

**AN ANALYSIS OF CHINESE FOREIGN DIRECT
INVESTMENT IN AFRICA**

JOSEPH EDWARD SOJEWICZ

Bachelor of Arts in International Relations, Syracuse University, 2024

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Syracuse University

Syracuse, NY, United States

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Abstract

Why is China pursuing investments in Africa? I argue that this is to increase China's soft power. This essay analyzes instances of Chinese investment in African countries and pairs this with an evaluation of trends in African public opinion toward China. To carry out this analysis, I use data on Chinese investment in thirty-seven African countries and public opinion surveys regarding the change in these countries' views toward China. The research offers a comprehensible picture of China's soft power in Africa. In Zambia, Chinese investment has increased Chinese influence over the country. Economic relations between South Africa and China have increased China's soft power. The essay's expected findings suggest that China's employment of financial investments in Africa has cultivated Beijing's strong positive global image.

Literature Review

Researchers such as Liang (2012), Bodomo (2009), and Corkin (2014) have written extensively about China's use of soft power in Africa and the resulting ramifications.¹²³ Bodomo emphasizes how China's soft power initiatives affect diplomatic ties and public perceptions, underscoring the idea of symmetry in Africa-China relations. Liang questions whether economic leverage alone is sufficient as she examines how China's economy might support its soft power on the African continent. On the other hand, Corkin and Zhang et al. (2016) analyze China's media tactics, shedding light on how rhetoric modifies narratives and helps project soft power in African settings.

Cotula et al. (2016) and Hanauer & Morris (2014) both focus on the economic environment surrounding investment between China and Africa.⁴⁵ Cotula et al. offer a perceptive examination of China's investment trends and how they affect African countries' governance and development. A thorough historical overview is provided by Hanauer and Morris, who also trace the development of China's economic relations with African nations over time, emphasizing their strategic significance. Samson (2016), Thrall (2015), and Dynamic (2019) all offer a critical

¹ Liang, Wei. "China's Soft Power in Africa: Is Economic Power Sufficient?" *Asian Perspective* 36, no. 4 (2012): 667–92.

² Bodomo, Adams. "Africa-China Relations: Symmetry, Soft Power and South Africa." *China Review* 9, no. 2 (2009): 169–78.

³ Corkin, Lucy Jane. "China's Rising Soft Power: The Role of Rhetoric in Constructing China-Africa Relations." *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 57 (2014): 49. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329201400204>.

⁴ Cotula, Lorenzo, Xiaoxue Weng, Qianru Ma, and Peng Ren. "The China-Africa Investment Landscape." *China-Africa Investment Treaties: International Institute for Environment and Development*, 2016. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep02691.7>.

⁵ Hanauer, Larry, and Lyle J. Morris. "How China-Africa Relations Have Developed." In *Chinese Engagement in Africa*, 19–44. Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy. RAND Corporation, 2014. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt6wq7ss.10>.

evaluation of the realities and perceptions surrounding China's involvement in Africa.⁶⁷⁸

Dynamic's work casts doubt on the integrity of China's claimed benefits to African countries by highlighting the discrepancy between verbal pledges and concrete results. Thrall examines the differences between anticipated and real effects while offering a nuanced account of Chinese behavior and presence in Africa. Samson captures public sentiments regarding China's role on the continent and provides insights into popular perceptions of China's expanding footprint in Africa.

Toogood (2016) provides a valuable case study on the relationship between China and Nigeria, a major player in African economics, providing a microcosmic perspective that can be compared to more general regional trends.⁹ This comparative method clarifies distinctive dynamics within particular African contexts, demonstrating how individual case studies advance our comprehension of China's complex interactions with African nations. These various viewpoints improve our understanding of the relationship between China and Africa. By examining soft power dynamics, economic engagements, perceptions versus realities, and regional case studies, academics provide significant contributions that enhance our comprehension of this dynamic and intricate relationship. Subsequently, multidisciplinary investigations and empirical research will persist in shedding light on the subtleties and consequences of China's impact on Africa.

⁶ Samson, Romaric. "China's Growing Presence in Africa Wins Largely Positive Popular Reviews," 2016.

⁷ Thrall, Lloyd. "Chinese Presence and Behavior in Africa." In *China's Expanding African Relations*, 21–74. Implications for U.S. National Security. RAND Corporation, 2015. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt15zc655.10>.

⁸ Dynamic, Beyongo Mukete. "China's Power in Africa: Rhetoric and Reality." In *Power*, edited by Jane Golley, Linda Jaivin, Paul J. Farrelly, and Sharon Strange, 186–200. ANU Press, 2019. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvfrxqkv.22>.

