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The European Union's and China's competing influence in Africa

A case study of Zimbabwe

Bacheloroppgave i Europa Studier med Statsvitenskap

Veileder: Anna Brigevid

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Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet
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Abstract

The African continent is home to the world's poorest developing countries. These countries were victims of the brutalities of European colonialism, which has left African states in a state of distress. They have been exploited for their natural resources and left in a situation of chaos with unstable regimes. The African countries are home to some of the most suppressed people in the world, who are in desperate need of development aid. This thesis aims to explore the relationship between the type of donor country, how they provide aid, and the recipient country. The research question(s) this thesis aims to answer is: Is there a powershift in the world today, from the Western states to China? For a country like Zimbabwe, which funding model is more attractive? A single case study of the African country Zimbabwe has been conducted to answer the research questions. The thesis focus on African history during the colonial time, with a focus on European states (now the EU), and Chinas history in Zimbabwe. Further, will this thesis explore if Zimbabwean public opinion towards the two donors' relationship with the amount of aid they provide. The thesis concludes that China is the preferred donor, even though the EU has provided a significantly higher amount of aid to Zimbabwe.

Sammendrag

Det Afrikanske kontinentet er hjemme til verdens mest fattige land. Gjennom århundrer har disse landene vært offer for brutalitetene påført av de europeiske kolonimaktene, som har etterlatt Afrikanske land i et stadium av nød. De har blitt utnyttet for naturressursene sine, og kaos og ustabile regimer har oppstått etter landene ble selvstendige. Det Afrikanske kontinentet er hjemmet til noen av de mest undertrykkende menneskene i verden, og er følgende i desperat behov for bistand. Oppgaven ser på forholdet mellom donor land og mottagerland. Problemstillingen til oppgaven er som følger: Er det et maktskifte i verden i dag, fra de vestlige statene til Kina? Hvilken finansierings modell er mer attraktiv for et land som Zimbabwe? En case study har blitt gjennomført av det Afrikanske landet Zimbabwe for å kunne besvare oppgavens problemstilling. Oppgaven ser på Afrikas historie gjennom koloni tiden, med et fokus på Europeiske stater (nå EU), og Kinas historie med Zimbabwe. Videre vil oppgaven utforske om offentlige holdninger i Zimbabwe relatert de to donorene, korrelerer med antall støtte levert av donor landene. Oppgaven konkluderer med at Kine er den foretrukne donoren, selv om EU donerer et langt større beløp til Zimbabwe.

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List of Abbreviations (or Symbols)

ACP	African, Caribbean, and Pacific
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
DC	Development Cooperation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund

1 Introduction

The African continent (Africa) is rich on natural resources, and for decades, have they been exploited by outsiders. While European countries began colonizing Africa in the 1880s, it wasn't until the 1950s, that the Chinese began investing in the continent (Ismael, 2008). African countries are defined as so-called developing countries, in the modern era, and they are in desperate need of development assistance. Which is a result of the brutalities of colonialism. This study will contribute to expand the knowledge of European Union (EU) and Chinese investment in Africa. The study will assess how development aid is perceived, and or whether it changes based on the donor. Through this thesis, will I examine which aid is perceived as more favorable in African countries. In addition, will the paper assess the possible powershift from the EU (a Western donor) to China. This will be assessed through a single case study analysis of the African country Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has a long history with Europe, as a British colony, and China has emerged as a relatively new, and relevant actor in Zimbabwe.

Many EU states are pre-colonial powers, and for a long time were they the only major powers present in Africa. The West has dominated international politics and set the political agenda for centuries. China is gradually entering the world stage, as a growing economic power, after the economic reforms of 1979 (GIS, 2019). They have increased their foreign direct investment (FDI) in all parts of the world. Chinas political and economic growth has challenged the balance of power, and we are arguably seeing a shift of power from West to East. The West and China have different political views, the West is liberal, whereas China is communist. China provides aid differently than the West, and this paper will assess these different approaches and establish which form of aid is preferred by the recipient countries, which in turn could potentially influence the world balance of power.

This paper will assess the following research question(s): Is there a powershift in the world today, from the Western states to China? For a country like Zimbabwe which funding model is more attractive?

There is little knowledge about Chinese investment or their neocolonization in Africa. Specifically, regarding amount, conditions, and to which degree it is preferable over other investors or donors. Europe, on the other hand, has for decades been the biggest, and for some time, the only colonial power in Africa. This is changing, China is rapidly increasing their involvement or "colonization" in Africa. Although there has been a rapid increase in research on the external perception of the EU, does Floor Keuleers establish some important gaps in the literature (2015). Firstly, there is a highly uneven geographical coverage, which makes it difficult to establish any general assumptions about aid. Additionally, is there little comparison between the EU and other actors (Keuleers, 2015, p. 803).

The EU is a traditional donor, whereas China is an emerging donor. Data retrieved from Afrobarometer, containing data from 19 countries, indicate that people aren't very familiar with the EU, even though they are the traditional donor (Keuleers, 2015, p. 803). China, however, has succeeded in creating a clear profile in many countries, and have achieved this in limited time. In fact, African evaluations of support for the EU versus China do not reflect the antagonistic representations that dominate the scholarly literature (Keuleers, 2015, p. 803).

World politics is anarchic, there is no world government, or a higher power that controls world politics. The closest thing we have to a world government is the United Nations (UN). Governance, in the global space, comes instead from treaties-based systems. Historically power has been moving laterally, from nation to nation, but today power is also moving vertically. Although there exist no world government, it could be argued that Western states, historically, have been the ones setting the political agenda. The concept of powershift is regarding the possible shift of power from the West to the East.

In this thesis, I argue that China's economic rise is challenging the current world order. China is outcompeting the West in Africa, through their foreign development aid approach. African countries are more prone to Chinese aid, than they are Western aid.

