China’s Influence in Africa: A Comparative Analysis of the Scope and Consequence of China’s Involvement with Sub-Saharan and North African Countries

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine the development of China's expanding footprint in the African continent, through the global 21st-century Silk Road strategy, also known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).China through its new plan provides consecutive significant aid to countries in Asia, Europe, and Africa. However, this study will be focused on how Chinese funding influences the low and high-income countries of Africa, along with a comparative analysis of the Sino-African relations in the countries of Morocco and Angola. As well as a data analysis and interpretation, that aims to portray the level of the said influence and the consequences of the "Free" loans of China's Export-Import Bank provides affect the continent's loaner countries in relation to concepts of "Debt Trap Diplomacy", debt distress, economic interdependence and possible relational geopolitical dominance.

Keywords: Economic Interdependence, African Countries, PRC, Debt Distress, the Belt and Road Initiative, Debt Trap Diplomacy, GDP, GNI.

ÖZ

Bu araştırma, Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi (BRI) olarak da bilinen küresel 21. yüzyıl İpek Yolu stratejisi aracılığıyla Çin'in Afrika kıtasındaki genişleyen ayak izinin gelişimini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çin, yeni planı aracılığıyla Asya, Avrupa ve Afrika'daki ülkelere art arda önemli yardımlar sağlıyor. Bununla birlikte, bu çalışma, Sahra Altı Afrika ve Kuzey bölgelerindeki Çin-Afrika ilişkilerinin karşılaştırmalı bir analizi ile birlikte, Çin fonlarının Afrika'nın düşük ve yüksek gelirli ülkelerini nasıl etkilediğine odaklanacaktır. Bu araştırma, Çin'in İhracat-İthalat Bankası'nın "Bedava" kredilerinin kıtanın kredi veren ülkeleri üzerindeki söz konusu etkinin düzeyini ve sonuçlarını "Borç Tuzağı Diplomasisi", borç sıkıntısı, ekonomik karşılıklı bağımlılık ve muhtemel kavramlar bağlamında ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. ilişkisel jeopolitik hakimiyet.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ekonomik Karşılıklı Bağımlılık, Afrika Ülkeleri, ÇHC, Borç Sıkıntısı, Kuşak ve Yol Girişimi, Borç Tuzağı Diplomasisi.

DEDICATION

To my family, my biggest supporters, and my roommate

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AU	African Union
BRI	The Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
B3W	Build Back Better World Strategy
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
PRC	People’s Republic of China
WTO	World Health Organization

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The international relations "dictionary", has not set a specific definition of what the concept of the emerging powers actually refers to. But to put it simply; the emerging powers can be referred to the economic and political rising powers having global effect on the flow of the Current political economic hierarchy.

In this context, the countries under the acronym of BRICS are the best fitting of the description, namely: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

In fact, throughout the years, the emerging countries have been expanding their footprint in the African Continent mainly in the Sub-Saharan regions for several factors depending on each countries' justification that can range from: finding new market, creating economic interdependence, charitable funding for the countries' lacking areas, trade relations, etc.

Moreover, Africa being one of richest continent in the world. It is the most resource-abundant; where almost every country in Africa has a fair share of natural resources differing from gold, oil, natural gas, petrol, and others. Geographically, it borders the Atlantic Ocean as well as the Indian Ocean. However, and In spite of all these facts, the continent is still heavily plagues by poverty.

Moreover, from these emerging countries, the one that has been most talked about is China’s footprint in the African Continent. After being short on supplies and means to fund infrastructure projects after the damage exercised during colonial times. Fortunately, African countries have found themselves, a "sponsor".

Furthermore, over several decades, Beijing has been plumbing resources into Africa. The country has invested billions of dollars across the continent, ranging from transportation, and infrastructure; to real estate and technology. Through its large scale project, Namely the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), conveniently generous, China's Export-Import bank will give low-interest and no-interest loans to African countries funding the said projects.

One of the main factors that play a significant role to why this sponsorship is heavily accepted by these African countries, is the West changing their international budget. In the sense that, the Development Assistance Committee and the World bank changing their budgeting on areas of infrastructure that were once in 70% , to presently reach 30% in favor of other areas (i.e. education).

However the Developing world, has not fulfilled their necessary need in this era, which makes them lacking behind with a gap of $68Billion gap of their necessary funding needs.

Nevertheless, a lot of ambiguity and suspicion has been associated to this Chinese “free” aid. There have been lot of speculation and controversy that was associated with the BRI project goals. World politics entails that the division of the world is either strong or weak, and I believe present flow of events show just that. Example that the countries that claimed cooperation and world peace, to entrench and close up to themselves once they felt the disease approaching sure shows the “state survival” agenda at its prime.

This paper focuses on two main questions: where and what. The first is in form of a a data analysis and interpretation that answers to the question of:What is china’s influence in Africa exactly in terms of enhancing its economic growth through the claimed Belt and Road Initiative and as well as to study if there is any truth to the said speculations associated with the Chinese aid that could perhaps jeopardize and/or threaten the participating state’s sovereignty.

Whereas “where” is in the form of a comparative analysis, which refers to the concentration of where is china more involved in the continent.

To understand the depth of Sino-African relation, post and Pre-BRI singing in the North and sub-Saharan regions, Morocco and Angola will be used as case studies to measure the concentration of the relations comparing these regions.

Why Morocco?

As part of The BRI implementation strategy, the Sino-African relations in the MENA region are mainly with the following countries: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.

So why is morocco the optimal choice of the study here? Well, the Sino-African relations in terms of northern side of the continent, sure does differ from country to another considering the individuality of each country, in terms policies and foreign strategies.

Except that in terms of tracing the Sino-North African affairs, from the start of the BRI, makes Morocco the most optimal choice because the latter was in fact the first North African country to sign the BRI implementation strategy in 5th of January 2022, the initiative has promised that cooperation will be strengthened in trade, investment, infrastructure, agriculture, energy, finance, science, education, technology, security, health, and research and development according to the official Moroccan government statement.

Hence, it being the North African country participating in the BRI for the longest time. So choosing Morocco as a first side of the two case studies to be compared helps a more prolonged tracing of the “so called” influence and consequences the thesis is trying to test out.

Why Angola?

In a region where China has had more exchanges than anywhere else, exchanges no only since the BRI but far longer than that.

However in terms of the BRI, the Sub-Saharan Region Angola is the chosen case study, for the reason that chronologically as well Angola was one the first countries to sign the agreement at the 2018 Form . Angola also is in the first place of the African loaners under the BRI project, Second World Wide after Pakistan.

The theoretical framework that will build the foundation of my thesis will be the

Neorealism Theory. Following The Neorealist assumption of state behavior I wish to follow and analyze my findings and put sense of the Chinese actions towards the African countries. In which the reference of the following core assumptions will take place: the neorealist conceptualization of priority of state goals, Emphasis on capabilities over intentions and the view on international cooperation.

The connection made of all the conceptual underpinnings mentioned above, is mainly in the purpose to break down " the world as it (actually) is ", in relation to China's involvement in one the most resource abundant continents through cooperative arrangements such as the infamous Belt and Road initiative.

The thesis research explored the different aspect of the current Sino-African Relations. Its main focus is to address the characteristics of the Chinese aid in Africa. In particular, under what aspects does the PRC give the funding's to the infrastructure? Why are the conditions that follow the Chinese aid? What does being part of the BRI imply on the economic independence of the participating countries? Moreover, the case studies used are for the purpose of highlighting the concentration of Chinese interest with the suggested regions of North or Sub-Saharan Africa.

Additionally, the thesis is concerned with whether the depth of the involvement implies any actual credibility to the suspicion that follow the BRI project.

The purpose of this research is to shed the light on one the most circling concepts lined to China's global projects to date, namely, " the debt trap diplomacy", specifically in African regions; which are considered regions often neglected and lacking behind compared to the other region harbors of developing countries of the world.

The Thesis Research will be structured as the following; first it will start with the introduction of the theoretical framework in relation of research question, secondly the next chapter will be a historical review of Africa's once prosperity leading to the its road of poverty portraying the reason of the stagnation of the countries compared to the Western countries. And finishing off with effect of the external intervention on the countries; namely the Sino-African Relations through presidential eras. Thirdly, The Belt and Road Initiative is introduced with its characteristics and different aspects, and projects which is considered the initiative that hold the numerous projects under one Global scaled strategy. Fourthly a Data analysis is done based on gathered research data on the taxonomy of the participating countries within the continent, the pattern of the most involved and the Biggest Loaners from the initiative's program, the concept of the debt trap diplomacy and some of the findings of the analysis of the contracts and loans terms, as well as the US' logic behind their opinionated response on the strategy.

Leading to the Last point with will be a comparative analysis between China in Angola and China in Morocco, highlighting the effect China's relations in two main case studies pre- BRI and Post-BRI implementation, through the following variables: GDP, and GDP per Capita, Internal Debt percentage and project Loans, Trade Value.

Last but not least, the limitations of this research an element that the mention of is mandatory. First is time limitations, in terms of the deadline dictated and adjoined with the Master program.

Another element that is necessary to mention is, that the countries are not necessarily representative of the regions, but are residents of the same region and have somewhat common patterns. Each country's individuality should not be dismissed. These can vary from technicalities of demography, geography and natural resources, other variations are in a sense; each state has its own policies and personal reasons to take certain actions.

The purpose of this analysis is to compare the patterns and common traits to come up with a generalized conclusion to where China is more involved and why.

Basing the research on 2 case studies, is of course not enough, however basing the research on all the countries will also not be 100% accurate. Because as it was mentioned before, internal affairs and motivations differ from country to country, that would in its place be a factor to the signing or decline of certain agreement with China, regardless of years of relations between the two parties involved.

So by doing this research, using the picked variable will allow us to create a closer and tangible comparison to at least measure the influence and concentration of China's finance and investments on the economic statistical level in one northern country and one sub-Saharan country.

Chapter 2

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Neorealism

In his book, “Explaining and Understanding International Relations Theories ”, Steve Smith states that “[...] To explain a watch we have to know how it wheels, springs and works, but the larger the system gets the harder it is to know how it (actually) works”. [1]

This is considered moderately the logical mechanism behind the international relations theoretical agendas. The international relations discipline was developed in the response to events and changes of the real world, for the international discourse to come up with accurate explanations to state behavior and war prevention. Within which the thesis distinguishes the neorealist theory; being one of the mainstream theories, and the one that is considerably aligned with the present thesis statement. It will use it to hold the following study together in the series of events that are going to be put in question, analyze and study in the next chapters.

This thesis will analyze the issue from a neorealist perspective rather than using other theoretical approaches because Kenneth Waltz is a prominent American political scientist who has explained international world politics much better than any other scholar in international relations discipline. His book *Man, the State and War* is one

[1]Burchill, S. Devetak, R., Linklater, A., Paterson, M., Reus-Smit, C., True, J. (2001) Theories of International Relations. London: Palgrave. – Chapter 3.

of his best known work has been well-cited all over the world.[2] He is particularly known for his systemic theory: neorealism[3].

According to Waltz, "The behaviors of states, the patterns of their interactions, and the outcomes their interactions produced had been repeated again and again through the centuries despite profound changes in the internal composition of states".[4] He contends that the "new realist" theory explains the reality much better because in contrast to the classical realist theory it starts "by proposing a solution to the problem of distinguishing factors internal to international political systems from those that are external."[5]

The neorealist theory depicts the international political system where it develops concepts' of system structure. In other words, neorealism is a structural realist theory that focuses on the role of the international system in shaping the behavior of states.[6]

The anarchic international system: Waltz argued that the international system is anarchic, meaning there is no global government to enforce rules or regulations. States must rely on their own power and resources to ensure their security and survival.

