China has helped to improve Kenya’s digital infrastructure. In telecommunications, Kenya’s leading service provider, Safaricom, partners with Huawei to provide a 4G network to its customers. The partnerships have also helped Kenyan consumers access digital payment services in all parts of the country (Majune et al., 2022). As such, Safaricom has become the most successful business in Kenya. Further, Chinese companies are partnering with other Kenyan companies to provide e-commerce and digital connectivity services. China's expertise in e-commerce and digital infrastructure can potentially support Kenya's efforts to expand its digital economy, facilitating cross-border trade in the digital space. While China's role in Kenya's regional trade has been substantial, it's essential to note that the impact is multifaceted, and opinions on the nature of China's involvement can vary (Zhang et al., 2022, p. 4). Some view it as a positive force for development, while others raise concerns about issues such as debt sustainability and the potential for unequal economic relationships (Kalu et al., 2022). Ongoing monitoring and assessment of the evolving economic ties between China and Kenya are crucial to understanding the long-term implications for regional trade dynamics

The chapter examined the role of China in Kenya's economy. It discussed the various sectors in which China had made significant investments in Kenya. These areas included infrastructure, manufacturing, and trade. It also highlighted that there were concerns about Chinese investments' impact on the environment. Infrastructure development is the main area where China is involved in Kenya. China has constructed roads, railways, ports, and airports. In 2022, the Chinese contractor completed Phase 1B of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) linking Nairobi and Naivasha. This was in addition to the SGR Phase 1A, which connected Mombasa Port and Nairobi. When completed, the SGR will link Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Eastern DRC, thus opening the country up to more efficient regional trade. The review showed that SGR had enhanced the efficiency of transportation and logistics between Mombasa and Nairobi. In terms of road infrastructure, China is the main investor in Kenya's highway system with the funding and construction of the Thika Superhighway, Nairobi-Mombasa Highway, and the JKIA-James Gichuru Expressway. They have also constructed many roads around Nairobi that have helped to decongest the city.

Additionally, China invested in Kenya's energy sector. They have partnered with the government to develop power plants and boost the country's energy production capacity. Also, a Chinese technology company, Huawei, has partnered with Kenya's telecommunication giant, Safaricom, to provide high-quality digital services to clients. They have helped the company to not only improve the quality of their services but also expand and develop the communication network. China is also a major investor in Kenya's manufacturing sector. Chinese companies are establishing subsidiaries in Kenya, where they are engaging in garment making, fabrics, aluminium, plastic, steel making, and construction materials. China has also partnered with Kenya in the construction of special economic zones and industrial parks. Large and medium companies such as Golden Lion battery maker have established their operations in the special economic zone in Athi River on the outskirts of Nairobi.

China is an important trading partner of Kenya. Kenya and China have signed several agreements that allow the two countries to sell their products in each other's markets. For example, China has access to the Kenyan market to sell manufactured products, while Kenya sells fresh produce such as fruits to China. Technological and skills transfer is another important component of the relationship between Kenya and China. China sells various machines and technologies to Kenyan companies to produce multiple products for the Kenyan and regional markets. In addition, Chinese companies are investing in the construction and real estate sector. Many roads in Kenya are currently under construction by Chinese companies. Chinese institutions and Kenyan colleges and farmers have partnered in the development and implementation of new farming techniques. These collaborations have resulted in better agricultural production. While it is important to note that the Chinese contributions to the Kenyan economy have brought many positive changes, one cannot ignore the environmental concerns associated with some of the investments.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this paper was to compare the approaches and effects of Chinese investments in DRC, Kenya, and Ethiopia. After reviewing multiple reports, past dissertations, books, and peer-reviewed articles, the paper presents important insights into the China-Africa investment relationships and the positive and negative effects of this relationship on the selected countries' socio-economic outcomes. These findings answered the question: What are the differences in Chinese investment outcomes in Ethiopia, DRC, and Kenya?