⁹ Toogood, Kimairis. "Understanding the Emerging Relationship Between China and Africa: The Case of Nigeria." Stimson Center, 2016. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep10795>.

A focus for creative analysis is the development and variation of China's soft power strategies in various African contexts. The work of Bodomo, Liang, Corkin, Zhang, and others offers a fundamental understanding of China's strategic use of soft power in Africa. By combining their points of view, scholars can reveal subtle trends and modifications in soft power strategies, illuminating how China's influence tactics work and how flexible they are in various sociopolitical contexts. A multidisciplinary investigation is necessary to analyze China's economic sway over Africa comprehensively. Three perspectives are provided to examine economic engagements: Cotula et al., Hanauer and Morris, and Dynamic. Scholars can discern the complex effects of Chinese investments on development, governance, and socio-economic dynamics throughout the continent by combining their research findings. This critical analysis reveals the intricate interplay of interests and outcomes related to China's economic footprint in Africa, going beyond simplistic narratives.

Bridging the knowledge gap between the general public's perceptions of China's involvement in Africa and empirical data offers creative research opportunities. Samson, Thrall, and Dynamic highlight differences between projected and natural effects, challenging popular narratives. By integrating these perspectives, scholars can enhance our comprehension of the complexities of the relationship between China and Africa, providing a more refined depiction of the apparent consequences of Chinese involvement in the region. Toogood's (2016) analysis of the Nigeria-China relationship offers a valuable case study to draw broader conclusions and implications. Through applying this microcosmic lens, scholars can discern distinct dynamics and obstacles within particular African contexts, offering significant insights into comprehending China's involvement at a regional level. Using case studies facilitates comparative analysis and enhances our understanding of China's diverse interactions with various African nations. Apart

from thematic synthesis and case studies, novel methodologies such as comparative analysis and media influence studies present fresh investigative perspectives. With the help of the insights provided by the scholars mentioned above, comparative analysis across various African regions or countries can highlight contextual differences in China's economic impacts and soft power strategies. Moreover, examining the impact of Chinese media on public opinion and policy outcomes advances our knowledge of the information dissemination and perception-management tactics used by Chinese entities in Africa.

Research Design

The relationship between China and Zambia was chosen as the primary case study for this research. Zambia was selected as a noteworthy example because Zambia is a significant beneficiary of Chinese development and investment initiatives. These cases provide an insightful framework for analyzing the nuances of China's diplomatic and economic entanglements in Africa. Zambia was chosen strategically for comprehensive analysis and comparison with broader regional trends and implications. For this research, operationalizing ideas like diplomatic choices and economic impact is essential to understand the total pressure of China's role in Zambia.

Quantitative indicators like trade volumes, investment flows, infrastructure projects, and their observable effects on local development and governance will be used to gauge the economic impact of foreign direct investment from China. A mixed-methods approach will be used to evaluate diplomatic decisions, drawing on media reports, official documents, public statements, and interviews with stakeholders such as government officials, corporate executives, and civil society representatives. Where possible, I will look for declassified records and private

statements that offer insights into the inner workings of the decision-making process for both Zambia and China.

The research design uses a similar case design approach to compare China's involvement in Zambia with that of other African nations. It is possible to isolate essential elements and traits that affect results with this design. This research aims to identify factors contributing to varying outcomes regarding public perceptions, diplomatic relations, and economic development by selecting cases that differ in specific aspects of China-Africa relations (e.g., infrastructure investments and soft power strategies) but share similarities in socio-economic profiles.

Within the framework of this study, critical terms like "economic impact," "soft power strategies," and "diplomatic decisions" will be defined as follows. Economic impact, for example, will include trade volume, FDI (foreign direct investment), infrastructure development, job creation, and socioeconomic results. Soft power tactics will include cultural exchanges, media sway, educational programs, and development aid to improve China's influence and reputation in Africa. Trade agreements, diplomatic missions, aid packages, and public diplomacy initiatives are all examples of diplomatic decisions.

Expected drawbacks to this research include difficulties obtaining data, possible biases in remarks made in public or media reports, and challenges determining the causal relationship between China-Africa relations. The study is aware of these limitations and plans to use strict procedures to reduce biases and guarantee a thorough examination of the empirical data. In summary, this research design offers a systematic framework for examining China's involvement in Africa, mainly focusing on Zambia. Cutting-edge methodologies examine the economic consequences, diplomatic choices, and broader regional dynamics. The study intends to produce insights that contribute to a deeper understanding of China-Africa relations and to inform

evidence-based policymaking for sustainable cooperation and development by addressing essential criteria and utilizing comparative case studies.