2 Literature review

I will begin by reviewing the Western model for development and aid, known as the Washington Consensus, which the EU member states subscribe to. I will focus on the problem of conditionality. Then, I will be taking a closer look at how the EU has operated in Africa, both in the aftermath of colonialism, and today. I conclude the literature review by examining how Chinese aid differs from Western aid.

2.1 Development and aid

2.1.1 History of development cooperation and The Washington Consensus

USA's foreign minister, George C. Marshall, in 1947, was the first to propose development assistance. The idea was to give aid to the European countries, so they could rebuild after the Second World war, commonly known as the Marshall plan, officially called European Recovery Program (Degnbol-Martinussen, 2003). Development assistance later evolved, and in 1949 introduced President Harry S. Truman "Development Cooperation". Truman emphasized the importance for a new program to make the benefits of their scientific advantages and industrial progress available for underdeveloped areas, to create improvement and growth (Butterfield, 2004). Foreign aid was created to help development among the poorest, most marginalized, and oppressed people and societies in the world.

For other large industrial countries, such as Great Britain and France, the motivation was based on moral consideration, and a kind of veneration of their own former colonies. This concentration was also strongly connected to the notion of promoting their economic and commercial interests, including upholding their access to natural resources, raw materials, and markets in their former colonies (Degnbol-Martinussen, 2003).

Development Cooperation (DC) follow criteria's, it should be aimed explicitly to support national or international development priorities, and therefore not driven by profit. DC is, moreover, not supposed to discriminate in favor of developing countries, and along with this, it must be based on cooperative relationships that seek to enhance developing country ownership (Alonso & Glennie, 2015). The second phase (1970-1990) referred to as basis needs, and redistribution, and represented a clash between liberal systems and capitalism systems. Liberalization of markets, and good governance, came in the third phase of DC (1990's-2008), ownership of governments, participation of citizenry. The last phase stretch from 2000 to the present. DC is complex, and globalized, and it includes common goals as the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.

John Williamson established the term Washington Consensus (1989), a set of free-market economic policies. It was supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Irwin & Ward, 2021). The Washington Consensus was created to help developing countries face economic crisis, and recommend structural reforms, which would increase the role of market forces, and reduction of state involvement, in exchange for immediate financial help (Irwin & Ward, 2021). It also consisted of reordering public expenditures, which suggested switching spending's towards things as basic health, education, and infrastructure. Additionally, did the consensus enhance a tax reform, liberalized interest rates, which stopped the state from artificially forcing interest rates below market values, and liberalized inward investment, redirecting the state inwards, and keep foreign investors out. The consensus privatizes, the state should sell their industries where they were losing money, or where private ownership might have been more appropriate. Lastly did the Consensus regard deregulations, creating barriers to reduce private business operations, and created property rights, which suggested that property rights needed to be protected and the poor should be allowed to own land (Moss, 2011, p. 112).

Economists have criticized the consensus, arguing that the policies have been unhelpful. It imposed harsh conditions on developing countries, which was not received well (Irwin & Ward, 2021). Privatization can increase productivity and thereof enhance the quality of the product or service. It could also lead to companies ignoring certain low-income markets or social needs of a developing economy (Irwin & Ward, 2021). Some economists argue that free trade isn't always in the best interest of developing economies, and some strategic and infant industries must be protected for it to provide long-term growth (Irwin & Ward, 2021). The Washington Consensus was developed with a purpose of becoming a universal guide for controlling the economy in a country, especially targeting developing countries. The consensus reflects western values, and by imposing these on developing countries, give western countries an opportunity to uphold a somewhat control over their previous colonies.

2.1.2 Conditionality

Conditionality became an important aspect in the donor strategy. Conditionality was the promise of policy changes by recipients in exchange for aid (Moss, 2011, p. 110). In some cases, can conditionality be said to have been close to bribery or even blackmailing. To receive the money, there had to be an agreement between the lender and the receiving country, in terms of what the politicians had to change to be able to receive aid. In cases where aid was given by the IMF, recipient countries had to write a "letter of intent", where they had to outline what they were planning on doing and changing over the coming years (Moss, 2011, p. 110). Until the 1980s, conditionality in the IMF was focused on macroeconomic policies. However, the complexity and scope of conditions have increased simultaneously with the IMF's growing involvement in low income and transitional countries, where multiple structural problems may hamper economic stability and growth (IMF, 2023). Recipient countries have primary responsibility for selecting, designing, and implanting policies to make their economic program successful (IMF, 2023). The IMF state that the overarching goal is to restore or maintain the balance of payments viability and macroeconomic stability, while setting the stage for sustained, high-quality growth (2023). IMF lending has always involved policy

conditions. The recipient countries governments thought making promises such as that would be an easy, and fair price to pay, to receive cheap money. Even though the policies the donors asked for seemed reasonable on paper, had the recipient governments little reason to make such changes. Additionally, found donors few reasons to enforce their previous demands. Leaving conditionality in practice a near failure.

2.1.3 Powershift

Paddy Ashdown, a British politician, argued power has moved onto the global stage, before it was held to accountability, held to the rule of law, within the institutions of the nation state, now has it migrated in a very large measure (Ashdown, 2014).

“We are all interconnected, and interdependent on each other” (Ashdown, 2014). The idea of a nation, state acting alone, is no longer a viable proposition (Ashdown, 2014). Ashdown predicted three major power shifts. The first one stating that power moves vertically, from nation to the global space. The second global shift regards a horizontal shift from the west to east, in an emerging multi-polar world. The third global shift Ashdown presents is regarding the modern world, due to the internet and the global power shifts, everything is connected to everything (2014). The balance of power is, today, balanced between three major power poles, the EU, the US, and China.

There are two ways the balance of power can be challenged, firstly if a major country augments its strength to a point where it threatens to achieve hegemony. Secondly, when a heretofore secondary state seeks to enter the ranks of the major powers and sets off a series of compensating adjustments by the other powers until a new equilibrium is established, or a general conflagration takes place (Kissinger, 2014, p. 33).