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[2] Waltz, K. (2001), *Man, the State and War,* Colombia University Press, New York.

[3] Waltz, K., Bull, H., and Butterfield, H. (1976) Theory of International Politics. New York: McGrawHill

[4] Waltz, "The Emerging Structures of International Politics", *International Security*, Fall, 1993, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Fall, 1993), p. 45.

[5] Waltz, "Realist thought and neorealist theory", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 44, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1990), p.124.

[6] Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4, The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars (Spring, 1988), pp. 615-628.

State as the primary actor: Waltz maintained that the state is the primary actor in international relations, and that other non-state actors, such as international organizations or multinational corporations, play only a secondary role.

National interest as the driving force: According to Waltz, states pursue their own self-interest or national interest as the primary motivation for their behavior in international relations.

The balance of power: Waltz emphasized the importance of the balance of power in maintaining stability in the international system. He believed that states will try to balance against potential threats to their security and survival by forming alliances or increasing their military capabilities. Waltz has come up with various assumptions such as:

The international system: Waltz argued that the structure of the international system, including the distribution of power among states, shapes state behavior. He maintained that the anarchic structure of the international system constrains state behavior and creates incentives for states to act in similar ways.

Naturally, based on this theoretical framework the thesis argues that can say that China is highly influenced by the Laws International System. The Structure of International System ; being anarchic at most, can give possible explanations to the PRC's power driven behavior in order to eventually exercise its potential dominance and compete with its competitors namely the US.

In a simple statement, Neorealism can be considered the theory that describes the world as it is it, not as it ought to be.

However, in a detailed statement, it is safe to say that Neorealism, or structural realism, puts classical realism on a more sophisticated and scientific footing, of that which once used to only focused on the “nature” factor of the human being, to explain state behavior. It furthers the previously mentioned assumptions and refutes some others. Mainly by the focus on the structure of international system, the theory being deductive and scientific, rather than normative, studies on systemic level of analysis— as a substitute to the individual level— , an understanding of anarchy, due to polarity and the classification of neorealist scholars as utility maximizers, rationalists and driven by material causes.

Some of the other core assumptions of the theory that the thesis mentions are fivefold and reside in the following:

The nature and consequence of anarchy

This mainly is highlighted in the realist acceptance and emphasis on the anarchic state of international relations. Neorealists believe that anarchy controls state behavior, sees the proposed solution of anarchy mitigation through institutions but an under-estimation of the great effects of anarchy.

Priority of state goals

State goals in the eyes of theories are usually related to their path to which their views are concentrated. In this case neorealist state goals are mainly concerned with issues of security[7]. This assumptions is obviously connected to the theory’s interpretation of state behavior.

[7] Kenneth Waltz, Ibid, p.8

Emphasis on capability over intentions

Contemporary neorealists emphasize capabilities more than intentions, in the sense that uncertainties about the future intentions and interests of others states lead statesmen to pay close attention to capabilities.

International cooperation

Neorealist scholars affirm the possibility of cooperation, however they constantly question and deny its occurrence. And even if it does occur it will be flared with rational injustice due to its dependence on the factor of power, making its persistence even more unlikely.

Relative gains

If we are to accept the claim that states act in accordance with their self-interest and perceive that their military power protects their interests, then we also have to deal with the issue of relative gain. That is, that neorealists tend to focus on "who will gain more?", rather on "how much will I gain"

This puts a different perspective on how the same results might be explained. Whereas Neorealists see states mainly motivated for maximizing their relative gains.

Another important concept of which the mention is mandatory, is Neorealism's conceptualization of power. It is impossible to study international relations without the recognition of power. Even outside of our framework, scholars still affirm the importance of power.

As Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall have so nicely expressed in their book entitled *Power in International Politics*[8].The neorealist assumptions will be utilized in this research while analyzing the research question.

"The failure to develop different conceptualizations of power limits the ability of IR scholars to understand how global outcomes are produced and how actors are enabled to determine their fate." Power in International Politics- Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall.

Moreover, Liberal Institutionalists, that some might argue are the polar opposite of realists, also mention the importance of power, in Robert Keohane's statement "Power should be checked in the fear of unchecked power" in his 2012 book, Twenty Years of Institutional liberalism[9]. Power's current status is not this way due to the scholars' continuous debate but rather to their awareness that power works in various forms and has various expressions that cannot be captured by a single formulation.

Simply put, in neorealists' point of view, power can be defined as the ability of actors to use resources to compel other actors to do something they normally wouldn't. Hence, it is safe to say that power states dominate world politics.

From this concept, a lot of other neorealist concepts see the light of day. For instance, this conceptualization directly links to the neorealist's believe in the long-lasting of a bipolar system, opposite to the other fragments of international polarity.

One of the logics behind this fixation is that neorealists argue that "dominance over

[8]Bannet, M. and Duvall, R. (2005) 'Power of international Politics'. (59, 1). pp. 39-75.

[9]Keohane, R. (2012) 'Twenty Years of Institutional Liberalism,' International Relations, 26:125-38

institutions or states by one of the actors generate oppositions by those who do not have the dominance.” The mention of this particular definition of power is rather necessary to understand the train of thought coming from here on out. The neorealist emphasis on the importance of power politics as the main motivator in the international relations between states gives meaning to our hypothesis and driven research question.

It is also important to note that realism has declined and reemerged a couple of times during the past years, between the end of the 1st world war, the start of the 2nd world war, the cold war period as well as the end of the cold war.

Except that to argument the reason of or this choice of theory in accordance of with my subject, can be justified by the present days’ series of events. Regardless of its previous declinations, neorealism sure fits the puzzles of the on-going scenario in 2022.

In the light of these recent occurrences, It is safe to say that neorealism has been thriving in terms of its accuracy in the explanation of the way states behave. This to mention the two marking events of the past three years: the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russo-Ukrainian war.

For instance, let’s briefly take the case of the pandemic period. By Underpinning neorealism and applying the theory to state behavior during this era, we notice the following phenomenon : Criticism of the role of the World Health Organization (WHO); that was accused for cowing to China during the pandemic, closure of international borders, international competition to collect pharmaceutical products, the ban on exports, richer states protecting their national interest, the international misuse of power during emergency orders, restrictions placed on the international media, as well as the deployment of military forces in some states. And I think in this sense, the case of the Russo-Ukrainian war is self-explanatory, in this sense.

The neorealists view states, not as atomistic in character, but as positional. Since states are naturally anxious about cheating, they primarily concern themselves with the ways they and their partners can benefit from cooperative arrangements. Such as, the China's ever so conveniently generous aid to the African continent. Namely under, the Belt and Road initiative, that shows China's immense ambition. China touts the fact that their foreign investment and aid is with no requirements on factors like the respect of human rights or democratic elections, as well as with no conditions or benefits to the People's Republic of China.

From another theoretical framework, this initiative's conditions would sound much more cooperative and in alignment with the principles of state behavior patterns. Except that from a neorealist point of view, this state behavior is not aligned with the given assumptions.

Evidently, China's claim has been refuted in a way that empirical evidence has shown that PRC had in fact political motives behind these initiatives by using these investments for national interest , putting our framework agenda on the right path that could be adapted for this choice of study.

In his article, Abdullah Alhammadi has linked China's and the US's external aid during the pandemic era with the neoliberal wave of explanation. While this attempts is undeniably more logical than any other, in the upcoming chapters of this paper sought to not only to analyze the actions but also the events following the said actions.

The connection made of all the conceptual underpinnings mentioned above, is mainly in the purpose to break down " the world as it (actually) is ", in relation of China's involvement in one the richest continents through cooperative arrangements such as the infamous Belt and Road initiative.

The indirect effect of China's Actions: Soft Power

From another perception, this scenario's indirect effects can be portrayed.

Directly the Neorealist theory seems be explaining that chia in the pursuit of its self-interest, it is known to take different actions, that might not be the best morally but beneficial to the country. As dictated by the International system;

The main assumption of Keohane's "After Hegemony"[10] is that the international system is not characterized by a single hegemonic power, but rather by a number of great powers that interact through complex networks of interdependence. Keohane argues that the neorealist assumption of a bipolar world dominated by two superpowers is inadequate to explain the complexities of the international system, and that the dominant power (or hegemon) does not have the ability to shape the international system in its own image.

Instead, Keohane argues that the international system is composed of a number of

[10]Keohane, O. R., (2005). After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in World Political Economy. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

actors that are interdependent, and that the behavior of these actors is shaped by complex bargaining processes, rather than by the relative distribution of power.

In "After Hegemony," Keohane introduces the concept of "complex interdependence[11]" to describe the intricate networks of interdependence that exist between actors in the international system. He argues that these networks create opportunities for cooperation and bargaining, and that they limit the ability of even the most powerful states to dictate outcomes in the international system. In short, the main assumption of "After Hegemony" is that the international system is composed of a number of great powers that interact through complex networks of interdependence, and that the behavior of these actors is shaped by bargaining processes, rather than by the distribution of power.

Simply put, Keohane accepted the neorealist premise that states are rational egoists but argued that the pursuit of self-interest can lead to cooperation. Too which the thesis relates China's Actions, in pursuits of it self- interest it is indirectly but effectively promoting globalization in it pursuits of Soft Power.

The conceptualization Soft Power, will be according to Joseph Nye[12]. In this context, Nye argues that a country's power can be based not only on its military and economic might (hard power), but also on its ability to attract and persuade others through its culture, political values, and institutions (soft power).

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[11]Robert Keohane, Ibid. pp.13

[12]Nye, J. (2005) "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics. New York City: PublicAffairs.

The key assumptions behind Nye's concept of soft power[13] are:

Attraction: A country's soft power is based on its ability to attract others to its ideas, values, and way of life. This means that people are drawn to the country and are more likely to follow its lead without coercion.

Cultural Appeal: A country's cultural appeal is a major source of its soft power. This includes its music, literature, art, and other cultural expressions that can be appreciated and enjoyed by people from other countries.

Institutions: A country's political and economic institutions, such as its government, universities, and NGOs, can also be sources of its soft power. People may be attracted to the way these institutions operate and the values they embody.

Values: A country's political values, such as democracy, human rights, and freedom, can also be a source of its soft power. People may be drawn to these values and seek to emulate them in their own countries.

This theoretical framework in the linkage to the subject in question, will help refute or confirm the proposed hypothesis.

[13] Nye. Ibid. pp.14

Chapter 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 The African Continent: Trade, Slavery, and Corruption

Europe is known for its progressive ideas and North America is seen as the land of opportunity, but Africa is unfortunately famous for its poverty. People often cite colonialism, foreign interference and corruption as the cause of this, but the real reasons why the region has yet to recover from its current struggles are usually overlooked. In this justification, one might notice the blatant normalization of the association of these reasons to Africa's state; in a way that all these given reasons ignore why this should happen in the first place.

Before we get into the main part of this thesis it is indispensable to put light on the state of the continent prior to what it is today, in the purpose of solidifying the belief in Africa's actual potential that is today but wasted. Commonly, it is tendency that rather than addressing more significant factors such as geography, climate, socioeconomic systems, political unity and leadership, most people attribute Africa's current problems to "colonialism or racism", which effectively removes our personal responsibility.

This part of the Chapter is going to be in the form of a tracing process. We look at the time where African countries were rich and powerful, to the time Africa lost its wealth, leading to reasons why it is been stuck since, in a period of stagnation in this poverty, whereas many countries that have endured the same faith once, have been able to make a fresh start for themselves and crawled back from the damages they once endured. This will help make sense of its position today in relations to the much-needed aid it receives from other states.