The study found that FDIs were important for DRC, Ethiopia, and Kenya's economic ambitions. The studies found that two FDI models were conspicuous in the case of DRC, Ethiopia, and Kenya, i.e., the dependency and internationalisation models. The dependency model refers to a case where a larger economy, in this case, uses its economic influence in a poor country, such as DRC, for its own good, often resulting in negative effects on the poor country (Saidi et al., 2020). For instance, the Sicomines Agreements allowed China to exploit DRC minerals and other resources in exchange for infrastructure. While massive amounts of minerals go to China, including most cobalt, copper, and gold, DRC has not received proportionate amounts of infrastructure (Maiza-Larrarte et al., 2019). The study revealed that the Chinese investment model in the DRC was purely linked to resource exploitation. While it is undeniable that China has invested in infrastructure projects such as roads and power stations, these investments are part of the mining infrastructure to facilitate extractive activities and the transport of minerals.

Nevertheless, the mining infrastructure has helped to open up the country. For instance, the investments linked the main mining province of Katanga with the capital city and main population centres such as Kinshasa and Lubumbasi (Jansson et al., 2009). The roads were also intended to connect DRC with the neighbouring countries of Tanzania and Uganda. Also, China is building at least three hydropower stations in Katanga Province to provide energy for the mining processes. Since these developments are specifically linked to mining activities, they have been marred by environmental issues, transparency, and corruption. In this case, the FDI approach is depleting the resources of the poor country while not improving the lives of the local communities. Further, it was expected that the Chinese companies would create jobs, invest in local infrastructure, and build hospitals and schools. The local communities remain poor, with no access to schools and healthcare despite the Sicomines Agreement being in place for more than 15 years (Rapanyane, 2022, p. 51).

The study found that less developed countries (LDCs) such as DRC are not sufficiently compensated for the mineral and other natural resources that China gains. It showed that China is leaving the country in a state of perpetual poverty. According to Joshua et al. (2020, p. 18022), for DRC to improve its economies, it must eliminate imperialism in its resource exploitation and negotiate better prices for natural resources. Further, China has failed to mobilise competitive factors that can help DRC to achieve its ambitions. For instance, China extracts the minerals in their raw form and exports them back to China for processing. In this regard, DRC's extractive industry is left ill-equipped to compete with the global, advanced mining industries. DRC lacks skilled labour and technologies that can help them establish their processing facilities. According to Malm (2020, p. 14), the Sicomines Agreement that gave China considerable control over DRC's minerals seems imperialistic in nature. DRC is supplying China with the raw materials that fuel her industries at less than market prices. Dependency theory, therefore, can explain the unequal relationship between many sub-Saharan African countries rich in minerals with China.

Another FDI model that was observed was the internalisation approach, where Chinese companies relocated to Kenya, Ethiopia, and DRC to provide services and infrastructure development. In the three countries, Chinese companies were the primary contractors of railways, roads, ports, highways, and bridges. In Kenya and Ethiopia, Chinese companies built the standard gauge railway lines linking the capital cities to the port. The railway facilitated the import and export of different goods into and out of the country (Farooq et al., 2018, p. 411). Also, the railway line made transportation of goods and passengers efficient, effective, and cheap. These countries benefitted from Chinese technology companies such as ZTE and Huawei, which helped improve digital technologies and telecommunication access in the three countries. In the DRC and Ethiopia, ZTE partnered with the governments to build telecommunication infrastructure and improve connectivity across the countries (Adem, 2012, p. 154). In Kenya, Huawei partnered with Kenya's telecommunication service provider, Safaricom, to upgrade the network to a 4G network. However, it is not just the large companies that are expanding to these African countries. Small and medium-sized companies in garment, battery, and machine assembly have established their production facilities in Ethiopia and Kenya’s industrial parks. These companies help to employ thousands of Kenyans and Ethiopians in their operations.

Internalisation theory is important for explaining the firm-specific advantages of Chinese companies moving to Kenya and Ethiopia. Some of the companies that have moved to Ethiopia are garment and fabric makers who seek to leverage the low cost of labour (Gebrehiwot et al., 2020, p. 1). They have trained employees on technical skills that help them in production line activities. In addition, there are Chinese companies engaging in the assembly of machinery, plastics, chemicals, and batteries that have expanded their businesses to Kenya and Ethiopia. Apart from the low labour costs, the strategy takes advantage of the special economic zones and industrial parks that Kenya and Ethiopia have constructed to facilitate manufacturing. These zones include infrastructure, electricity, and telecommunication infrastructure that lowers the overall operational costs. Narula et al. (2019, p. 14) explained that Chinese businesses engaging in FDI activities were exploiting the cost advantages in those countries. In addition, they were moving away from regions of stiff competition to areas with low competition. It allows these Chinese companies to expand their competitive advantages. Chinese companies were leveraging on the low cost of production in Ethiopia to produce products that they export back to China, thus maximising their competitive advantages. These observations were in line with Sutherland et al.'s (2020) argument that multinational companies develop their internal competitive advantages or gain monopolistic power in a foreign market.