Overall National Results

China unveiled the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013, which has evolved into a significant global development plan with massive implications. The Belt and Road initiative aims to facilitate trade and develop infrastructure throughout Asia, Europe, and Africa to improve international connectivity and foster economic cooperation. The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road are the two main components of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The former focuses on land-based infrastructure that connects China to Central Asia and Europe. At the same time, the latter emphasizes maritime routes that connect China to Southeast Asia, South Asia, Africa, and Europe.¹⁰ The BRI has had several noteworthy effects on the international stage. The substantial infrastructure spending in participating nations, which includes ports, railroads, highways, and energy projects, is one primary outcome. Numerous regions, such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America, have experienced increased economic growth and development due to this infrastructure development, improving connectivity and trade efficiency. Furthermore, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has strengthened China's economic relations with its partner nations by encouraging trade and investment flows and creating new markets for Chinese goods and services.¹¹ However, there have also been challenges and concerns about the BRI worldwide. Critics have raised questions regarding the viability of the

¹⁰ McBride, James, Noah Berman, and Andrew Chatzky. "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative." Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/background/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>

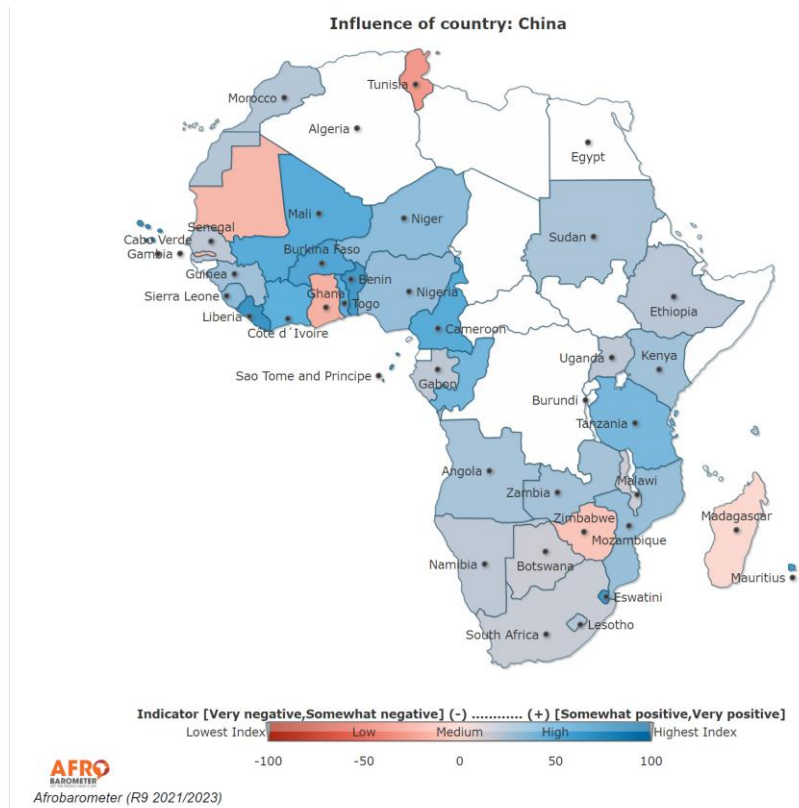
¹¹ McBride, James, Noah Berman, and Andrew Chatzky. "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative." Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/background/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>

debt for the participating nations, the possible environmental effects of major infrastructure projects, and the geopolitical consequences of China's growing influence.¹² However, the Belt and Road Initiative continues to play a significant role in reshaping the dynamics of the global economy and in promoting unprecedented levels of regional cooperation and connectivity. Analysis of this large-scale effort's complex effects and impacts worldwide is ongoing.

Africa has been a battleground for influence by world economic powers since the mid-nineteenth century. The violence and aggressive tactics of European colonization began to end after the Second World War, but now Africa could potentially be under a new threat. Perhaps a form of neocolonialism, world powers have ramped up their financial investments in the developing continent. China is one of the leaders in this increased expenditure by investing \$75 million in 2003 and increasing their investment to \$5 billion in 2018¹³ And scholars want to know why. Is China just a supportive global neighbor, or is there a more calculated plan hidden in the background of its foreign policy? Analyzing China's investment in Africa and the potential outcomes that result from this foreign investment are the main issues in international relations, especially for China's economic rivals, such as the United States of America or India. Suppose China successfully increases its geopolitical influence and soft power through significant foreign investment. In that case, other countries will want to learn from China's actions or expand their investments in the developing continent of Africa.