The start of the 14th century

The East African coast is an interface between the continental world of Africa and the maritime world of the Indian Ocean, and the monsoons provided a convenient wind system to link them. Littoral societies were best suited to collaborate economically, socially, and culturally with the other world, including intermarriage.

In a sense that at the time, the best part of the country had been successful in developing metallurgy, such as gold, that was commensurate with that of Europe and Asia alike, the example of the Swahili era:

Swahili or contemporary Era

The evidence of writings during this period goes back to the beginning of the Contemporary Era or the Swahili from the beginning of the second millennium when the linguistic unities were in the breach of forming and gradually taking place, to name the Bantu languages.

Moreover, the continuance success on the International trade department, followed by the gradual integration in the “Wider Indian Ocean World[14]” had helped these Bantu-speaking communities from Southern Somalia to Northern Mozambique, upgrade from villages and towns to city-states. The spoke in a language that and kept

[14]Sheriff, A. (2017) ‘The Swahili in the African and Indian Ocean Worlds to c. 1500’, Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.152.

on improving with the flow of interactions with Arabic, their Indian Ocean languages and literature. And at one point Swahili became cosmopolitan.

Figure 1: The Swahilian Coast
Source: The Swahili in the African and Indian Ocean Worlds to c. 1500

The African slave Markets

At one point, Slavery became Africa's main source of outcome. From the perspective of African rulers this seemed like a good deal: they were weakening their rivals while earning lots of money in the process. And so over time slavery changed from a small market where slaved had rights, into a large system of warfare where slaves became property to be sold to the highest bidder.

Statistically speaking, during this era 12.5 million captured men, women, and children were sent from the continent, and 10.7 million arrived in the Americas. This long-distance human migration is considered the costliest in human-life.

And later, in the 19th century, three major events happened that would solidify African poverty: the end of Slavery, the industrialization and Colonialism.

The end of slavery

The first was an end to slavery. Suddenly African slave traders were losing customers.

This was since the practice of slavery became prohibited everywhere else in the world. This was a big problem for Africans since their economies were heavily dependent on importing goods from abroad and exporting slaves. In other words, they had lost their main source of income.

Additionally, because of the slave trade, Africa had not developed any other industries, leaving it without a second source of income with which to conduct trade with other nations[15].

Consequently, many of the goods and tools that Africans relied on could no longer be

[15]Miers, S. (1988) *the End of Slavery in Africa.*Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.

purchased. This led to the slow collapse of African economies in the 19th century.

Industrialization

The second major event in the 19th century was industrialization. To Africa had become weak with little to offer the outside world and the outside world taking little interest in Africa.

So, Africa's economy is in decline, and Europe's economy is at its peak. Moreover, Europe, with the help of newly developed technology, gained the ability to transport vast amounts of heavy materials across oceans. But steam technology meant trains. And then the third major event happened in 1870s.

Colonialism

In the late 19^{th} century, it was in fact Belgium that triggered colonization in the continent, and later Western and Eastern countries followed. African countries were both weak and vulnerable at the time. This had three marking results on Africa: the increase in poverty, infrastructure, and the lack of leadership.

The increased poverty

European colonizers cared little for the people living in the colony, in the sense that Africans were driven out of the most fertile regions to make space for European settlers. Plantations were built for Africans to Work whereas property was owned by Europeans, and African taxes were rarely spent on improving their living conditions, but instead on continuing their own oppression.

The European colonizers were only interested in extracting wealth from their colonies, they built roads and railroads and ports to transport raw materials to Europe and North America.

Whatever wealth Africans had was systematically taken from them and handed over to European settlers. A good example would be the Congo Free State, where they worked millions of people to their deaths. To note that the “Free” in the naming basically meant “free of oversight” meaning a free pass for exploitation of the colony.

Infrastructure

In this context, I believe that Togo’s president‘s speech sums it up nicely enough:
In which he stated that the colonizer has exercised economic isolation between states and even city states, that proximity did not necessarily mean contact where he compared he could easily call Paris from his telephone but can not get a hold of Logos in Nigeria that is only 250 miles away all due to the designed infrastructure that sought to create a communication blockage.

Loss of leadership over the continent

And the third result was that by replacing all the African leaders with European leaders that Africa was losing vital skills in terms of governing themselves. And even after independence did not necessarily guarantee prosperity over the continent once more. Even though, history has shown us that colonialism was not reason for condemnation, Since African countries due to their ignorance in several fields were unable to keep up with other advancing countries.

3.2 Africa Today

3.2.1 Africa's Estimated Wealth

Despite, many struggles, the continent Total private wealth in Africa is currently worth 2.1$ trillion, according to the Africa Wealth Report 2022. Though the growth of total wealth was flat over the past decade, the rise of megacities and diverse new wealth-creation sources are expected to full wealth creation in coming years". It's mostly concentrated:

In North Africa, Morocco's the Total Private Wealth is estimated $55B, and Egypt's TPW is estimates $128B.

In South Africa, Abidjan the TPW is estimated $25B, Accra with $35B, and Lagos the hub of Africa's largest economy, is estimated at $97B, Luanda for $32B.

Two of Africa's wealthiest cities, Johannesburg and Cape Town, are both in South Africa. They have a combined wealth of $370 billion.

While wealth creation in Africa is a positive development, key questions remain around how much of that wealth will remain on the continent. If conflict and uncertainty and unfair intervention remain, wealth migration will continue to occur.

3.3 External Intervention in the Continent

Throughout COVID-19, power balances have shifted to the extent that some scholars are anticipating the emergence of a reformed world order.

The engagement of emerging powers in Africa that has not been subtle, it has been observed for some time now. Considering that there is no specific conceptualization of what an "emerging country" is, since the list of emerging countries had been a source of debate and disagreement.

The term generally indicates that some countries are increasingly participating in global affairs. This list has mostly been about countries in the global south under global politics.

Those who are known “to be in the process of increasing their political and economic weight faster than their predecessors, under the acronym of BRICS indicating: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.” [16]

Like Russia’s attempts to increase its footprints in the continent despite the competition from the US, Europe and China with the help of the Wagner Group, all the way through Libya, the Central African Republic, Sudan, Mozambique.

But what we are more concerned with currently is China’s involvement in the continent rather than other emerging countries.

In order to trace that we will look into some of the main historical periods in China's history should be introduced leading to the aid and intervention it is currently leading in Africa, be it southern or Northern countries.

3.4 Sino-African Ties Throughout the Years

China has had a long history of involvement with Africa, and from 1949 until 1990 they were more focused on their political relationships than economic ones, the involvement pace also varied from one era to another, this introduction will highlight

[16]Chegraoui, K., Lyammouri, R. & Skah, M. (2015) *‘ Policy Center for New South’* Emerging powers in Africa: Key Drivers, differing interests, and future perspectives. Rabat : Policy center, p.5.

the gradual evolution of the Chinese African relations.

For this purpose, we'll look at six phases of China's involvement in this second part of the chapter, starting with the pre-19th century up to the era of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and finally Xi Jinping. The effects of this involvement are still being seen today.

The pre-19 century until 1948

China's first real connection with Africa happened during the Ming Dynasty. After that, there was a long break in the relationship until Chinese workers and merchants started coming to Africa in the late 1700s. Once Sun Yat Sen got into power in 1912, he began to build official ties with South Africa, where a Chinese population had already grown. South Africa is still the country with the most Chinese people on the African continent.

The Republic of China had some contact with Liberia and the Chinese community in Madagascar while they were colonies. But because of trouble governing China, they couldn't do much in Africa.

Mao Zedong (1893-1976)

The Communists Party of China (COP) taking over in 1949 didn't lead to any major influence in Africa right away. Mao Zedong was mainly focused on making sure his power stayed in place. As African countries gained independence, China started becoming more practical in their dealings with Africa and scored a huge success in October 1971 when they got accepted into the UN. Along with, the mention is very important is one of China's most important of the communist leaders, Zhou Enlai.

This era has played a very important role in the African Chinese relations.

During his famous trip to Africa, and following the Bandung conference of 1955, he declared the five core principles that would serve as a guide for how China interacts with African and Arab countries. These principles have only been slightly adjusted since then and remain in effect today.

They include: “mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.” [17]

Deng Xiaoping (1978–92)

The evolution that took place during his era is the support of the “One China” [18]policy. Back in the 1970s, only 44 African countries supported Beijing's 'One China' policy. That number rose to 48 by the 1980s. From 1981 to 1989, an impressive 55 African presidents made the trip to China. This mainly due the high influence of economic assistance China provided at the time. Except that, China's economic advancement meant they had less money to give to Africa, so they couldn't offer the same amount of help. It needn't say that was not without consequences on the relations, since china was benefiting on its behalf as well.

Jiang Zemin (1992–2002)

During this time, China and Africa's diplomatic ties became stronger than ever

[17]Shinn, D. H. (2019) ‘China–Africa Ties in Historical Context’, Oqubay, A. & Lin, Y. (eds), *China-Africa and an Economic Transformation*. London: Oxford University Press, pp. 61–83.

[18]Shinn, D. H. (2019) ‘China–Africa Ties in Historical Context’, Oqubay, A. & Lin, Y. (eds), *China-Africa and an Economic Transformation*. London: Oxford University Press, pp. 61–83.

before, and there were countless Chinese officials visiting African countries. That, for instance, in 1996, Jiang Zemin made a trip to Kenya, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mali, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. And In 1989, China also deployed personnel to a UN peacekeeping mission for the first time.

Hu Jintao (2002-2012)

This period was characterized by Hu Jintao giving up power what resulted in a big win for Beijing’s One-China" policy, in a sense that only four African countries, naming Eswatini, Burkina Faso, Gambia, and São Tomé and Príncipe, were the remaining ones recognizing Taiwan.

Additionally, the second FOCAC meeting happened in 2003 in Addis Ababa, where about thirteen African leaders, and over seventy ministers from both Africa and China have joined. Additionally, nearly a hundred Chinese businessmen got together with African counterparts in a side session.

Xi Jinping (2012-Preesnt)

At the 6th FOCAC, China said they'd be giving African countries a $60 billion loan, trade, and aid package. Along with a condition of forgiving debt for the poorest African nations. Moreover, China also announced that it will be providing scholarships for African students coming to study in China By 2015, almost fifty thousand Africans were already studying in the in country.

Leading us to the present day’s Chinese president. During his China, Xi Jinping

[19]have Emphasized the following themes:

- Enhancing political mutual trust,
- Deepening cooperation in international affairs,
- Economic and trade cooperation,
- Expanding cultural and people-to-people exchanges,
- Promoting peace and security in Africa.

All these principles were encompassed under one main strategic plan, namely The Belt and Road Initiative. In his goals, the BRI has been directly aiming in the enhancement of its Soft Power that can be portrayed on the previous themes. These strategies and main goals can be on a significant influence on globalization and the expansion of China to be significant model in the global economic and political sphere.

Generally, other ways in which China is helping globalization through the BRI with other continents combined is through the following:

Promoting economic development: The BRI aims to promote economic development and growth in countries along the route by investing in infrastructure projects that connect them to global markets. These projects can create jobs and help to raise living standards in these countries.

Encouraging trade: By improving transportation and communication links, the BRI can facilitate trade between China and other countries, as well as between those

[19]Shinn, D. H. (2019) 'China–Africa Ties in Historical Context', Oqubay, A. & Lin, Y. (eds), *China-Africa and an Economic Transformation*. London: Oxford University Press, pp. 71–83.

countries themselves. This can lead to increased trade volumes and greater economic integration.

Increasing cultural exchange: The BRI is not just about infrastructure development; it also aims to increase cultural exchange and understanding between China and other countries. This can help to promote mutual respect and cooperation, as well as greater openness and tolerance.