2.2 The EU in Africa

European colonization of Africa began in the mid 17th century, but it wasn't until the 19th century that colonization began to take form, when Western European colonial powers found it profitable (Mufwene & Vigouroux, 2008, p. 3). Soon after discovering the Third World, did the Europeans secure concessions, and treated it as new homes. The European colonization was exploitive and lasted for centuries, and the decolonization of Africa didn't begin until the 1960s.

The European powers sought to preserve their economic ties with their previous colonies, using European aid as a mean to maintain the colonial economic legacy (European Parliament, 2023). History has shown that European countries have had enormous power in the world, and the EU is continuing to uphold this legacy, as an important actor today (Dinan, 2004, p. 293). The colonial ties are mainly maintained through agreements, investments, and partnerships, such as the Lomé Convention, the European Development Fund (EDF), and the African-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment.

Colonialism is a form of domination; the control individuals or groups have over territory and/or behavior of other individuals or groups. As the term colonialism refers to a form of domination, does it also closely relate to the concept of power (Horvath, 1972, p. 46). The colonial past, and present is ruthless, exploitative, and "minorities" are being suppressed. The term colony stems from the Latin word *colonus*, which means farmer. Colonialism thereof involves the transfer of a population to a new territory. The arrivals, or the colonists, lived as permanent settlers while maintaining political allegiance to their country of origin (Kohn & Reddy, 2023).

The formalized cooperation between European states date back to 1957, and the Treaty of Rome, where the European Economic Community (EEC) was established. The EEC was the forerunner for what is known today as the EU. This marked the beginning of European cooperation, but also the formal relationship between the EU and the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) regions. The Treaty of Rome created the EDF, which was launched in 1959 (EUR-Lex, 2023). The EDF is EU's main instrument to financial development cooperation with ACP countries and overseas countries and territories. It is also a direct way for the EU to maintain their colonial economic legacy. The first trade agreements between the EU and the ACP can be traced back to the Yaoundé Convention, from 1963, which created a free trade area founded on the principle of reciprocity. However, it wasn't until 1975, and the first Lomé Convention, that the relationship between the ACP and EU was formalized. The original agreement was signed between the nine members of the EEC and the ACP countries, which included 46 African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries (European Parliament, 2023).

The first Lomé convention was held in February 1975, and since then been revised two times. The goal was to manage the transition from a colonial relationship to a post-colonial relationship (Brown, 2002, p. 2). It was a legally binding agreement, covering aid to the ACP, trade, in the form of access to EU markets, and it stabilized export earnings from the ACP. The Lomé also made the actors commit to deal with a whole range of development co-operation issues (Brown, 2002, p. 3). However, the convention did not constitute a common market, a free trade area, nor a political alliance, although elements of this were present (Brown, 2002, p. 3). Most of the original purpose and structure of the convention remained in place during the revisions. The Lomé II represented a "standstill" in ACP-EU relations, whereas the Lomé III presented a more significant change, and hinted about more fundamental changes which were made in a last revision of the convention, the Lomé IV (Brown, 2002, p. 2).

The official Africa-EU partnership was established in 2000 and continues to be guided by the Joint Africa-EU strategy, adopted at the 2007 summit in Lisbon (EEAS, 2022). The importance of Africa-EU trade policy was enhanced in 2021. The policy suggested enhancing further sustainable trade and investment, between the EU and Africa, but also within Africa itself, whilst strengthening the already existing regional integration processes. It's commonly known as the "Trade Policy Review Communication" and is seen as the forerunner for the 2022 Summit in Brussels (European Commission, 2023). The 2022 Summit adopted a joint vision for 2030, which included the Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package, and 150 billion EUR in grants and investment,

supported by the EU budget. The summit also included revised and enhanced cooperation for peace and security, and changes regarding migration and mobility. Lastly, did it include a commitment to multilateralism within the rules-based international order, with the UN at its core (EEAS, 2022).

2.3 China in Africa

The People's Republic of China was established by Mao Zedong in 1949, which marks the beginning of China's development. China has since risen from a poor developing country to a major economic power. For instance, after the economic reform in 1979, did China's gross domestic product (GDP) grow at an average rate of 10% until 2017 (GIS, 2019). And the reform lifted more than 800 million people out of poverty (GIS, 2019).

China (re-)emerging as a great power has already altered the distribution of power in major organisations. Norms of international interactions favour, unfairly, the existing Western powers, and they still, at times, obstruct China's ability to meet national development goals (Breslin, 2010, p. 52). Regardless, has China been able, through economic growth and engagement in the global economy, to establish itself as a responsible global actor. Seen as a means to ensure China's access to the resources they need. Interestingly, despite economic growth, are they still in many respects a developing country, which makes it hard for China to change the existing global order without causing global instability or damage their own ability to generate economic growth and ensure political stability (Breslin, 2010, p. 52).

A strong economy has given China the ability to expand over domestic borders, and as African countries are the largest fast-growing economies, it has attracted loans and investment from somewhat "new" external factors, such as China (Horvath, 1972, p. 372). Raw materials are the biggest driving force for China, and it has contributed too much of Africa's recent growth. Cities have grown across the continent, new infrastructure, and a new urban middle class has emerged from the neoliberal economy (Horvath, 1972, p. 373). Neocolonialism is a form of control, and it is usually exercised through economic or monetary means. This is arguably what China is doing in Africa today.

The term neocolonialism first came up in the 1950s (Horvath, 1972, p. 45). However, it did not get an official definition until 1961 (Afisi, 2022). Neocolonialism refers to the new wave of colonialism and can be described as a subtle propagation of socio-economic and political activity by former colonial rulers. Neocolonialism is a way for the former colonial powers to ensure that the newly independent colonies remain dependent on their former colonies through economic and political direction (Afisi, 2022). Historically has colonialism, and in general globalization, had a negative impact in Africa, and with the aftermath of slavery, and colonialism, it has left Africa in an identity and culture crises. Africa has, therefore, been dependent on Europe and the West in general, for their development, and additionally, development of their identity and culture. Recently, have they also depended on China for development (Afisi, 2022).