¹² Lindley, Daniel. "Assessing China's Motives: How the Belt and Road Initiative Threatens US Interests." Air University (AU), <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3111114/assessing-chinas-motives-how-the-belt-and-road-initiative-threatens-us-interests/>

¹³ Freitas, Marcus Vinicius de. "The Impact of Chinese Investments in Africa: Neocolonialism or Cooperation?," pg. 2



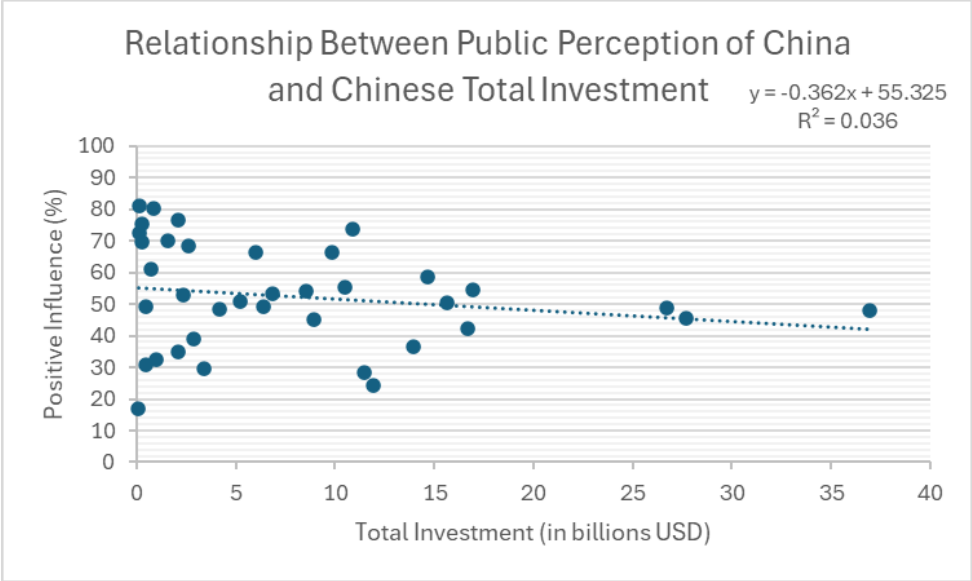
Map from Afrobarometer (Round 9 2021/2023) showing an overview of African countries' public perception of China

The Council of Foreign Relations defines soft power as “a country's ability to influence others without resorting to coercive pressure.”¹⁴ The key word here is influence. To measure influence, it is necessary to see how people perceive a specific element; in this case, the question is, how do African countries perceive China? If African countries have positive views of China, it could be concluded that China has a higher influence in that country than in another country with more negative views of China. Using public data provided by the Round 9 survey questions asked by Afrobarometer in 2021/2023 and investment data from The American Enterprise Institute’s “China Global Investment Tracker,” it is possible to run two linear regression models

¹⁴ “What Is Soft Power?” Council on Foreign Relations, <https://education.cfr.org/learn/reading/what-soft-power>.

using both positive and negative African public perceptions of China and Chinese total investment in different African countries to gauge if there is a fundamental relationship between Chinese investment and influence. The two variables used in these linear regression models are positive/negative influence and total investment.

Table 1

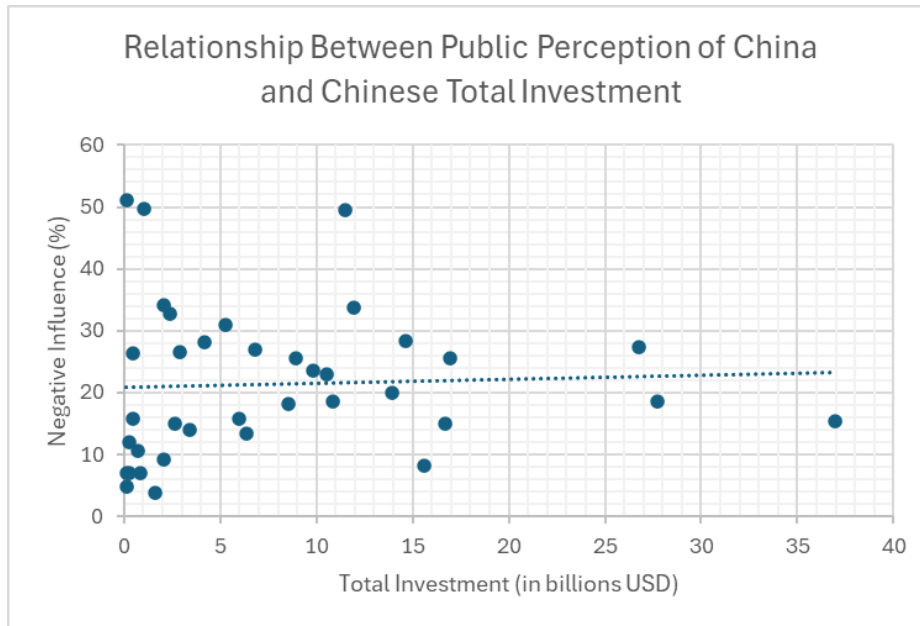


Data collected using Afrobarometer Round 9 (2021/2023) showing African perceptions of the influence of China and investment data collected from the AEI’s “China Global Investment Tracker