Enhancing connectivity: The BRI seeks to enhance connectivity between countries, both physical and digital, which can help to bridge regional and global gaps and promote greater collaboration and cooperation.

Supporting sustainable development: The BRI includes a focus on promoting sustainable development and addressing environmental concerns. This includes investments in clean energy and green infrastructure, as well as initiatives to reduce carbon emissions and promote environmental protection.

Overall, the BRI represents China's efforts to promote globalization by building stronger economic and cultural ties with other countries and regions.

However, the initiative has also faced criticism and controversy in some countries, particularly over concerns about debt sustainability, transparency, and geopolitical implications.

Chapter4

THE BELT AND ROAD INTITATIVE

The Initiative's map of activity stretches from East Asia to Europe, which would help enhance China's economic and political influence. Except that the initiative is not actually original to the 21^{st} century. In fact, it can also be considered as an upgrade of an ancient existing trade route plan that took place centuries ago.

4.1 The Original Plan

4.1.1 The Ancient Silk Road

The Silk Road got its name from the Chinese silk that was moved along the trade routes. Improvements in technology and more secure political systems meant more trading happening.

The Silk Road Plan is an ambitious project that aims to revive the ancient trade route between Asia and Europe. Moreover, the plan was a pivotal trade route that connected China, the Middle East, Central Asia, and Europe from 200 BCE to 600 CE. The route consisted of a series of trade routes and caravan stations spread across thousands of miles. In fact, as more trading paths were opened, merchants used these routes to transport precious commodities goods such as spices, and concepts, also unwanted exports were made with the human contact that took place at the time as well as diseases.

Over the past centuries, however, the Silk Road has suffered from decay because of wars and political instability in the region. Namely, some of the obstacles the Route encountered would be that the bad effect the Crusades and Mongolian had on trade, resulting in the economic isolation of the current Central Asian countries in aspects such as that only an average of 6.2 percent of their cross-border business exclusive to each other.

However, there have been efforts to revive the ancient trade routes and restore their significance for international trade.

In this context, the Silk Road project plans to establish new trade corridors and reinvigorate economic activity along the route by facilitating the flow of goods and services between various parts of the world. The project is being spearheaded by the Chinese government. Notably, the project has received significant support from the international community. And the first phase of the updated plan was launched in 2013.

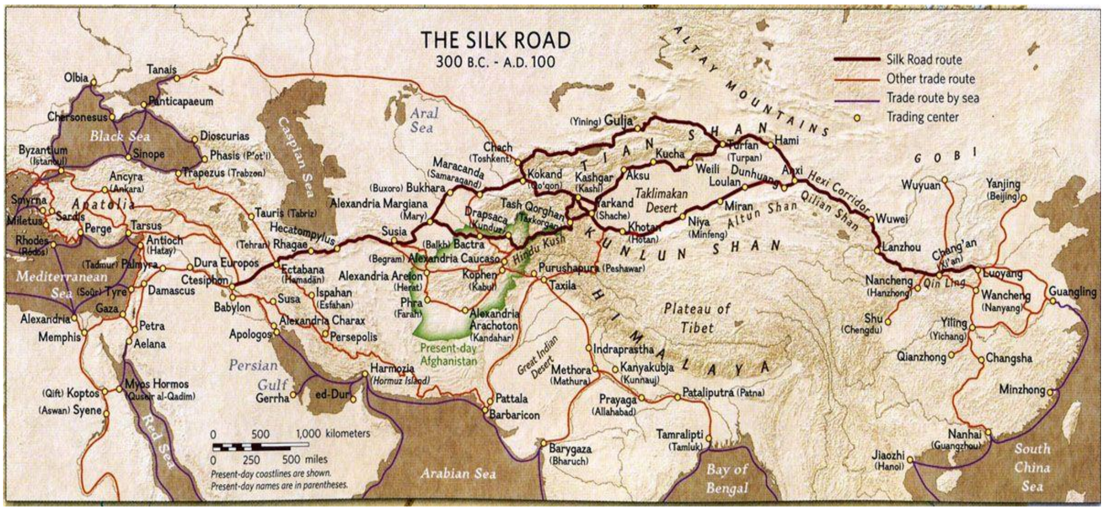


Figure 2: The Ancient Silk Road Routes
Source: https://www.chinadiscovery.com/

4.2 The New Silk Road: The Belt and Road Initiative

Launched in 2013, following the announcement of President Xi Jinping during his official visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia, as “one belt, on road”[20] (一带一路).

Estimated to cost an approximate amount of $4 trillion, in a way that China is spending roughly $150bn a year in the 68 countries that have signed up to the scheme. However, with time more than eighty countries are known to participate, the plan is responsible for 36%, and by 2040 it is expected to boost the Global GDP by 7$ trillion per annum.

The Belt and Road

The naming of the initiative is self-explanatory of what the initiative is mainly about.

The Belt

On one hand, the Belt element refers to the Silk Road Economic Belt, which is considered the update of the old Silk Road. Referring mainly to the trading routes and rail transportation linking Asia and Europe. Hence, we can assume that Central Asia is the main part of the Belt. The roads traverse through central Asia along the western regions.

The Road

On the other hand, the Road is short for the Maritime Silk Road. It’s considered the new element in the suggested plan. In 2014, Xi Jinping’s vision is mainly in relation to his wanting to create a trade route, more beneficial and convenient to the country; mainly under two main criteria:

[20]Haralambides, H. and Merk, O. (2020) ‘ The Belt and Road Initiative: Impacts on Global Maritime Trade Flows’, International Transport Forum Discussion Papers.

The first route would be avoiding the Malacca Strait., while the second is portrayed in establishing a trade infrastructure along the old Marco Polo route, in form of a new sea trade plan.

Additionally, the road is set to have different infrastructure ranging from bridges, Ports, fueling stations, etc. The planning of the Belt and Road is designed to conveniently pass by the major economic corridors Of China's relations, the two following Maps indicated the mainland and Sea corridors as well as the economic corridors that the Belt and Road cross.

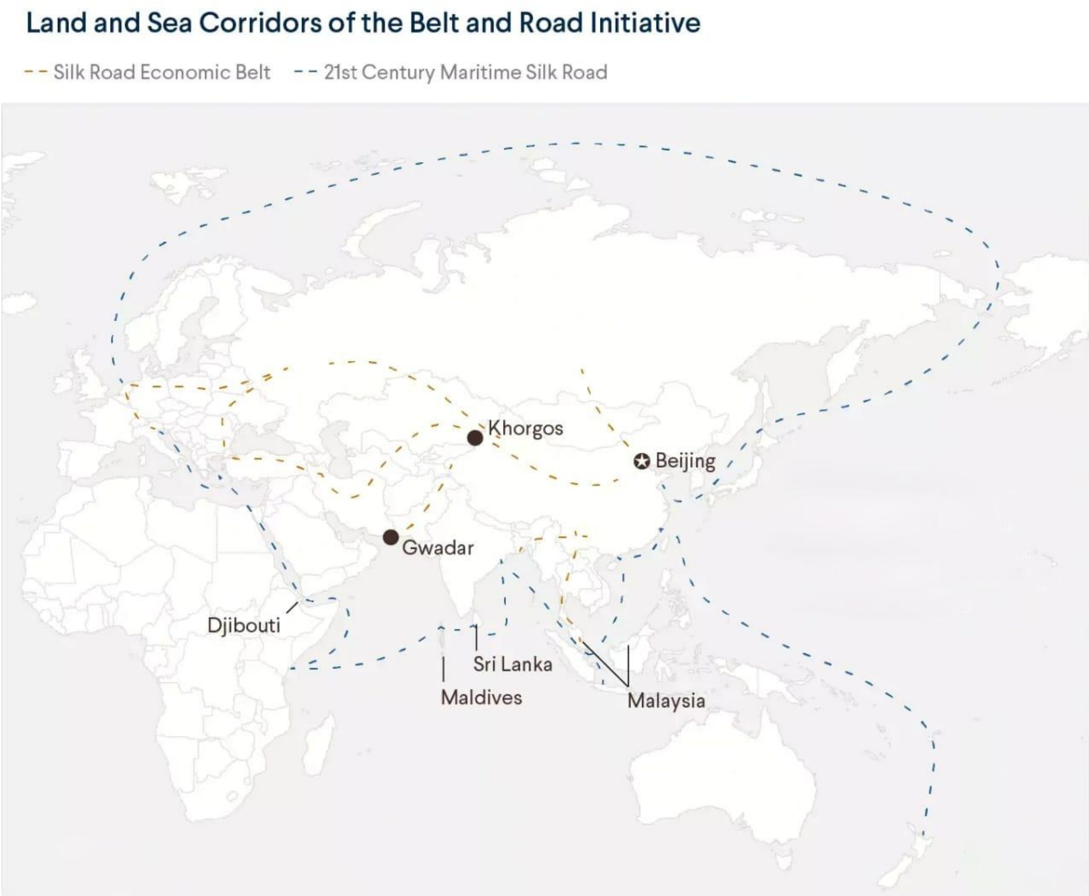


Figure 3: Land and Sea Corridors of the Belt and Road Inititative
Source: Council of Foreign Relations- Mercator Institute of China Studies [21]

[21]Council of Foreign Relations- Mercator Institute of China Studies

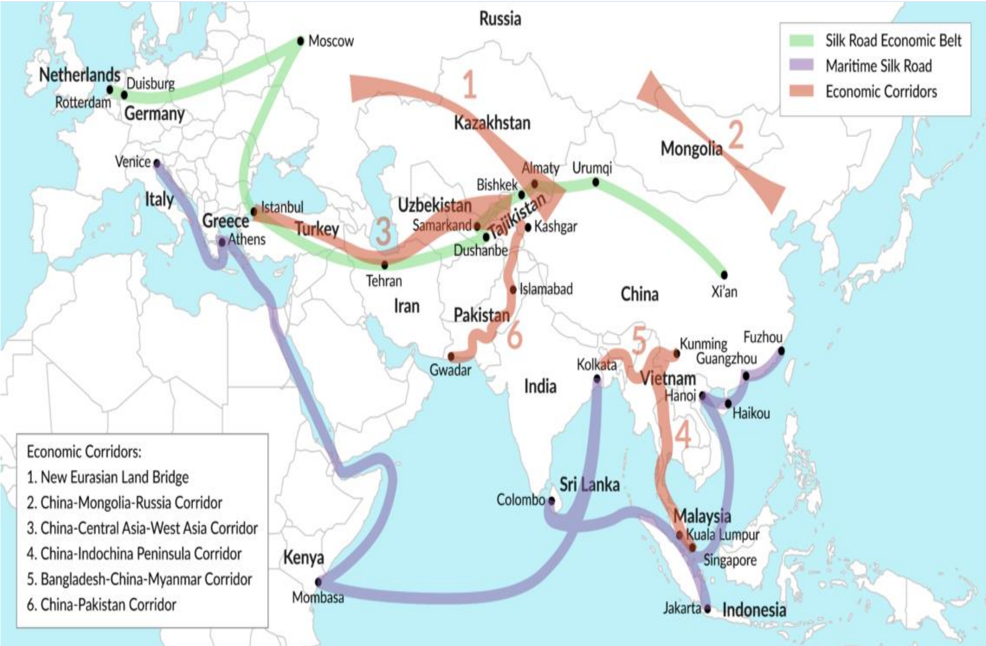


Figure 4: The Silk Road Economic Belt, The Maritime Silk Road, and the China-related Economic Corridors
Source: https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/belt-road-initiative-dangers/[22]

4.2.1 China's Goals through the BRI Project

There are three main motivations during the initiative connected to the following presented goals:

The first motivation is related to the sea road through the Malacca Strait route through which the majority of Chinese international trade passes, seeing that the road passes by a US ally. From this, the initiative aims to create a more convenient, independent trade route for Chinese International Trade affairs also creating an economic interdependence with the participating nations.