The Chinese model of bureaucratic development advanced through the Beijing Consensus, which demonstrated that growth, social change, and a middle class with purchasing power and technological excellence can be realized under authoritarian auspices. The Beijing Consensus is an alternative to the Washington Consensus and is an economic model where the state is in control. It is carefully orchestrated, regarding state industrial policies, and state-managed process, that work towards a gradual liberalization (Kalu, Okafor, & Lin, 2022, p. 2). China's economic model is centered around the concept of self-determination and argues that countries should be free to fit into the global political economy according to their own peculiarities (Kalu, Okafor, & Lin, 2022, p. 2). The Beijing Consensus consists of ten economic principles regarding, localization of practices, combining free market capitalism and planned communism, and it puts forth flexible means to reach a common goal. The consensus emphasized self-reliance, a stable political environment, a constant upgrade of industry, indigenous innovation, a prudent financial liberalization, and economic growth for social harmony (Kalu, Okafor, & Lin, 2022, p. 3). It's a single headed route to development, not ensuring that the ones having less actually achieve economic growth.

Beijing has reduced Africa's infrastructural defects and focused on economic cooperation. They have provided African countries credit facilities and bought African commodities (Pinto, 2023). Despite China's nearly forty-five-year history of aid, did the Beijing Summit promise that the new start would be based on "mutual benefit". African relevance has increased dramatically geopolitically, their booming population, and flow of natural resources, such as minerals, will continue to be in high demand (Pinto, 2023). As African countries have become of relevance to outside actors, have Chinese firms, many aided by the government, been investing large sums in African developing economies. Investments, often relate to infrastructure, create opportunities for long-term trade and growth (Irwin & Ward, 2021). The Chinese aid and economic cooperation came at a time when the traditional donors were downplaying their donation regarding these areas (Brautigam, 2009, p. 11). As a mean to improve African infrastructure did China start a Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2004, which they expanded already in 2008 (Horigoshi, et al., 2022). The BRI is a strategic initiative to seek to connect Asia with Africa and Europe, developed by the PRC, through land and maritime networks. The aim is to improve regional integration, increase trade, and stimulate economic growth (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2023). The African continent stand for the highest share of BRI member countries. The BRI also has the largest inflows of PRC-financed development projects. The 2020 global survey showed that 54 percent of African leaders were reported working with Beijing (Horigoshi, et al., 2022). African leaders argue that they prefer China as a partner for infrastructure, as opposed to other investors (Horigoshi, et al., 2022). The BRI is arguably Beijing's main tool for projecting power and potentially achieve Eurasian hegemony (Menzel, 2021). The Chinese loans for infrastructure were intended to reduce the high costs of production (Brautigam, 2009, p. 11).

The Chinese model have become attractive to authoritarian systems all over the world, especially in Asia and Africa. China is a communist state, and they share many similar ideas with authoritarian leaders in Africa, which makes the Chinese model more

appealing to the African leaders. The recent engagement of Chinese companies in Africa, are mainly focused on the benefits of their home economies, of the neocolonialists, rather than infusing local African economies with cash to stimulate growth and increase local capacity (Afisi, 2022).

The Beijing Consensus open for more freedom, and less control, as opposed to the Washington Consensus. The Washington Consensus focus on basic health, education, and infrastructure, and away from unproductive subsidies and overbloated civil services. The Beijing Consensus focus instead on the freedom and flexibility within the economy. Western countries want to maintain the Western-led liberal order, and China pose a threat to this order. Chinese aid does not involve conditionality, as the aid is given more freely, and without imposing changes on the recipient country, which pose another difference between the two consensuses.

Scott Kennedy (2010) argues that the Beijing Consensus is designed to promote China's economic success and challenge the universality of the Washington Consensus model (Kalu, Okafor, & Lin, 2022, p. 4). Research suggest that the West has had a free rein without any real competition in Africa until China emerged as a strong economic global power. I think this reflects the Western priorities as opposed to the Chinese prioritises. They build on different foundations, and overall have a different perception on how the world should and is working. Maybe most importantly, they have a very different approach concerning the role of government and view political issues differently.

The West may have underrated Chinas development model, including the Beijing Consensus, to attract African leaders. In fact, a study finds that in the period from 2000 until 2017, the total export and import of merchandized goods, between China and Sub-Saharan Africa grew from US\$10,035,06 billion in 2000 to US\$143,752,22 billion in 2017. An increase of 1322% in less than two decades (Kalu, Okafor, & Lin, 2022, p. 4). China has now become Africa's major trading partner, surpassing Britain and the US (Kalu, Okafor, & Lin, 2022, p. 4).

China's involvement in Africa have been heavily criticized by Western political forces and media. Despite this, has China experienced significant support from Africans (Sautman & Yan, 2007, p. 75). Sautman & Yan argues that the perception of China practicing neocolonialism in Africa, is rooted in the perception of China supporting illiberal regimes. Critics also argue that China also has harmed the environment, through their purchases of illegal African timber (2007, p. 76). China has pledge not to interfere with domestic affairs, which means that the leadership actively engages with dictators, such as in Zimbabwe (Brautigam, 2009, p. 3). The promise of non-interference is arguably one of the most important reasons for why African countries might prefer Chinese aid over aid provided by other actors. Projects are financed through so-called "soft loans", which really are "indirect conditionalities", an understanding that PRC firms will secure a portion of work financed by PRC loans (Sautman & Yan, 2007, p. 86).

China is not yet in any position to change the current world order (Menzel, 2021). For a state to become a hegemon, and to uphold hegemonic powers, must they concur and be innovative across fields. The Silk Road, a trade route linking the Western world with the Middle East, and Asia, is an example of Chinas overland routes (Menzel, 2021). The BRI is an expansion of the Silk Road, and it is Beijing's main tool for projecting power and possibly achieving Eurasia hegemony. Ulrich Menzel argues that China will become the world's biggest economy by 2035, overtaking the US, and by 2049, will they be the leading international power (Menzel, 2021). However, there is no guaranty that this will happen.