Each blue dot represents a different African country, with the country ranked highest in percentage of positive influence at 80.2% as Liberia and the lowest at 17.1% as Tunisia. The graph shows that the coefficient of determination is 0.036, with only five data points or countries touching the linear trendline. With an R-squared value so close to zero, this implies that the independent variable of total investment from China has almost no power to explain the dependent variable of positive influence. A simple glance at how the data points are arranged on this graph clearly shows a weak relationship between positive influence and total investment in China and Africa, even without knowing the value of R-squared.

After running the linear regression model seeking the relationship between positive influence and total investment, a second linear regression model was necessary to determine if a strong relationship existed between negative influence and total investment. This could also indicate the presence of soft power shifts in African countries due to foreign direct investment from China.

Table 2



Data collected using Afrobarometer Round 9 (2021/2023) showing African perceptions of the influence of China and investment data collected from the AEI's "China Global Investment Tracker"

Table 2 shows an even more scattered set of data points than Table 1, supporting the conclusion that the relationship between negative influence and total investment is even weaker than the relationship between positive influence and total investment, which was indicated by the R-squared value of 0.036. Zero data points touch the linear trendline, and it seems that total investment does very little, if anything, to help explain the negative influence.

In conclusion, data from the American Enterprise Institute's "China Global Investment Tracker" and Afrobarometer's Round 9 survey questions were analyzed and put through a linear

regression model. The results showed little correlation between Chinese investment in African nations and opinions of China's influence (both positive and negative). The coefficient of determination (R-squared) for the first linear regression model that compared the relationship between positive influence and total Chinese investment was 0.036. The low R-squared value indicates that total investment alone cannot fully explain positive perceptions of China's influence. This relationship is also visually confirmed by the scatterplot of data points, which shows points widely distributed around the linear trendline. The lack of data points that matched the linear trendline in a second linear regression model examining the connection between negative influence and total Chinese investment revealed an even weaker correlation. The model's R-squared value supports the idea that the overall investment does not substantially contribute to explaining negative perceptions about China in African nations. These results imply that the amount of Chinese investment does not necessarily reflect how African countries perceive China's influence. It suggests that perceptions of soft power and influence between China and African nations may be shaped by factors other than economic investment.

Suppose soft power is not powerfully explained by investment. In that case, it suggests that China is investing in Africa for other reasons that correlate with the nation's Belt and Road Initiative and not just to buy influence. Soft power and influence may be too complicated of an idea to gauge using just quantitative research. The analysis of specific case studies and countries may be required to grasp better whether China is using foreign direct investment in Africa to strengthen its soft power.

The Case of Zambia

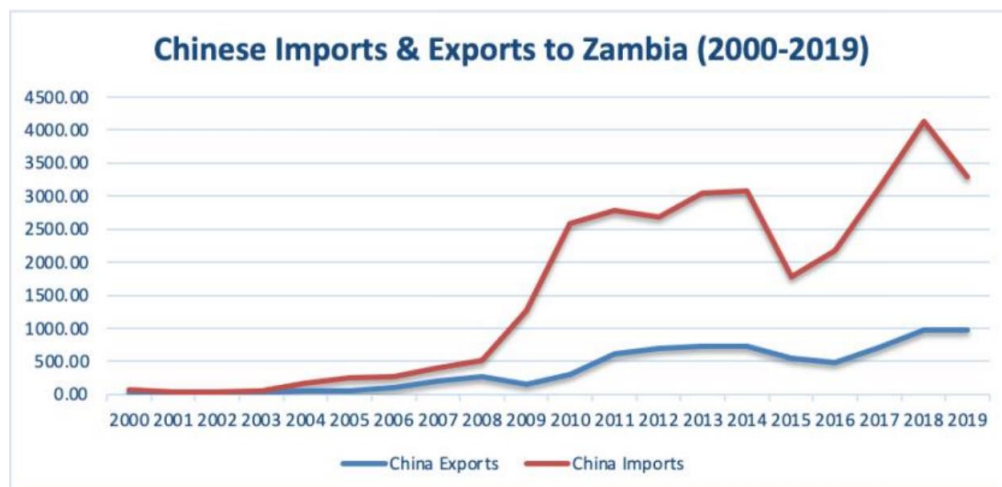
Zambia is a country landlocked in Africa, gaining independence from its colonial power, Great Britain, in 1964.¹⁵ During its colonial rule, Zambia was a leader in copper production and is home to many natural resources. Zambia hoped to continue these economic and political levels after they gained independence. However, during the 1970s, Zambia's economy took severe hits due to the price of copper, which was going through a global crisis. Copper dropped by 40% in 1975 and 1979 as the cost of oil rose. Zambia's copper production halted as copper mines closed and mass unemployment spread across the country. Zambia's dependence on natural resource wealth turned out to be too much to overcome when the price of copper dropped, leaving little to no way to stimulate the economy. Wealth reserves dropped, and national revenue plummeted. Zambia was forced to take out loans from the International Monetary Fund, resulting in a Zambian economy hindered by high debt and spiking inflation.