Moreover, the Second is considered an aid response to the victims and economical damage that the 2008 Crisis created, and at the same time conveniencing China in the

[22]Chaudhuri, P. P. (2019) 'India nudges China toward Belt and Road changes', GIS Reports, 4 January. Available at: https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/belt-road-initiative-dangers/ (Accessed: 5 February 2023).

provision of an alternative market for its companies beyond the country's borders.

Lastly, the third motivation would be for the purpose to stimulate the Chinese lacking businesses; in particular, for those located in the central regions' provinces which performance is judged poorly compared to those in the Coastal areas.

Through the funding part of the Initiative China is attempting to, by investing in infrastructure, Beijing aims:

- Among China's massive foreign exchange reserves are low-interest-bearing securities, which need a more profitable home.
- To provide Chinese companies with new markets (e.g. high speed rail)
- For Cement, steel, and other metals from the country can be exported.

Moreover, by investing in a more volatile countries in central Asia; Xi Jinping is convinced he can create a more stable neighborhood for China's own restive western provinces of Xinjiang and Tibet[23]. Additionally, by encouraging more Chinese projects around the South China Sea, which a given since the BRI refers to sea lanes.

4.2.2 Participating Countries

According to the Green Finance and development center[24], as of 2022 in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the number of countries participating in the BRI are of 147 country that range in the following taxonomy:

Six South Asian countries, twenty from Latin America and the Caribbean, eighteen from the Middle East and North Africa, thirty-five from Europe and Central Asia,

[23]McBride, J., Berman, N. and Chatzky, A. (2023) 'China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative', Council on Foreign Relations

[24]Nedopil, C. (2022): "Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative"; Shanghai, Green Finance &Development Center, Shanghai: FISF Fudan University, Available at : www.greenfdc.org

twenty-five from East Asia and the Pacific and forty-three from Sub-Saharan Africa.

Moreover, the countries' income can be divided in four categories with; 34 with high Income, 42 with an Upper middle income, 41 with a lower middle income, and 30 with low income.

4.2.3 Some of BRI Projects and Corridors

- Agua Negra Pass international tunnel
- Baku-Tbilisi-Kars new railway line and Alyat free economic zone in Baku
- China-Indochina Peninsula economic corridor, including Laos-China economic corridor
- Eastern economic corridor in Thailand
- Economic corridor in Greater Mekong subregion
- European Union (EU) Trans-European transport networks
- Europe-Caucasus-Asia international transport corridor an
- d TransCaspian international transport route
- Industrial park Great Stone
- International North-South transport corridor (INSTC)
- Lake Victoria-Mediterranean sea navigation line-linkage project 21. Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia transport corridor
- Malaysia-China Kuantan industrial park
- Nepal-China Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional connectivity Network, including Nepal-China cross-border railway
- New Eurasian land bridge
- Northern corridor trade route in Africa linking the maritime port of Mombasa to countries of the Great Lakes region of Africa and Trans-Africa highway 27.

North-South Passage Cairo-Cape Town passway

- Port of Piraeus
- Transcontinental shipment of cargo using the capacities of the Northern sea route
- “Two corridors and one belt” framework

4.2.4 Project sectors by number of Projects

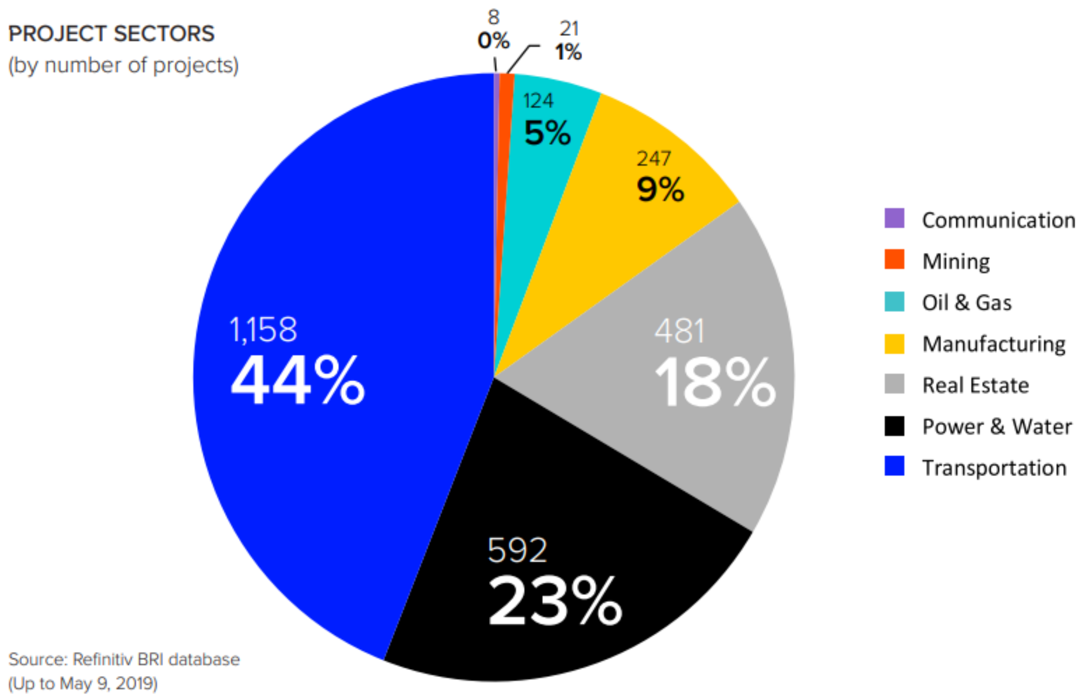


Figure 5: Project Sectors by Number of Projects
Source: Refinitive BRI database (Up to May 9th)

Chapter 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 The Belt and Road Initiative in Africa

5.1.1 Participating countries in Africa

The total of participating countries from the African continent adds up to 50 countries, which the most involved continent in the cadre of the initiative to date representing 34.01% of the countries' total located in Africa only.

The range of income concerning the mentioned above African countries are gathered in the following table:

COUNTRY	REGION	INCOME
Algeria	Middle East and North Africa	Upper Middle Income
Angola	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower Middle Income
Bahrain	North Africa	High Income
Botswana	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper Middle Income
Burundi	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Cabo Verde	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
Cameroon	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income

Chad	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Comoros	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper Middle Income
Congo, Dem. Rep.	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Congo, Rep.	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper Middle Income
Côte d'Ivoire	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
Djibouti	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
Egypt, Arab Rep.	North Africa	Lower middle income
Equatorial Guinea	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper Middle Income
Eritrea	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Ethiopia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Gabon	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper Middle Income
Gambia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Ghana	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
Guinea	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Guinea-Bissau	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Kenya	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
Lesotho	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income

Liberia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Libya	North Africa	Upper Middle Income
Madagascar	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Malawi	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Mali	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Mauritania	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
Morocco	North Africa	Lower middle income
Mozambique	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Namibia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper Middle Income
Niger*	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Nigeria	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
Rwanda	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Senegal	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Seychelles	Sub-Saharan Africa	High Income
Sierra Leone	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Somalia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
South Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper Middle Income

South Sudan	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Sudan	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income
Tanzania	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Togo	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Tunisia	North Africa	Lowe Middle Income
Uganda	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low Income
Zambia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower Middle income
Zimbabwe	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower Income

Figure 6: Income Group of African Countries in the BRI
Source: https://greenfdc.org/countries-of-the-belt-and-road-initiative-bri/?cookie-state-change=1673895891805[25]

From this table we observe that the 2 countries out of 50 from those participating in the Initiative are of High income; that is 4% of the total.

The results are not so much of shocking, if we consider the fact that these countries of low-income are the ones with the most need of help rather than those of high income.

This scenario is passable in the case of the countries approaching PRC for negotiations to participate in the big “charitable” event that China holds.

However, from another point of view we can speculate that the scenario and

[25] Green FDC. Ibid, pp.34

understanding of the out-come depends completely on who reaches out to who. In that term, China has in fact, regardless of the suspicions and speculations that follows its actions been a big of a help to Africa in enhancing the pace of countries' economies.

5.1.2 BRI Funded Projects in Africa

It has been reported that China has generously funded a big amount of project in the continent that were of a significant surplus to PRC than to the project destinations. Some of the major projects can be the following:

In Egypt, the US$1.03 billion that Egypt borrowed from China to finance infrastructure projects. One of the inevitable consequences of the projects that it strengthened the diplomatic between Egypt and China. Also followed by china deploying an approximate number of 1900 workers to work in those projects.

In Djibouti, the BRI loans has helped the construction of the Addis Ababa–Djibouti Railway and Ethiopia-Djibouti Water Pipeline. Also followed by China benefiting from the already established military base in Djibouti, that portray its global naval presence. Its BRI projects include:

- A major port
- A new railway line to Ethiopian Capital
- A Gas pipeline

Additionally, China's put up around 14$ billion in investments and loans for Djibouti in 2012-2020.As well as, the Port Sudan-Ethiopia railway connectivity, and many others.

5.2 Debt Trap Diplomacy

When one wants to make a certain decision, the logical, thing to do is to search up what people before you that took the same decision have, positively or negatively affected them, you measure your chances, then make a calculated conclusion. This is sort of how this part of the Chapter is built.

The BRI is not fully implemented in Africa as it is in Asia. In Asian countries and some of the African countries, the aftermath of the said funding that China gave in the name of the BRI have propped certain controversies that raises eyebrows.

So the question is, if Asian countries are suffering from certain controversial outcomes, what stops lower income desperate African countries, hat are newly implemented under the Chinese agenda with a tendency to follow the same path, from reaching the same destinations?

The Belt and Road initiative has an on-going rule of continuously adding-up projects, states and plans under it. In a nutshell, the BRI is a big scale project, with a huge budget and ambiguous but charitable plans along with low-to-no interest loans given to the implemented countries. Some might say that China is a saint trying to create paradise on earth.

However, since there is evidently no such thing as charity in politics, inevitably the project sparked talked about controversy. Some of which are not so inaccurate from the occurring actions.

A lot of the controversy and debate about the Initiative have been linked the so called

Chinese "Debt trap diplomacy[26]". The states were divided between those that feared being trapped under it (e.g. India being wary of the Initiative and explicitly stating its disagreement of China's actions, and the Chinese military base in Djibouti adds up to that stress) and those who felt threatened by the power it might give China (e.g. the United States (U.S.) that also felt threatened and even tried to create her own version of the Belt and Road Initiative, under the acronym of the B3W, signifying Build Back Better World strategy, which in fact was not that successful).

This data analysis, I do not aim to victimize an end over the other; the developing world has agency and can decide for itself how it wants to engage in terms of development agenda, but to simply and objectively study the multiple factors in these debt mechanisms that do in fact seem ambiguous in the international relations as we know them.

What is the Debt Trap Diplomacy?

The term basically entails that China lures its loaners into a trap, in order to gain a part of its sovereign territory.

The "Debt Trap" can be summarized under 3 phases:

Step One: China approached a country with an irresistible offer, the latter cannot deny.

Step two: The project, inevitably, fails putting the country in a situation of debt distress. (e.g., Sri Lanka's empty airport, Kenya's leading nowhere road, Kyrgyzstan's Oil refinery that runs at just 6% of its capacity)

[26]Ones, L. and Hameiri, S. (2020) 'Debunking the myth of 'debt-trap diplomacy': how recipient countries shape Chian's Belt and Road Initiative'. London: Chatham House

<u>Step Three</u>: China, so generously, forgives the loan. In exchange of a little piece of the country's territory.