The study confirmed that dependency and internationalisation theories of FDI can explain the Chinese investment model in Africa. While the approaches looked similar in Ethiopia and Kenya, where the focus was on infrastructure and trade, the dependency model was more conspicuous in the case of DRC. In DRC, the investments focused on the extraction of minerals, including cobalt, copper, gold, diamond, oil, and other minerals. In Ethiopia and Kenya, Chinese investments were in critical infrastructure and manufacturing. Xinfeng and Chunyu (2023) explained that China was investing in Kenya and Ethiopia to expand to new markets for their goods and manufacturing. In these cases, China is partnering with these countries to form economic activities as well as facilitate the flow of economic inputs under reduced tariffs. They are investing in special economic zones and industrial parks. China is offering training opportunities for Ethiopian workers that they can use to manage companies or businesses at the parks. In Kenya, they partner in agricultural research to increase the agricultural productivity of the farmers. Looking at the three cases, it is evident that China uses a different investment model for DRC compared to Kenya and Ethiopia. In DRC, the model focuses on the extraction of raw materials, while in Kenya and Ethiopia, the focus is on trade, connectivity, and manufacturing (Malm, 2020).

The case study analysis showed that DRC-China was not as straightforward as would be expected of any country interested in the minerals. Specifically, the Sicomines Agreement highlights that DRC is not just gaining money for the minerals that it sells to China, but also Chinese companies are offering technical and financial support in the construction of roads and power stations (Morake et al., 2016). The agreement expects China to invest in schools and healthcare for the local community. The findings confirmed that while DRC sees China as a better option for its development needs after breaking away from Western colonial exploitation, China seems to leverage the opportunity to exploit minerals from the resource-rich country. However, one cannot see the many problems associated with the arrangement, such as lack of transparency. For example, the existing reports had insufficient information on the exact expenditure of the Chinese on DRC roads and infrastructure (Ericsson et al., 2020). There was no information on how these projects were impacting the environment and how they could be evaluated. The available studies have suggested that the Sicomines Agreement allowed China to extract DRC's resources in exchange for infrastructure development, which has been more beneficial to China than Congo.

The implementation of the Sicomines Agreement is suspect to many people. While China has effectively implemented the mining component of the agreement, the investments in infrastructure are still below 30 per cent of the agreed amount (Ericsson et al., 2020). The Chinese companies have continued to exact vast volumes of minerals from DRC mines. According to Kabemba (2016), the value of the minerals that China has extracted from DRC is more than ten times the value of the infrastructure development projects that they were implementing. Also, DRC mines have given China full control of some strategic global industries, such as batteries for green energy solutions. Sicomines Agreement gave China 70 per cent control of the cobalt mines, which are the largest in the world. Unlike any other business, the agreement cushions China and its companies against any risk that they may face during their operations in

DRC (Kabemba, 2016, p. 11). Therefore, China was receiving full economic and strategic benefits based on their engagement in the DRC's extractive sector even as the country remains one of the poorest in the world. The model allows China to get enough resources from Congo and maintain a dominant position in the DRC's extractive sector, thus denying potential competitors an opportunity to invest in the sector.

Trade is an important pillar of China's relationship with Kenya, Ethiopia, and DRC. The studies showed that China had become the main trading partner of the three countries. Specifically, China and Ethiopia leverage their long diplomatic, political, and social ties to build strong economic relationships. Ethiopia has designed its economic model in line with the Chinese model, which managed to eliminate poverty among the majority of the Chinese population in record times (Gebrehiwot et al., 2020, p. 1). The China-Ethiopia relationship focuses on manufacturing and special economic zones, infrastructure, technology transfer, employee generation, and funding. Regarding manufacturing, Ethiopia has been a destination for both major Chinese companies and small and medium-sized enterprises. The large companies include phone makers, Tecno, and several construction and engineering firms (Tesfaye, 2020). Small and medium-sized firms that have invested in Ethiopia come from diverse industries, including textile, chemicals, and plastics. To support her manufacturing ambitions, Ethiopia is following the Chinese model of special economic zones (SEZs). SEZs have a special infrastructure network and other services that make them attractive to manufacturers. One of the most successful SEZs in Ethiopia is Hawassa SEZ, which has attracted more than 100 Chinese companies so far (Fei & Liao, 2020).