3 Method

In this paper will I be conducting a Single Case Study analysis of the African country Zimbabwe. A Single Case Study provides a more direct experience of the interplay between theory and data (Moses & Knudsen, 2019). A Single Case Study will also provide an in dept analysis of how the EU and China provide development aid in Africa. It allows to study the history of Zimbabwe, as a colony, as a dictatorship, and as a developing country, to look at how this has affected the country. It Zimbabwe's poor history, their extreme need for aid, and interesting history with the EU and China which makes it an interesting for case study researching how development aid is given and perceived.

Zimbabwe has an interesting history, as a former British colony, and as a dictatorship. Zimbabwe gain independence from Britain in April 1980. Despite Britain's control in Africa, did China start their investment in Africa already in the 1960s. China overall been supporting weak regimes in Africa, such as Zimbabwe, preaching a non-interference and mutual beneficial engagement (Strauss, 2009, p. 778). Zimbabwe is a country rich in natural recourses, which has made them especially interesting for outside actors.

The analysis will be based on economic indicators. These economic indicators will show whether it's the EU or China who provides Zimbabwe with the most amount of aid. This data has been collected from the World Bank, and it will show exactly how much, and from which actor, Zimbabwe is receiving their FDI from. Further, will the analysis address which donor Zimbabwe prefer, based on an analysis of local newspaper articles. The economic indicators will establish which actor provides Zimbabwe with the most amount of aid, regardless of how the people of Zimbabwe portray the actors. The economic indicators I have chosen are collected from the data sources from the World Bank showing the "Foreign Direct Investment, net inflows (BoP, current US\$) – Zimbabwe". This data is based on data from the IMF, Balance of Payments databases, and supplemented by data from the UN Conference on Trade and Development and official national sources (World Bank, 2021). The reason why I choose these indicators, were because they provide the exact amount of aid each actor provides Zimbabwe with.

Data, that the analysis will be based on, has been collected from local Zimbabwe newspapers. The goal with the newspaper-based analysis is to see which actor is portrayed more positive and therefore appear more favorable in Zimbabwe. It will give a good indication of the public opinion. The news articles are from "The Herald Zimbabwe", and are retrieved from Factiva, an online database. I searched for articles firstly containing the EU and Zimbabwe, and then China and Zimbabwe. There were many news articles regarding these topics, but I sourced out the ones containing the relationship between Zimbabwe and the external actors. I also focused on the articles containing words as democracy, and western values, or partnership, and relationship, as well other as similar indicators. In total did I retrieved fifteen articles. There were far more articles available containing China-Zimbabwe relations, than EU-Zimbabwe relations.

The analysis has mainly three possible outcomes, when the aid data and the newspaper data are combined. The first possible outcome is that the EU gives more aid and is more favorable in the media, or China gives more aid and is more favorable in the media. The second possible outcome is that the EU gives more aid and portrayed negatively, or China gives more aid and portrayed negatively. The last possibility is that the more aid the donor gives the more positive are they being portrayed, or the less aid the donor gives the more positive will they be perceived.

4 Case Study analysis of Zimbabwe

The colonization of Zimbabwe was part of the closing dramatic scenes of the European partition of Africa. Different dynamics in the West, particularly the economic crisis in Britain, provoked the search for new markets, raw materials, and job opportunities elsewhere. These were the main push factors for Britain's colonization (Mlambo R. a., 2009, p. 40). As a British colony, until 1965, was Zimbabwe first known as the Southern Rhodesia, and after that as Rhodesia until 1980. The name comes from the historical Great Zimbabwe monuments that were built out of stone near the southern Zimbabwean town of Masvingo (Mlambo A. S., 2014, p. 3). British settlers arrived in Zimbabwe in 1890, marking the beginning of an eighty-year-long colonial dispensation (Mlambo A. S., 2014, p. 4). After the arrival of the British settlers, the gradual expansion of the white settler population began, and their development of a modern economy was mainly based on mining, agriculture. The manual labor relied heavily on cheap African labor (Mlambo A. S., 2014, p. 5). Southern Rhodesia declared independence in 1965, which led to an armed conflict, and prolonged independence until 1980. The Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) was established as a black majority rule government, with Robert Gabriel Mugabe as the party leader (Mlambo A. S., 2014, p. 5).

4.1 The EU in Zimbabwe

The EU wanted Zimbabwe to join the Lomé, because they argued it would fit into the wider western policy, pursued by the EU. One goal was for Zimbabwe to become independent (Brown, 2002, p. 150). Zimbabwe's independence, and the Western political involvement already in the region, pushed Zimbabwe to join the Lomé Convention. This followed the acceptance of Zimbabwe as a new state into the international community, alongside membership in the UN, World Bank, IMF, and Commonwealth (Brown, 2002, p. 150). Zimbabwe had since the end of 1970 received emergency non-Lomé aid, retrieved from EU's budget for non-associated countries from the EU, even before joining the Lomé convention (Brown, 2002, p. 151).