The justification of this is actually reliant on two main events that took place:
The first is **Sri Lanka's Hambantota's Port** that basically claims that, the loans compromised Sri Lanka's sovereignty. New York Times said "This case is one of the most vivid examples of China's ambitious use of loans and aid to gain influence around the world and its willingness to play hardball".

In short, the claim is that Sri Lanka took out a $300 million loan in 2008 from China. Sri Lanka falls into debt distress for not being able to pay the Loan. China then brings a new contract, with the condition of forgiving the loan in exchange of gaining property of same port in 2017, for the next 99 years. The course of events, sure does appear to be a clear-cut case of "debt-trap diplomacy".

The Second is China's feared naval presence emphasizes in its **Military Base in Djibouti.**

Furthermore, China has only one overseas military base — in Djibouti, on the Horn of Africa, and the deployment of forces in the base since 2008 has raised suspicions.

Findings: Context of Sri Lanka and Djibouti Military Base

- **Context of Sri Lanka's Hambantota's port:**
- China was not even Sri Lanka's largest source of debt — actually it owed more to the Asian Development Bank, Japan, and the World Bank. ***(China 10%).***

- In External Overseas payments, Sri Lanka is burdened with, only 5% is related to the Hambantota port. The biggest burden is the crushing Sovereign Bonds Sri Lanka issued at 8% interest rate. This one compromises 40% of their external Debt Burden. Totally unrelated to China.

- The official document issued by the Government of Sri Lanka in December, 2002 under " the gaining SRI LANAKA : Vision and Strategy for Accelerated Development plan", proved that The Sri Lanka's government had been considering the project for decades before it approached China, as Part II : Poverty Reduction Strategy, in its forth point shows. In fact, it had asked both India and the USA to build the port.

- In 2004, it suffered a devastating tsunami, which contributed to a decline in exports. This, in turn, led to a "balance of trade" problem. In short, because it was importing more than it was exporting, it ran out of US Dollars, which it needed to make payments on its loans.

- Post debt-distress, the Chinese company paid $1.1 billion for a 70% stake of a 99-year lease. No debt was forgiven in the process and the money was used to pay off other loans from other countries. Neither will it gain a new military base at least, not, as the lease dictates, without Sri Lanka's explicit permission.

Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

Preface From The Prime Minister

Regaining Sri Lanka

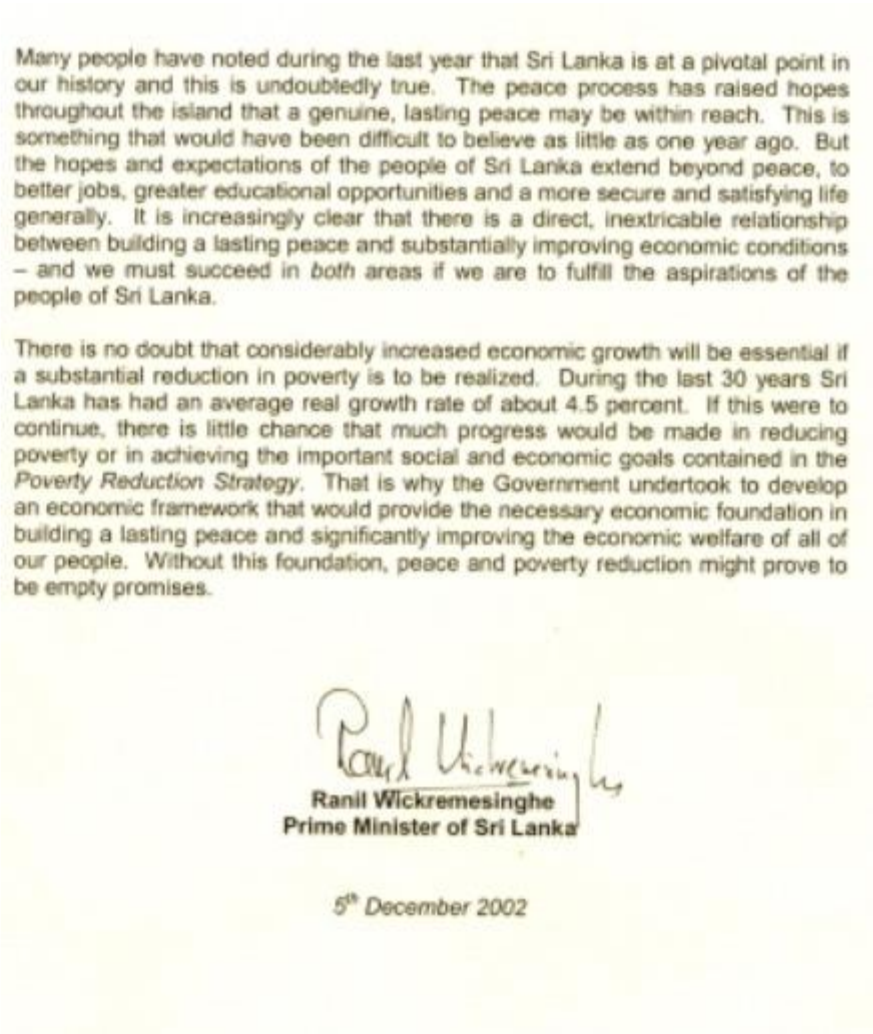
The most important determinants of the high incidence of poverty in Sri Lanka today have been the war that has raged for two decades and a legacy of poor economic management. This Government is fully committed to overcoming both of these challenges and building a country that is at peace and that provides the social and economic opportunities necessary for all of its citizens to meet their needs and lead fulfilling lives.

The poor economic management in the past has to a large extent been the result of the inability to effectively implement change. We have known for a long time what steps were needed to improve economic performance – but too often these steps were not taken. Sri Lanka began the process of liberalization and reform in 1977, seeking to reverse a regime of nearly total state control of the economy and near universal deprivation. This process began well and produced good results, but over time it has lost its momentum, reaching the point where last year Sri Lanka experienced its first serious economic contraction and we found ourselves nearly buried under a rapidly expanding public debt.

Regaining Sri Lanka brings together several important and complementary elements of the Government's economic program:

- Part I presents the framework for economic reform developed during the Government's first year in office. It is based on the work of a large group of people, drawn from both the private and public sectors, and largely focuses on the immediate actions necessary and particularly on the challenges of effective implementation.
- Part II presents the *Poverty Reduction Strategy*, which was developed over the course of the last four years with the participation and consultation with stakeholders and interested groups. The PRS provides a somewhat broader, medium-term perspective that also addresses in greater depth the critical actions required in key areas.
- Part III includes a fully integrated *Action Plan* following from Parts I and II.

Figure 7: Regaining Sri Lanka: Vision and Strategy for Accelerated Development
Source**:** Official Document by Sri Lanka government publishes 2002 Planning



Many people have noted during the last year that Sri Lanka is at a pivotal point in our history and this is undoubtedly true. The peace process has raised hopes throughout the island that a genuine, lasting peace may be within reach. This is something that would have been difficult to believe as little as one year ago. But the hopes and expectations of the people of Sri Lanka extend beyond peace, to better jobs, greater educational opportunities and a more secure and satisfying life generally. It is increasingly clear that there is a direct, inextricable relationship between building a lasting peace and substantially improving economic conditions – and we must succeed in *both* areas if we are to fulfill the aspirations of the people of Sri Lanka.

There is no doubt that considerably increased economic growth will be essential if a substantial reduction in poverty is to be realized. During the last 30 years Sri Lanka has had an average real growth rate of about 4.5 percent. If this were to continue, there is little chance that much progress would be made in reducing poverty or in achieving the important social and economic goals contained in the *Poverty Reduction Strategy*. That is why the Government undertook to develop an economic framework that would provide the necessary economic foundation in building a lasting peace and significantly improving the economic welfare of all of our people. Without this foundation, peace and poverty reduction might prove to be empty promises.

Ranil Wickremesinghe
Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

5th December 2002

Figure 8: Regaining Sri Lanka: Vision and Strategy for Accelerated Development Plan
Source: Official Document by Sri Lankan government publishes 2002 Planning

Context of Djibouti

In Djibouti, in 2015, China built its first and currently only overseas military base. But so has Germany, Spain, France, the U.K, Saudi Arabia and the U.S.

Its colonial history is long and complicated. But the simple version is that, in place of natural resources, Djibouti has access to a 18-mile wide chokepoint between the Red Sea and Indian Ocean.

Its leaders have used this fact for all its worth by renting land to almost any military willing to pay.

5.3 Findings

In this Chapter, I tried to analyze the Chinese debts and lending mechanisms African countries, in order to understand the Chinese viewpoint in this regard.

Despite fears that China controls the strategic assets of debtor countries through its debt, there is no evidence to support those fears. However, China has recently acquired a share in projects that it is directly involved in the ownership of.

China's loan contracts for foreign aid projects included the following terms and conditions as most prominent:

"If there is any difficulty in repaying the debt on time, the repayment period can be extended after consulting with the Chinese government"

In the contracts of a number of loans to countries such as Nigeria and Kenya, it is noted that there has been extensive use of the term **"waiver of sovereign immunity"** [27]The waiver clause basically dictates that China requires of **"sovereign immunity"** allows a country to be sued in a foreign court or to be subject to International Arbitration.

Moreover, when reviewing many Chinese loan contracts, most of them contain language on waiver of sovereign immunity in relation to arbitration and enforcement. But a significant lack of what is known as **"expropriation of sovereign assets"** by China, as a result of default, whether in Africa or globally.

[27]The 2018 Nigerian National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Infrastructure Backbone Phase II project

Additionally, it is important to mention that the influence of China is not only through any debt distress; what China also gets from these projects is not just geopolitical power or exercise of economic interdependence but through its diplomatic gestures it exercises another form of influence, in the impact on the people and leaders of the country. (i.e.: *Chairman Xi Jinping visits Senegal one of the continent poorest nations. China gains more valuable through intangible*).

Dismissing the Debt trap narrative one still acknowledge the risks that follow the Chinese investments in Africa. From another angle, one cannot help but notice some of the strategic locations of some of the funded projects in Africa by China. For example some of the projects being inclusive of Chinese industrial zone in the Gulf Suez and plans of funding and infrastructure in the Western Sahara region, etc.

One of the Tactics that Beijing uses is it approaches the issue that took place with a " charitable" "want to help" initiative, then after it is studied it shows that it in fact is beneficial to China as well. This does not necessarily make China evil nor benevolent, it makes it an opportunist state, which theoretically speaking makes perfect sense if we take under consideration the concept of power.

Neorealism does not deny mutual gain, it just says that there is no charity cooperation, rather a taking and giving process and sometimes what one takes can be graver than what is given hence, relative gain.

All that being said, we can notice four main common patterns in most the Chinese investments in Africa:

Firstly**, Corruption**, some of the African countries that are known to be heavily corrupted and China seems often ready to pay that fine if it means it will get the job done. e.g. the controversy of Hambantota Port that launched in 2010 in the Birthday of Sri Lanka's President, showing his personal engagement and association).

Especially since there is so much secrecy surrounding most of these BRI deals.

Unfortunately, a lot of these countries, it becomes a political situation where people are putting projects where it suits them politically.

If you looked at the list of projects, given in terms of who is in power, you will recognize that there is a connection. In other words, its politicians making these decisions, and deals.

Second can be**, labor immigration**, some of the projects claim to provide not just low-interest funding but also state that some of the advantages of these projects can be factors of the increase labor opportunities of the civilians, meaning more work done equals more employees needed.

However, it has been a noticeable phenomenon, that more often than never, if a project takes place; China tends to send a significant number of Chinese workers to the site (e.g. in Egypt, the deployment of 1900 Chinese employer in the project sites) a noticed phenomenon that follow this labor immigration is that the salary criteria give too locals tend to be lower than that of the Chinese workers. In a way, it can be a creation of a Chinese zone.