Zambia's first president, Kenneth Kaunda, initiated foreign relations with China when he first took office in 1964. One of the symbols of Chinese investment in Africa, the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority railway was a project that China helped fund in the early 1970s, providing trade routes for Zambia beyond its landlocked borders. This infrastructure project signaled an extensive relationship between China and Zambia. The theme of Chinese investment into Zambia started with the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority railway when the 400-million-dollar loan from China to Zambia was turned into a grant after Zambia could not pay China back.¹⁶ It is a symbol of trust for Zambia but also a symbol of potential manipulation for China.

¹⁵ "Zambia | Population, Capital, Language, Flag, & Map | Britannica," <https://www.britannica.com/place/Zambia>.

¹⁶ "Our History | TAZARA.," <https://tazarasite.com/our-history>.

Throughout China’s history, the nation has needed other countries to provide it with natural resources. According to the Consulate General of the People’s Republic of China in New York, the first economic and trade cooperation zone between China and an African country was in Zambia, being reported in 2007.¹⁷ This makes sense for China as China is the world's largest consumer of copper, according to Statista, and Zambia is Africa’s second-largest producer of copper per the World Economic Forum.¹⁸¹⁹ While this economic and trade cooperation zone did benefit Zambia with jobs and financing, it also continued the disproportionate relationship that started in the early years of Zambia post-independence.



Data from UNComtrade data from 1992-2019, <http://comtrade.un.org/data/>

¹⁷ “China Launches First Economic, Trade Cooperation Zone in Africa.” China launches First Economic, Trade Cooperation Zone in Africa, http://newyork.china-consulate.gov.cn/eng/xw/200702/t20070205_4685774.htm.

¹⁸ Jaganmohan, Madhumitha. “World Copper Demand by Region 2022.” Statista, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/613094/copper-demand-worldwide-by-region/#:~:text=China%20had%20by%20far%20the,nearly%208.7%20million%20metric%20tons>.

¹⁹ “Which Countries Produce the Most Copper?” World Economic Forum, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/12/which-countries-produce-the-most-copper/>.

Debt-trapping diplomacy is a term used to describe what China is doing in Zambia and Africa. Zambia is a country that has debt that cannot be sustained and is often characterized by international organizations as risky to do business with due to Zambia's inability to pay back loans. According to the IMF and Reuters, Zambia owes China more than five billion dollars in debt.²⁰ The fact that China repeatedly gives Zambia grants, loans with little or no interest rates, and credit shows evidence of debt-trapping. China seems to be taking advantage of a country struggling with debt, as Zambia has for almost its entire history since 1964. Zambia's reliance on China for foreign aid has led to corruption, misuse of funds, and political turmoil. All of these things, however, lead to an easier chance of manipulation by China in a wave of neo-colonialism.

Infrastructure investments under the Belt and Road Initiative are frequently funded by borrower-friendly loans that are often interest-free. The Belt and Road Initiative has provided over 50 infrastructure projects in Zambia.²¹ The World Bank, however, has criticized the Belt and Road Initiative for creating a debt sustainability risk. As Zambia is funded more and more by China, Zambia's debt to China increases even though China knows that Zambia cannot pay the loans back. This increases China's authority, enlarging Chinese political and economic agendas, and could prevent Zambia from retaining complete control of its own country's resources and allocation of funds.

Perhaps the most concerning aspect of China's geopolitical rivals is the political influence that China can have over Zambia and other countries that are trapped in the debt cycle of the Belt and Road Initiative. Zambia is a firm believer in China's "One-China Policy," arguing that China

²⁰ Mfula, Chris. "Zambian Officials Held Debt Talks with Chinese Banks Last Week | Reuters." Reuters.com, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/zambian-officials-held-debt-talks-with-chinese-banks-last-week-2024-02-02/>.