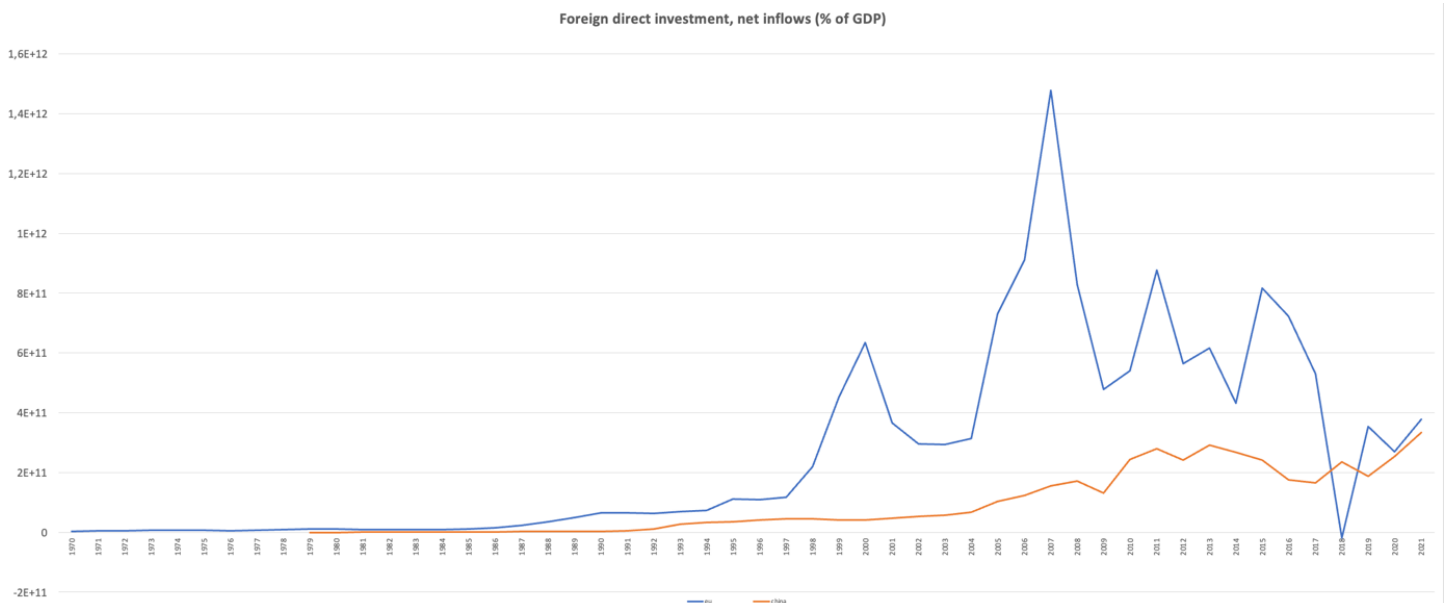


Figure 1 Foreign direct investment, net inflows (% of GDP). y-axis amount in trillions USD. The blue line shows the EU. The orange line shows China (World Bank, 2021)

The figure above shows an overview of FDI, net inflow in Zimbabwe, from the EU and China. The FDI includes the amount of aid provided by each actor. The graph clearly shows that the EU has provided Zimbabwe with significantly more FDI than China has done. For both actors have the FDI increased drastically. However, has Chinese FDI had a more gradual, and stable evolvement. The EU increased the amount of FDI in the years leading up to 2007, when they were hopeful for the direction the country was taking. In 2007 began a political crisis in Zimbabwe, following a drastically reduce of FDI from the EU. A new election in 2017 was held, and Emmerson Mnangagwa marked a departure from the abusive Robert Mugabe era, and an increase in aid from the EU (Mavhinga, 2021). The graph shows that the last amount of FDI provided by the EU was 2,197546722 (BoP current US\$) (World Bank, 2021).

The newspaper article search on EU-Zimbabwe related topics, were mostly regarding gender equality, and women empowerment. The minister in Zimbabwe, Nyoni, was quoted in one article on Zimbabwe EU engage on gender equality, women empowerment, and said, "We are delighted to see the EU as a partner in our efforts to strengthen the role of women in our society as set in the NDS1" (Zhakata, 2023). Another article does also enlighten the EU's efforts to Gender Based Violence. The article states that the EU Ambassador Kirchman is fully committed to fight gender-based violence and pledge to continue to support the Government of Zimbabwe, for them to achieve more gender equality (Freddy, 2022). The article further explained changes at the legislative and policy level. It underlined the new Marriage Act, the launch of and rollout of the Public Service Sexual Harassment Policy, the Public Sexual Harassment module, and the National Strategy on women in decision-making, as new initiatives to reduce gender inequality in Zimbabwe. However, not all articles viewed the EU positively. An article by Fungi Kwaramba (2022), wrote that the EU abandons confrontations with Zimbabwe. The article talks about the importance of being more productive and create more sustainability in agriculture. It gives the impression that changes are being discussed, and the EU and Zimbabwe are establishing closer relations, however, everything is referred to as a working project (Kwaramba, 2022).

Another article did directly set the EU and the Western nations in a negative light. The headline read "EU civil society Bill exposed double standards of West" (Hanyani, 2023). Words like "double standards" put a stigma on the EU, and the people in Zimbabwe will naturally be more sceptic towards aid and development provided by the EU. The article continues, saying that the civil society organization has exposed the hypocrisy of some Western countries. It goes on arguing that the unfair scrutiny on Zimbabwe by the West was a result of the land reform program, from 2000 (Hanyani, 2023). The land reform conflict was a dispute between the country and some of the Western countries, who felt their interests in the country and elsewhere were under threat because of Zimbabwe's actions. It is almost as if the West blames Zimbabwe, and the article frames the situation as if the West isn't taking responsibility for their actions. Hanyani continues, "With the EU joining them in coming up with legislation similar to Zimbabwe's PVO Amendment Bill, the West's double standards from the so-called champions of democracy have been exposed for the world to see" (2023). Hanyani even accuses the West of having double standards regarding human rights, democracy, and the rule of law among others (2023). This could, potentially, alter how the Zimbabwe population perceive the EU. Going out with such harsh phrasing might result in overweighing the positive sides of EU-Zimbabwe relations also presented in media.

In the EU case, the relationship between aid and coverage is not consistent with the perception that more aid equals more positive coverage in the news. This suggests that the amount of aid doesn't affect how the donor is perceived by the media, or the public in the recipient country. Suggesting that more aid, does not result in positive associations, or coverage in the news.