In terms of ordinary people that are aware of these projects that are also losing hope:

In Sri Lanka, one citizen stated "This process will dispose of those born in Hambantota of their lands".

Third can be, **the strategic Location of the sites** that china could easily get the upper hand from: the strategic location of the Hambantota Port in regards to India and the Colombia port, Egypt's administrative landmark for China).

From one point of view, China can easily persuade other "Smaller countries" into deals that can be tempting and somehow beneficial, but not necessarily advantageous.

Simply put; either they are in desperate need of loans, easily persuaded or just carefree.

Forth is **debt distress,** We have established the contextual facts of what is going on , but that does not eliminate the risks of a debt distress,, seeing that no one can predict what may happen in the future. Because there are cases in which the countries were considered taking too much debt.

Example of Djibouti: it is now facing what the WB calls "Debt distress": a debt to china to 70% of its GDP, Angola owing 40% of its external debt to China, Uganda with 32% of its external debt, as well Sri Lanka was in fact in a situation of debt distress that it led the state to give up its port. This does not signify a debt trap, but debt distress is a critical area of vulnerability, that can lead to unexpected outcomes.

5.4 The Odious Debt Principle

Neorealist mindset, entails us to stay wary and keep an eye out. Aside from the fact that the concept of Debt trap might actually have any truth to it that would, or whether the given options might cause an unknown disadvantage at one point of time is still and will remain foreign to the state.

In the fear to suffer the fate of the Hambantota port takeover for a good time of 99 years in favor of the Chinese government, even though the Chinese government have officially stated that no military base will take place without Sri Lanka's full and explicit consent, except that who is to say that China will honor that deal.

This fact of course has prompted suspicion and fear in neighboring and powerless countries. In avoidance of the same fate, it can be suggested for African countries to adopt the: the 2007-documented Odious Principle under the UN, as an alternative to debt-to-debt principle.

What is the Odious Debt Principle?

The debt being officially adopted in 2007 by the international court.

Basically dictated that a debt's obligations are odious and should not be enforced in the following three cases, if:

- they were not approved by the people;
- they did not benefit the people; and the lender knew, or should have known,
- That the people disagreed and disapproved to it or the debt was not of a help to them.

This three-part Sack definition quickly became the standard way of examining odious debt. It's a great theory, but it has one big problem: money is interchangeable. A loan taken for a good reason can still let the government use money for something bad. The other option is looking at the corruptness of the government itself, instead of examining each loan on its own.

Nevertheless it can still be a good way of avoiding a possible speculated "Debt trap" if there ever will be one.

The US response

In a course of who is more powerful than who, China and the US seem to be on the lead of the 1st and 2nd place. In fact, as mentioned in the previous chapter, one of the main motivations of creating the BRI, is for China to create its own trade routes away from US allies'. The distinct but subtle Chinese footprint spreading all over the African continent will of course create US opposition as the latter would feel threatened.

This success has got Western powers, especially the US paying more attention.

At the G7 summit they set out their own plan to complete with its own abbreviation B3W; Build back better world. In which, they are emphasizing things like transparency, good governance, and environment bringing in the private sector to help fund it all. (*The G7 Summit has been designed in a manner that has the major powers of the west, discussing the "right" alternative way to give loans and infrastructure plans)*.

But the B3W is thin on details. There is no budget and there is no timetable.

Moreover, in this new program, I cannot see anything that they have identified which is not already being done by the World Bank, the IMF, the Asian development Bank or the other investment banks. The main focus of this is posed on values.

However, particularly when talking about funds and the actual capability of building infrastructures, that’s a whole other story. The US can say: “well, we’ll offer better terms and we’re nicer guys, as well as ideologically preferable, but I don’t know what that means if you build roads. A road is a road: as long as the quality and the price is right”. The belt and road initiative is about China’s position in the world, it is a strategy for China’s to outshine everyone else.

However, the race between two superpowers is not the issue, the issue is who is caught up in the middle, and Arica is not an end for China but rather a mean to an end. Eventually create a bigger market, economic interdependence, geopolitical power and word trade dominance. Hence, being more powerful in the face of its allies.

Chapter 6

THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In this Chapter, the conceptualization of Africa as a continent , will be divided into two main regions , in which and according to the research conducted, is the division of the participants in the BRI project, vis-à-vis the following : the northern region and the Sub-Saharan Region.

Hence, this conceptualization will help, in this part of my thesis research, highlight the concentration of the Chinese activity in reference of the regions, by selecting and comparing the two case studies from each region.

The chronological frame of this analysis will be from the start of the BRI project implementation and the signing of the said implementations by the countries chosen until the present day. In other words, the data gathered will be in reference of the Belt and Road Initiative implementation in the country, the previous projects before the announcement of signing on the BRI implementation strategy will only additionally include 2021 in the results of this analysis.

Whereas, the area of involvement studied will be on the economic level. In other words, the comparison will be done on an economic framework. In which, I will be highlighting how deep the Chinese economic interdependence that China possibly exercises of the chosen countries is, for three main purposes:

1. To showcase where is China more active in the continent

2. To interpret a pattern of the said behavior, and eventually a limited explanation to why is China more active in the said regions more than others.
3. To test out how a country that just signed the BRI implementation is different than one that has been implemented in the Initiative 3 years earlier, in terms of trade, level of investment and debt
4. Finally to test out the consequences of this Chinese activity on the countries' economic growth and whether it has any potential influence on the latter

Limitations of the research

One thing the mention of is mandatory is that the countries are not necessarily representative of the regions, but are residents of the same region and have somewhat common patterns. Each country's individuality should not be dismissed. These can vary from technicalities of demography, geography and natural resources, other variations are in a sense; each state has its own policies and personal reasons to take certain actions. The purpose of this analysis is to compare the patterns and common traits to come up with a generalized conclusion to where China is more involved and why.

Basing the research on 2 case studies, is of course not enough, however basing the research on all the countries will also not be 100% accurate. Because as it was mentioned before, internal affairs and motivations differ from country to country, that would in its place be a factor to the signing or decline of certain agreement with China, regardless of years of relations between the two parties involved.

So by doing this research, , using the picked variable will allow us to create a closer and tangible comparison to at least measure the influence and concentration of

China’s finance and investments on the economic statistical level in one northern country and one sub-Saharan country.

Lastly, this analysis will be based on the two case studies of Morocco and Angola however other statistics of other countries will be mentioned along the way using the common thread of them being residents of the same region.

The variables for the comparative analysis

- GDP , and GDP per Capita
- Internal Debt percentage and project Loans
- Trade Value with China
- Level of investments

6.1 The Case Studies of the Analysis

In terms, of the countries compared in this research, it will be the following:
Morocco in the North Africa, and Angola in the Sub-Saharian Region.

Why Morocco?

As part of The BRI implementation strategy, the Sino-African relations in the MENA region are mainly with the following countries: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.

So why is morocco the optimal choice of the study here? Well, the Sino-African relations in terms of northern side of the continent, sure does differ from country to another considering the individuality of each country, in terms policies and foreign strategies.

Except that in terms of tracing the Sino-North African affairs, from the start of the BRI, makes Morocco the most optimal choice because the latter was in fact the first North African country to sign the BRI implementation strategy in 5^{th} of January 2022, the initiative has promised that cooperation will be strengthened in trade, investment, infrastructure, agriculture, energy, finance, science, education, technology, security, health, and research and development according to the official Moroccan government statement (maroc.ma).

Hence, it being the North African country participating in the BRI for the longest time. So choosing Morocco as a first side of the two case studies to be compared helps a more prolonged tracing of the “so called” influence and consequences that we are trying to test out, rather than choosing another country.

Why Angola?

In a region where China has had more exchanges than anywhere else, exchanges no only since the BRI but far longer than that. However in terms of the BRI, the Sub-Saharan Region Angola is the chosen case study, for the reason that chronologically as well Angola was one the first countries to sign the agreement at the 2018 Form . Angola also is in the first place of the African loaners under the BRI project, Second World Wide after Pakistan.

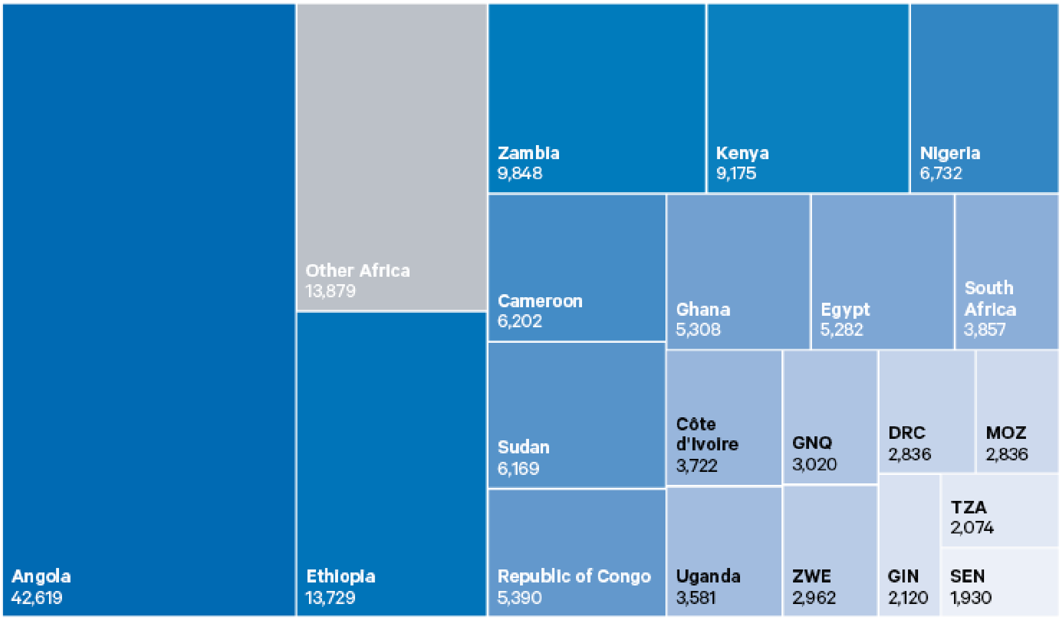


Figure 9: Table of Loans in the BRI projects by African countries (from 2000-2020 in millions unadjusted)

Angola and Morocco in terms of their relationship with China:

Morocco and Angola have some similarities in terms of their relationship with China. Both countries have sought to develop close economic and diplomatic ties with China in recent years, and both have seen significant growth in trade and investment from China.

***Economic Ties*:** Both Morocco and Angola have seen an increase in Chinese investment and trade in recent years, particularly in sectors such as infrastructure development, mining, and energy. China has also provided economic aid to both countries to support their economic growth and development.

Diplomatic Relations: Both Morocco and Angola have sought to develop close diplomatic relations with China, with leaders from both countries regularly meeting with Chinese officials to discuss issues of mutual interest. China has also played a role in mediating disputes between the two countries and supporting their efforts to resolve conflicts in the region.

Joint Projects: Morocco and Angola have also worked with China on joint projects and initiatives, such as infrastructure development and cultural exchange programs. These projects have helped to strengthen the relationship between the two countries and China, and have also contributed to the economic development of the region.

Strategic Partnership: Both Morocco and Angola see their relationship with China as a strategic partnership that provides significant benefits for their respective countries. They have sought to deepen their cooperation with China on a range of issues, from economic development to regional stability and security.

Overall, Morocco and Angola have many similarities in their relationship with China, including their focus on economic development, their efforts to strengthen diplomatic ties, and their desire to establish a strategic partnership with China.