²¹ Sam Williams, Amrita Neelakantan, Satvik Parashar, Grace Stonecipher, and Jessica DiCarlo. "Focus-Bri Country Report." Center for Large Landscape Conservation, pg. 7 <https://largelandscapes.org/wp-content/uploads/Kenya-FOCUS-BRI.pdf>.

has sovereignty over the nation of Taiwan.²² Zambia is over 6,700 miles from Taiwan and has little to do with the island nation. The Journal of Current Chinese Affairs states that while 30 African countries at some point did have relations with Taiwan, now only three African countries do.²³ Chinese political influence and geopolitical agendas are now being supported by African countries like Zambia, possibly due to China's economic power over Zambia. Zambia is so reliant on China and in so much debt to Beijing that it must follow and support China to continue any sense of prosperity in Africa. China has control over Zambia's advancement, and the economic and political imbalance between the businesses of Zambia and China outweighs any sense of symmetry in the relationship between the two countries.

Chinese Controlled Production in Africa

	Chinese-controlled production in Africa (MUSD)	Total African production (MUSD)	Chinese-controlled production share of world total ¹ (MUSD)	Chinese-controlled share of African total (%)	Chinese-controlled African production share of Chinese world total ¹ (%)
Copper ²	2902	10,300	7605	28	38
Bauxite	1318	1600	1365	82	97
Cobalt ²	901	2200	901	41	100
Gold ³	544	30,600	1921	12	28
Zinc	226	780	816	29	28
Uranium	163	400	163	40	100
Manganese	189	5800	189	3	100
Chromite	102	4800	102	2	100
Iron ore	0	6000	3306	0	0

Data sourced from RMG Consulting
Mineral Economics <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13563-020-00233-4>

²² “Zambia Reaffirms Commitment to the One-China Principle.” Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the Republic of Zambia, http://zm.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/sbgx/zz/202401/t20240117_11225341.htm#:~:text=Zambia%20Reaffirms%20Commitment%20to%20the%20One%2DChina%20Principle&text=On%2016%20January%202024%2C%20the,to%20the%20One%2DChina%20Principle.

²³ Rich, Timothy S., and Vasabjit Banerjee. “Running Out of Time? The Evolution of Taiwan’s Relations in Africa.” *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 44, no. 1 (March 1, 2015): 141–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810261504400106>.

The Case of South Africa

South Africa, like Zambia, was also colonized by Great Britain. However, of all the African countries, South Africa has one of the largest economies, as defined by the highest gross domestic product (GDP), ranking 2nd on the continent after Nigeria.²⁴ Post-independence and post-Apartheid South Africa allowed geopolitical relations with China, starting in the late 1990s. According to the World Bank, China today is South Africa's largest export and import trading partner.²⁵ Like Zambia, there have been large Chinese loans to South Africa and accusations of debt-trapping from China. *Foreign Affairs* writers Steil and Della Rocca state that 4% of South Africa's GDP is in national debt owed to China.²⁶ An economic stimulus package was granted to South Africa from China in 2018 at a cost of over 25 billion dollars, causing controversy.²⁷ Even though South Africa has one of the largest economies on the African continent, South Africa's economy is unstable, and easy for China to manipulate with unsustainable debt-trapping practices.²⁸

When discussing China-South Africa relations, it is essential to note the differences between them and China-Zambia relations. Zambia is trapped in debt to China and forced to give up partial economic and perhaps political control due to the inability to pay China back. South Africa is in a much better financial position than Zambia, so China must sway South Africa

²⁴ "GDP, Current Prices." IMF, <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPD@WEO/AFQ/DZA/ZAF/MAR/NGA/EGY?year=2019>.

²⁵ "South Africa Trade." South Africa Trade | WITS Data. <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountrySnapshot/en/ZAF>.

²⁶ Greg Mills and Emily van Der Merwe. "Will We See a Post-Covid China-Africa Reset?" Daily Maverick, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-04-30-will-we-see-a-post-covid-china-africa-reset/>.

²⁷ The Mail & Guardian. "China Gifts SA with R370bn," <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-09-14-00-china-gifts-sa-with-r370bn/>.