4.2 China in Zimbabwe

China is rapidly becoming a major player in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2008 did China replaced the EU and the US as Africa's major trading partner (Van Dijk, 2009). China's involvement in Africa is not restricted to trade, and they have increased their FDI and development aid. Aid, investment, and trade are mutually reinforcing the China-Zimbabwe relationship. China is mostly involved in trade and investment, and they are especially active in the mining sector in Congo and Zimbabwe. Due to the opportunities, and lack of competition, is it not only private Chinese companies present in Africa, but also private Chinese people, and even the Chinese government. The Chinese government tries to implement the government's strategy with respect to Zimbabwe, and even coordinates the activities of different actors (Van Dijk, 2009).

FDI net inflow shows that China provided Zimbabwe with 16,108,266,54 (BoP current US\$) in 2021 (World Bank, 2021). The graph (see figure 1) shows a more stable FDI from China than the EU. The graph indicates that, opposed to the EU, does Chinese FDI not get affected by the political situations in Zimbabwe. In fact, during the times the EU has reduced their FDI, have China only continued to increase their FDI. Regardless the amount of money received, is China overall presented more positive in the media. First of all, most of the news articles refer to the China-Africa and China-Zimbabwe relationship

as a co-operation. China is perceived as a partner when the EU is perceived as a donor. The word "donor" can create negative associations and present the EU as being "above" Zimbabwe. However, by referring to China as a "partner", leaves this the impression that they are equals, it's a co-operation not charity. Further, does, another article present China-Africa relations as entering a new era of building a "high-level" China-Africa community, where they "share the same future" (Su, 2023). The journalist goes on, arguing that China never has sought political gains or attached any political strings from Zimbabwe. Oppositely are Western countries presented as having exploited natural resources for centuries. China-Africa cooperation is even being referred to as open and inclusive, and enhance that credibility, friendship, and efficiency is important for China (Su, 2023). China is presented as a partner that has provided support for promoting Zimbabwe's economic development and in turn improved people's livelihood. China is building infrastructure and working towards increasing trilateral or multilateral co-operations with multiple African countries. As they state, "jointly make a greater contribution to the continent's development" (Su, 2023). The news articles state that China-Zimbabwe bilateral co-operation will be given, and will always have top priority, and therefore continue to support Zimbabwe's economic and social development. It even enhances that, "the relationship will stay open and inclusive, and bring benefits of the two countries and it's people" (Su, 2023).

China has also been referred to as an investor, this is more positively associated than the word donor (The Herald, 2022). A donor is associated with a stronger state giving money to a weaker state, as one "saving" the other. Whereas an investor, is a more positively loaded word, which gives positive associations. China is investing in the mining sector in Zimbabwe. The article written about this investment present this as having a positive impact on Zimbabwe's economy. Only enhancing the perception that China is the popular partner. China does also invest in the mining sector in Zimbabwe. An article, relating to mining, states that the investments from China have revolutionized the mining industry in Zimbabwe. The newspaper article wrote that the investments from the Asian country have high value in the mining sector, especially lithium. "In fact, no amount of discrediting can overshadow the transformation China has provided the mining sector in Zimbabwe" (The Herald, 2022). Another article goes beyond describing China-Africa relations as partners, with a bilateral formality, and describe them as "sister countries", arguing that the bond transcends convenient terms in conventional diplomacy (Mahomva, 2022). This is another indication that both China and Zimbabwe see each other as equals.

In China's case, the relationship between aid and coverage is opposite of the EU. China is perceived more positive in the media and covered significantly more than the EU is. There is no evidence of a connection between the amount of aid, and newspaper coverage in the case of China. In general, does the newspaper analysis suggest that there is no evidence that amount of aid affect how the donor is perceived by the media, in neither of the cases.

5 Discussion

There was a significantly higher amount of hits on the China-Zimbabwe newspaper search than the EU-Zimbabwe search had. The China-Zimbabwe search also revealed that China is far more positively perceived, as they for example are referred to as a "partner", and a "sister nation". Almost all articles regarding the China-Zimbabwe relationship refer to China and Africa as a "community". There are no accusations towards China, nor does any article imply that China is exploiting Zimbabwe. This is completely different from how they local news portray the EU. The EU is portrayed as a "donor", and having "double standards" regarding democracy, rule of law, and even human rights. One article even refers to the EU as a "charity giver". There are, however, some positive notions about the EU in the news articles, one stating that there is "scope for further cooperation", here regarding trade, but it emphasizes that it's due to the President Mnangagwa's foreign policy that places international trade at the heart of diplomatic relation. In a way, it could be argued that this in a way portrays Zimbabwe as the positive one as opposed to portraying the EU positively. Regardless, the positive notions do not outweigh the negative ones in this case for the EU.

Overall, is China promoted as the preferred partner to receive aid from. Which clearly indicate that they are the preferred partner and aid donor for Zimbabwe. The economic indicators showed that the EU provides a far higher amount of aid to Zimbabwe than China does. Through the analysis of the local newspaper articles, the perception of each donor does not correlate with the amount each donor provides.

The newspaper articles, and the economic indicators, show that there is no relationship between the amount of aid and how well the public perceived the donor. In fact, the EU is perceived negatively in the media, even stating that the EU is "abandoning" Zimbabwe, and imposes "double standards", even though they provide Zimbabwe with the highest amount of aid. Whereas China is perceived as a "partner", and "an investor". Which indicates that China is the favored donor, even though they provide Zimbabwe with a significantly lower amount of money than the EU.