Trade deficit is a major issue that critics have often raised when discussing the relationship between China and sub-Saharan African countries. All three countries had a trading deficit against China. For example, the trade deficit between Kenya and China was $9 billion. China was the primary supplier of capital and manufactured goods to the East African country. Due to the good trade relations, China was supporting Kenya to expand its manufacturing and agricultural capacity for the benefit of the two countries. Due to this, Wen (2019) noted that international trade integration had facilitated development in many regions. These findings suggest access to African markets is the primary reason China was investing in African ports, railways, and roads. The expansion of Mombasa Port in Kenya and the construction of Lamu Port would provide a gateway for Chinese goods into East Africa, the African Great Lakes region, and the Horn of Africa. The ports are supported by the railway project that, when complete, will connect Uganda, Rwanda, and Eastern DRC (Farooq et al., 2018). These investments in Kenya would enable Chinese companies to access a market of 500 million people in Africa's fastest-growing region.

Also, China has invested heavily in Ethiopia's infrastructure. For instance, China has provided infrastructure development loans worth more than $4 billion to China since 2000 (Abate, 2023, p. 4). Ethiopia used the loans to the Djibouti-Addis Ababa rail line and constructed link roads to decongest Addis Ababa. In Kenya, China has provided funds and technical expertise to assist in the construction of roads, railways, ports, and airports. In 2022, the Chinese contractor completed Phase 1B of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) linking Nairobi and Naivasha. This was in addition to the SGR Phase 1A, which connected Mombasa Port and Nairobi. The construction has made it easier and more efficient to transport cargo from the port of Mombasa to Nairobi. It has become cheaper for passengers and freight transport linking the two cities (Farooq et al., 2018). Moreover, China has constructed roads, ports, and highways in Kenya. Some of these projects included the Thika Superhighway, the Nairobi-Mombasa Highway, and the JKIA-James Gichuru Expressway. They have provided funds and expertise for the development of power production plans and enhanced access to electricity in Kenya (Abdirahman, 2020, p. 34). Other infrastructural development projects have been in the field of telecommunications, where Chinese company Huawei is partnering with Kenya's telecommunication giant, Safaricom, to enhance access to digital technologies and services. Huawei has helped Safaricom to expand and develop its communication network.

Globalisation and trade liberalisation are other factors that continue to facilitate trade, manufacturing, and investment relationships between China and the East African countries. Globalisation and trade liberalisation opened new markets and opportunities for investment in less developed and developing nations. Thiombiano and Tulga (2022) noted that Kenya, Ethiopia, and DRC operate open market policies that allow investors from all over the world to enter these markets. Chinese companies enjoy an advantage in entry regard as the country already has several agreements with the three nations to protect its citizens and Chinese companies. China and Kenya and

China and Ethiopia have signed more than a dozen trade agreements among them. Focusing on Kenya-China trade agreements, studies state that China has favorable access to the Kenyan market. China is the leading provider of capital and manufactured goods in Kenya. Since 2000, the majority of the machinery used in Kenya's manufacturing sector has been imported from China (Abdirahman, 2020, p. 34). However, Kenyan businesses are also having increasing access to the Chinese fresh produce market. Kenya is the leading exporter of avocados to China.

Consequently, Ethiopia and Kenya gained technology and skills due to cooperation with China. Many Ethiopians and Kenyans flew to China to receive training on production line activities. They received Chinese models of operational management (Ogutu, 2020). Other than that, China sells various machines and technologies to Kenyan companies to produce multiple products for the Kenyan and regional markets. Chinese models and technologies have also been visible in Kenya and Ethiopia's construction and real estate sectors. Kenyan contractors are partnering with their Chinese counterparts to deliver on modern designs. Chinese contractors are responsible for the many buildings that have changed the skylines of Nairobi, Addis Ababa, and other major cities in Ethiopia and Kenya. One such building constructed by the Chinese companies is the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Abate, 2023, p. 4). Technological and skills transfer can also be seen in the Kenyan agricultural sector. Chinese and Kenyan universities were partnering in developing and implementing new farming techniques. These techniques have enhanced the agricultural productivity of the farmers.