²⁸ "South Africa Is Slowly Collapsing." <https://businesstech.co.za/news/government/642791/south-africa-is-slowly-collapsing/>

politically rather than just trapping them financially. However, China has started this process of attempted influence control with investment. Not only the previously mentioned foreign direct investments and infrastructure developments but also the Chinese Communist Party have been accused of providing funds for the African National Congress, the leading political party in South Africa.²⁹ Time Magazine reports that in 2014, China agreed to build a political training school for the African National Congress.³⁰ Joint military programs have also been introduced between South Africa and China. China seems to support groups such as the South African Communist Party, which has views that align with its own.³¹ It is often criticized that the African National Congress seeks to establish a similar control over South Africa to that of the Chinese Communist Party over China.³²

The more China invests in the African National Congress and South Africa, the more South Africa seems to support China's geopolitical agenda. South Africa ended its foreign relations with Taiwan and instead favored China and the One-China Policy in the late 1990s.³³ In the late 2000s and early 2010s, the Dalai Lama was denied entry multiple times into South Africa due to China's political interests in keeping Tibet a Chinese autonomous region.³⁴

²⁹ The Mail & Guardian. "ANC's Dodgy Funders," March 21, 2009. <https://mg.co.za/article/2009-03-21-ancs-dodgy-funders/>.

³⁰ Johannesburg, Stephanie Findlay /. "South Africa: ANC Looks to Learn from Chinese Communist Party." <https://time.com/3601968/anc-south-africa-china-communist-party/>.

³¹ Shinn, David Hamilton, and Joshua Eisenman. *China's Relations with Africa: A New Era of Strategic Engagement*. New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2023.

³² Allison, Simon. "ANC's Future Foreign Policy: All Roads Lead to China." Daily Maverick, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-08-20-ancs-future-foreign-policy-all-roads-lead-to-china/>.

³³ AP Archives. "South Africa-Diplomatic Relations with Taiwan End." YouTube, https://youtu.be/KKhJvUWOoho?si=N_awDwiwE9ZbXknM.

³⁴ The Mail & Guardian. "Dalai Lama Visit to SA Hangs in the Balance," <https://mg.co.za/article/2011-09-28-dalai-lama-visit-to-sa-hangs-in-the-balance/>.

Political pressure from China has caused South Africa and the African National Congress to sway its politics in favor of China.

After analyzing South Africa, relations with China have increased since post-Apartheid. Despite the strength of South Africa's economy compared to other African nations, the country is at just as much risk of losing political influence to China through debt-trapping. The predatory relationship perpetuated by China has deepened its grasp on the African National Congress and, therefore, the country as a whole. Infrastructure development and economic packages allow the South African political and military complexes to be manipulated by Beijing. China's increased influence raises red flags about South Africa's political autonomy and decision-making. China's ability to expand control and influence over even the wealthiest African countries provides a troubling future for the continent and the world.

Results and Conclusion

Reflecting on the data sets provided by the linear regression models and the conclusion that total investment does not accurately explain the influence of China amongst several African countries, it is seen that despite this, China is gaining substantial influence in African countries through the use of investment. Why might this be the case? It is most likely a combination of factors, not just the single economic factor of total investment. Returning to the definition of soft power provided by the Council on Foreign Relations, soft power is created without coercion from another country. China is coercing these countries to hand over control and influence through various economic and political manipulation techniques. Therefore, the question no longer is whether China has used investment to shift a positive global image of Beijing. These countries are forced to support China regardless of whether or not a nation's government or

public has a favorable opinion of China. To answer why China is investing in Africa, it is because they can gain increasing economic and geopolitical influence.

From a comprehensive review of China's engagement with South Africa and Zambia, it is clear that Chinese investments, especially those made possible through programs such as the Belt and Road Initiative, significantly impact these African countries. Predatory and disproportionate relationships cause economic and political imbalances within countries. Financial support from China initially helped, but due to Zambia's historical dependence on natural resources and the early recession, the government now faces a severe debt problem. Infrastructure development has led to a debt crisis, with Zambia's growing debt to China threatening its political and economic independence. This dependence went beyond economic governance and influenced foreign policy attitudes and geopolitical decisions supporting Chinese interests, such as the "One China Policy."

Similarly, concerns about South Africa's debt and political influence have increased the flow of Chinese investment, even though the country is doing better economically than other African countries. China now significantly impacts South African politics by making decisions about infrastructure investment and political connections to influential groups such as the African National Congress. The decision to divert foreign relations from Taiwan to China and Chinese political and regional issues, such as the Dalai Lama's visits, exemplify how Chinese influence extends to decisions about geopolitical ties.

These two case studies demonstrate China's broader economic involvement in Africa, defined by large-scale investments that have long-term implications for the authority and independence of recipient countries. China can leverage the dependencies created by expanding economic ties—often made possible by borrower-friendly loans and infrastructure projects—to

achieve its geopolitical and strategic goals globally. The cases of South Africa and Zambia highlight the complexity of cooperation between China and African countries and show a trend where financial aid can become a tool of political influence and control. Beyond economic sustainability, the effects raise essential questions about preserving national sovereignty and regional power distribution. As China's influence in Africa grows, policymakers and other stakeholders must negotiate these challenges so that economic ties are mutually beneficial without undermining the independence of African countries.

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