Rating external influencers | 18 countries | 2019/2020

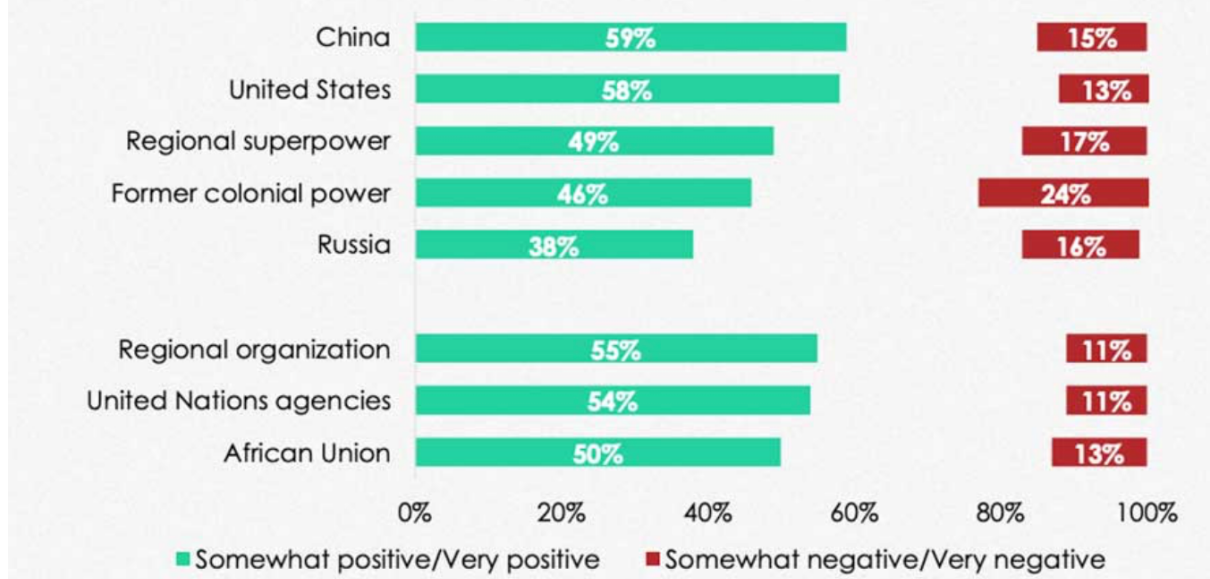


Figure 2 Rating external influencers (Olander, 2020)

The graph above shows an overview of how African countries rate external influencers. Continent wide, it seems to be the trend that China is the most popular amongst the external influencers.

China has a multipolar world vision, coordinated through partnership arrangements between power on equality, respect for sovereignty and on common interests, rather than a shared set of values and ideologies. China's partnership agreements, seen from a critical point of view, can be seen as promising too much, and lack substance (Wiessala, Wilson, & Taneja, 2009, p. 125). The Chinese arrangements are designed to be flexible, opposite from other alliances where partners commit to each other's defense, which could be argued is an ambitious goal, that result in promises not being kept (Wiessala, Wilson, & Taneja, 2009, p. 126). The multipolar world, seen through China, involves, a readjustment in relations between the major powers, with the growing role in international affairs of Europe and Japan. Thereby, also involving the rise of developing countries (Wiessala, Wilson, & Taneja, 2009, p. 125). From an outside perspective, does it seem like China provides Third World countries with subsidies without any conditions. China becoming more popular amongst African countries, which could alter the power dynamics of outside actors in Africa.

A powershift will change international dynamics substantially. For a superpower to obtain their influence, and position internationally, they need support and cooperation with multiple parts of the world. Africa is a continent historically connected to Europe, still effected by the colonial time. Europe is still involved on the continent, but China is gradually enhancing their influence. The two have different approaches to aid, and investment, and arguably provide aid based on different motives. A common concern

about China, when they have power, is that they attempt to change the structure of international institutions and norms to governance, both domestic and global (Breslin, 2010). Chinas relationship with so-called "rough-states" such as Zimbabwe, can indicate that China is challenging the global liberal order (Breslin, 2010, p. 53). This makes it harder for the Western liberal states to pursue their global objective (Breslin, 2010, p. 58). Scholars argues that for decades China has been more of a rule taker than a challenger to the existing international order, through international organizations such as the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF, and World Bank), and the World Trade Organization (Breslin, 2010, p. 55). China has a veto right in the UN, for instance did they use it to block sanction against Zimbabwe and precented official UN censure of human rights abuse in Myanmar (Brown, 2002, p. 58). China still does not have the power to change the world order, but through their veto power in the UN, they have the power to block initiatives, and through that ensure their interest are being accounted for, and essentially changing the world order (Brown, 2002, p. 60).

6 Conclusion

This paper evaluated whether we are seeing a powershift from the West to China. The findings from the single case study of Zimbabwe indicate that there is an ongoing powershift in African countries. China has become an extremely important actor, donor, and partner for several African countries. Although, the data collected from the World Bank indicated that, although China is increasing their FDI, does the EU still provide Africa with the highest amount of FDI. Even though the EU provides a significantly higher amount of aid to Zimbabwe, is China seemingly the more popular donor amongst the Zimbabwean public. Zimbabwe, in general, have more negative associations with the EU, possible affected by the colonial time. These results can indicate that there is an ongoing powershift between the donors in Zimbabwe. China's funding model is far more attractive for Zimbabwe, than the EU funding model. These findings indicate a possible powershift in Africa, which in turn can enhance the powershift globally. However, there is no evidence of a global powershift, although China is growing their economy and increasing their influence globally, are they in no position to overtake the Western hegemony. The fact is that China is a powerful force in Africa, and they are not going anywhere. As Brautigam states, their embrace of the continent is strategic, planned, long-term, and still unfolding (2009). This is true today as well, and it can be seen in the case of Zimbabwe.

As the study is a single case study, is it difficult to generalize, even though there are evidence that China is the more popular donor or investor in Zimbabwe. However, this does not indicate that this is the case throughout Africa. Additionally, as the public opinion was collected through newspaper articles from a local newspaper in Zimbabwe, is it hard to establish whether it actually reflects public opinion. However, the way the actors are portrayed in the media, gives a good indication of how the EU and China are perceives by the people in Zimbabwe. Based on the data analysis is it is hard to conduct a general conclusion on a powershift in Africa, because the analysis was based on a single case study. For further research, it would be interesting to look at the same impulses in other African countries and compare the findings with Zimbabwe.

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