Also, in the DRC's mining sector, the decisions are made in line with the Sicomines Agreement, which has given Chinese companies exclusive rights in some of the lucrative mines in the country. It is estimated that China controls more than 70 per cent of cobalt mines in DRC (Kabemba, 2016, p. 11). Also, Chinese companies have the right to establish their production or trading facilities in the hugely subsidised special economic zones in Kenya and Ethiopia. While the countries are open markets, Chinese companies leverage on the cooperation between the countries and their government to establish a foothold in the market.

Chinese investments in DRC, Ethiopia, and Kenya have been a major source of employment for the locals. It is estimated that more than 200,000 people are employed in different Chinese companies in Ethiopia and more than 100,000 people in Kenya (Oya & Schaefer, 2023, p. 9). These employment opportunities extend to several sectors of the economy. In Ethiopia, the largest Chinese employers are in the garment and fabric-making sectors. There are several Chinese garment makers in various industrial parks in Ethiopia. In DRC, many people are employed in mining facilities, especially in cobalt and copper industries. In Kenya, there are several Chinese companies manufacturing batteries, plastic products, and machine assembly. Apart from employment, these companies support technological diffusion and allow the countries to gain new skills and production facilities. Xinfeng and Chunyu (2023) indicated that Chinese investments support technological diffusion to developing nations, thus becoming an engine for economic growth. Large and medium companies such as Golden Lion battery maker have established their operations in the special economic zone in Athi River on the outskirts of Nairobi.

The Chinese investments in DRC, Kenya, and Ethiopia have had different impacts on the economic prosperity of the countries. The differences in the impact can be attributed to the differences in the absorptive capacity of the countries. According to Usman and Lyu (2021), it encompasses the impact of the FDI inflow on the social, economic, and technological development of the country. Studies suggest that a country's absorptive capacity depends on factors that are beyond the control of the investor. For example, some countries may be corrupt, while others will lack the needed infrastructure to absorb the investments. However, when a country has a good absorptive capacity, then the impact of the FDI inflows will be positive. The phenomenon can be seen in the case of Ethiopia, which has benefitted in terms of job opportunities and economic growth compared to other countries (Oya & Schaefer, 2023, p. 9). Ethiopia enjoys relatively low corruption rates compared to Kenya and DRC. Also, between 2000 and 2020, the country enjoyed one of the longest periods of political stability that supported high growth rates. Though it is understood that domestic factors are the main influencers of the absorptive capacity, Tovar (2019) suggested that since China was the main trading partner of the three countries, they have a responsibility to build a healthy relationship that will support investments and ensure the realisation of positive economic impact.

From the analysis, it is evident that China's investments in DRC, Ethiopia, and Kenya have made positive contributions to the economic development of the three countries. These developments have been in the form of infrastructure development, manufacturing, employment opportunities, technology fusion, and skills development (Ogutu, 2020). While these investments have changed the economic outlook of the countries, they have resulted in massive indebtedness. Currently, Ethiopia, DRC, and Kenya are some of the most indebted countries in the world, with debts above 70 per cent of their GDPs. Most of these debts are owed to China and thus are at enhanced risk of defaulting. According to Tarrosy (2020), Chinese unconditional loans are the leading cause of debt distress in sub-Saharan African countries. Xinfeng and Chunyu (2023) suggest that the total African debt was estimated to be around $1.8 trillion, which is 13 per cent above the 2010 debt levels.

The debt levels have grown more than three times the continent's GDP growth rate. The total debt that the continent owes China is around $170 billion (Xinfeng & Chunyu, 2023). These debts were used to build infrastructure. Most of these infrastructure projects, such as SGR in Kenya, have not generated revenues as was projected, thus leaving the public with huge debt holes. Also, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the economic progress of these countries, while problems such as drought enhanced the countries' dependence on foreign powers for food. As such, it has become difficult for these countries to meet their debt obligations (Plummer, 2022). In addition, these countries are now unable to meet their development goals, especially capital for infrastructure, as the Chinese loans have dried up. Without Chinese loans, these countries lack the means to stimulate economic growth to levels that will support their debt repayment needs. Plummer (2022) noted that the COVID-19 pandemic changed Chinese priorities regarding financing infrastructure projects on the continent.

Some critics have argued that the growing debt problem in Africa is a symbol of China's debt trap diplomacy in Africa. Brautigam et al. (2020) defined debt trap diplomacy as the use of loans to woo poor countries into unsustainable debt burdens resulting in sovereignty losses. While China and African government officials have rejected these arguments, the Chinese lending patterns, especially before the COVID-19 pandemic. Chinese lending approaches were found to be considerably different from those of multilateral organisations such as the World Bank and the IMF. Zajontz (2022) explained that the Chinese state-owned lenders prioritised profits over the interests of the borrower. The loan contracts often include clauses that put various constraints on African economies, including a lack of collective restructuring (Zajontz, 2022). These confidentiality clauses included provisions that allowed China to take control of the Assets of the African countries. As such, it denied the power to make independent financial decisions.

Furthermore, Chinese loans expose African countries to multiple financial risks, including a lack of transparency and accountability in the country's debt status. The lack of transparency and accountability on the debts that Kenya, Ethiopia, and DRC have with the Chinese government makes it difficult for the countries to engage with other creditors (Tarrósy, 2020, p. 111). Without transparency, lenders and citizens will not have adequate information on the debt status. It reduces their ability to engage with various governments on financial issues. Further, the study indicated that there are increasingly high levels of hidden debts from Chinese state-owned banks, thus complicating the ability to estimate debt levels. For example, it is difficult to ascertain the amount of money that Kenya and Ethiopia borrowed for their railway projects (Kariuki, 2022, p. 8). The study also indicated a lack of financial data on the amount of money that China had spent on the DRC infrastructure projects, as was indicated in the Sicomines Agreement. These debts were posing serious management and accountability challenges (Kabemba, 2016, p. 11). The findings were in line with Asongu et al. (2013), which showed that almost 50 per cent of Chinese loans to African countries are not disclosed in their sovereign debt records.

In a nutshell, the study showed that China uses different approaches to FDI in Africa to different and sometimes contrasting impacts. Focusing on the case of DRC, Kenya, and Ethiopia, it is evident that China has been a major player in the three countries' infrastructure development journey. China provided billions of loans for the construction of roads, railways, ports, and telecommunications networks. China also invested in power infrastructure in the three countries. In the case of Ethiopia and Kenya, these investments supported its internationalisation agenda of expanding its markets in East Africa and establishing cost-efficient production plants for Chinese companies in the countries. In the DRC, the investments are to provide infrastructure for mining operations. Under the Sicomines Agreement, DRC and China have a comprehensive agreement that explains the mining blocks that China will access in exchange for infrastructure development. The analysis found that China was benefitting from the deal than DRC, as few of the agreed infrastructural projects had been implemented.

In Kenya and Ethiopia, China sought to exert its influence by expanding trade and investment opportunities. For example, China funded the construction of special economic zones and industrial parks in Kenya and Ethiopia. These parks provided adequate infrastructure for cheap production of small and medium-sized companies such as garment, machine assembling, and plastic companies. As a result, these companies created thousands of job opportunities in the two countries. However, there is some negativity associated with these investments. For instance, the three countries have become heavily indebted and are at the highest risk of default. Also, there was a lack of transparency and accountability in relation to the Chinese loans. For instance, these loans had hidden clauses that attached some of the loans to state assets.

In a nutshell, the three case studies have shown that while there are some controversies, several Chinese investments have contributed to the development and economic expansion of sub-Saharan African countries. For instance, China's investments have improved infrastructure in many countries while making resources available to build new railroads, highways, and ports. In addition, it has allowed these countries to access new technologies and build competitive economies. However, the debt issue in some of the countries cannot be ignored. Some of the countries have become hugely indebted due to the ease of accessing Chinese loans. Hence, there are positives and negatives associated with Chinese investments in Africa.

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Workplace	Position	Year
-	-	-

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Publications:

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