6.2 GNI (Income),GDP and GDP per Capita

From the previous table in Chapter 5, we notice that only 6 out of 50 participating countries are from North Africa, while the concentration of the financing through the BRI project goes to sub-Saharan countries.

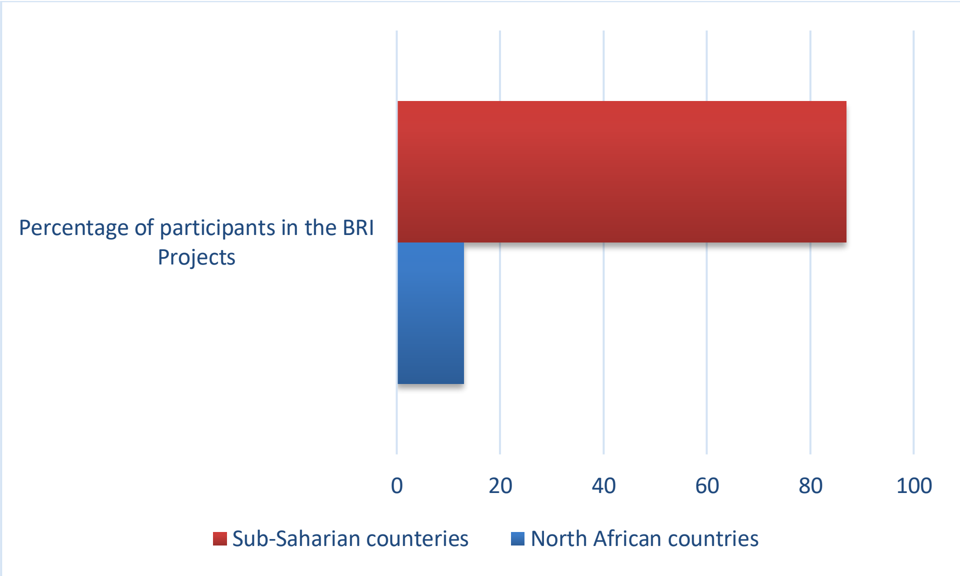


Figure 10: Percentage of participants in the BRI projects in Africa

Analysis

Only 13 percent of the participating countries are North African, whereas, 87 percent are from the Sub-Saharan region.

What is noticed here is the majority of the participating states are of a lower income. This could be related to the factor, but not reliant, of income since majority sub-Saharan countries are characterized of a lower income than North African's countries, also keeping in mind the list of participants' states under the BRI in chapter 5, where it was observed that only 2 out of 50 countries were of high income.

Another factor could be the state of states. In terms of infrastructure and rail roads and others convenient projects that china funds and that are not necessarily of a big need to other countries. In other words, poorer regions will need more funding and money, therefore will implement to benefit of the BRI funding projects.

A third factor can be strategic location and planning by the Chinese government to convenience themselves of corrupted smaller countries located in rather convenient locations. As we have seen before, PRC is unlikely to do charity work, it will making tempting offers with previous advantageous planning in its favor.

A forth factor, would of course be the history of the Sino-African relations; where china has had long history with the Southern and Sub-Saharan part of the continent , but is just catching pace with Northern part due to the Western influence in the region.

- ***GDP and GDP per Capita***

According to the 2021 census results, On one hand Moroccan demography is estimated to be 37.08 Million, with an income of 328.7 billion PPP dollars, a GDP of 142.9 billion USD and a GDP per capita of approximately 3,795.38 USD, on the other hand Angola demography is estimated to be 34.5 million, a GDP of 67.4 billion USD and a GDP per capita of approximately 1,953.53 USD.

Moreover, in more cases than often it is safe to say that weaker countries have the tendency to be an easy prey not necessarily in the face of the exercise of brute force but rather because they are usually in desperate need of helps making the given offer rather more tempting especially if it is portrayed on a reachable plate of gold, in this case China’s low to no-interest loans.

To make an accurate interpretation of the said findings we will look at the level of investment of China in Angola and in Morocco.

6.3 The Level of Investment

Chinese Level of investment in Angola and Morocco

"In the last years, China has been one of the main investor countries in Angola and, according to unfinished statistics, until now the Chinese investment volume already exceeded 20 billion U.S. dollars," said the Chinese Ambassador in Angola.

In morocco, however, according to Ning Jizhe statement “China's direct investment in the country had reached **$380 million”**.

Analysis

The Chinese investment in Angola is all but noticeable since China has been and still is Angola’s first investor, whereas Morocco is still in the road of being an attractive investing destination to China after the former signed the MoU for the BRI implementation.

6.4 The Trade Rate

Evidently, new agreements do in fact affect the other existing agreement, even if they are unrelated, since the bigger image is a part of the “Bilateral Relations” between the two parts involved.

Additionally, China is a rather strategic country, so there is a high chance that new agreement will seek to enhance the relations in favor of the PRC.

From this we will take the trade rate as another variable to measure the influence of the Chinese relations in these two countries differ in terms of concentration, as well as taking under consideration the change of the trade rate pre-BRI agreement and post-BRI agreement.

6.3.1 Moroccan-Chinese Trade rate during pre- and Post BRI Implementation

With Moroccan imports on the western Mediterranean and Atlantic, Chinese export manufacturers have easy access to African markets.

Moroccan exports to China

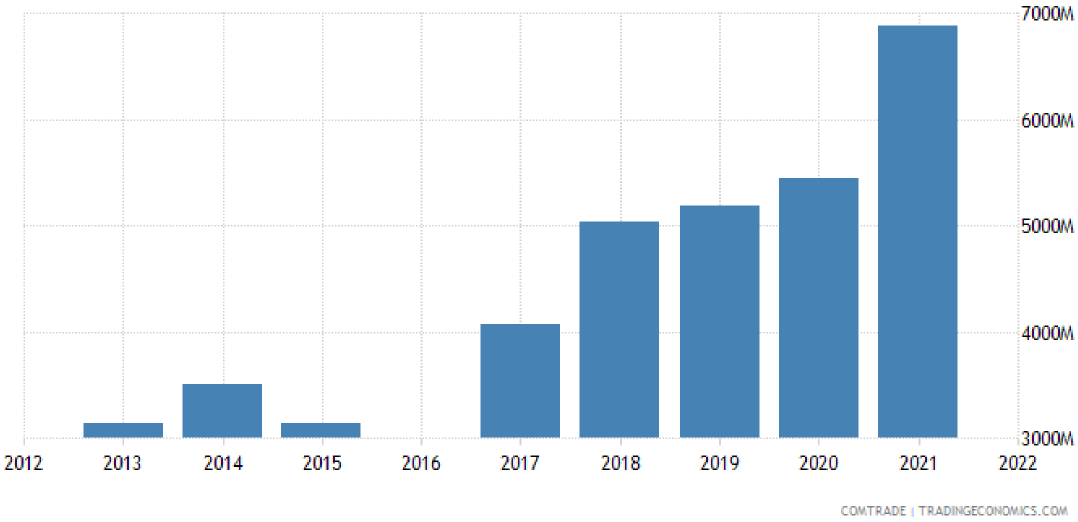


Figure 11: Moroccan Exports to China (2013-2021 in Millions)
Source: The UN COMTRADE database on International trade

Moroccan imports from China

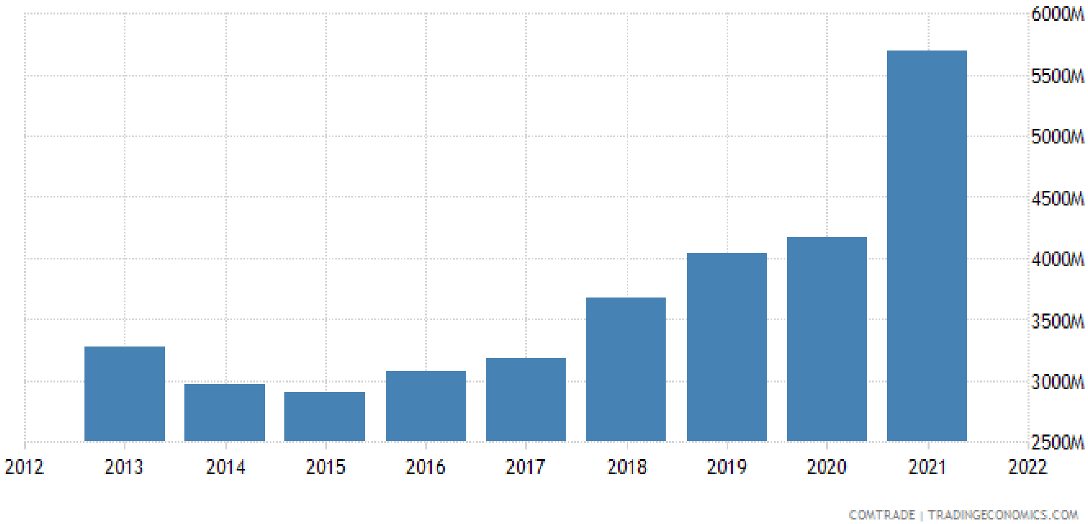


Figure 12: Moroccan Imports from China (2013-2021 in Millions)
Source: The UN COMTRADE database on International trade

Analysis

Nowadays, the Sino-Morocco trade relations is catching pace. The BRI implementation plan was signed by Morocco on the 5th of January 2022.

Moroccan exports from China dropped by $80.1M (-15%) between October 2021 and October 2022, while imports increased by $62.9M (-9.76%).

Moreover, in October 2022, Morocco exports value amounted for $62.9M and imported $455M, resulting with a negative net exports and a debt deficit, but a positive trade balance for China.

6.4.1 Angolan-Chinese Trade Rate during Pre-BRI Implementation and Post-BRI Implementation

Angola's exports to China

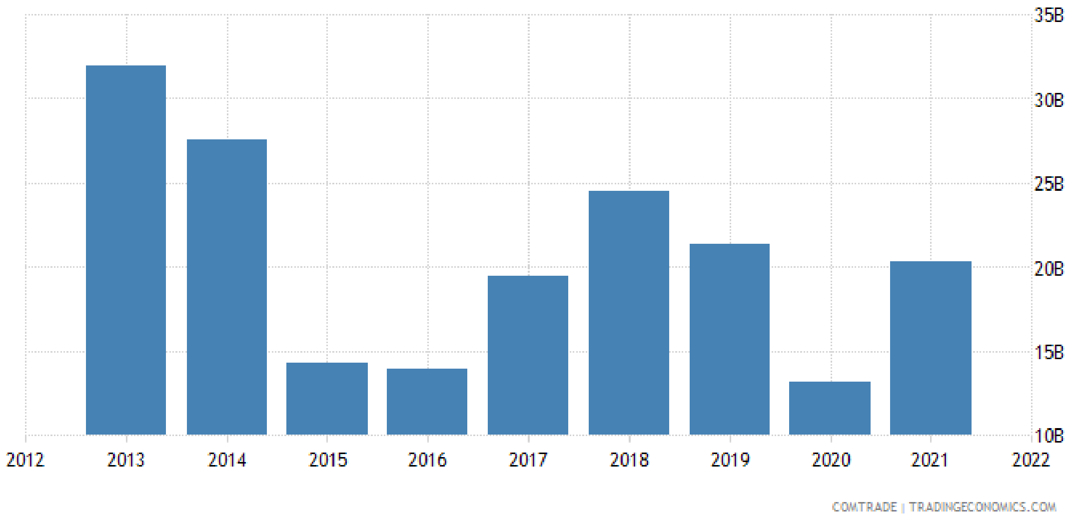


Figure 13: Angolan Exports to China (2013 -2022) on Millions
Source: The UN COMTRADE database on International trade

<u>Angola's imports from China</u>

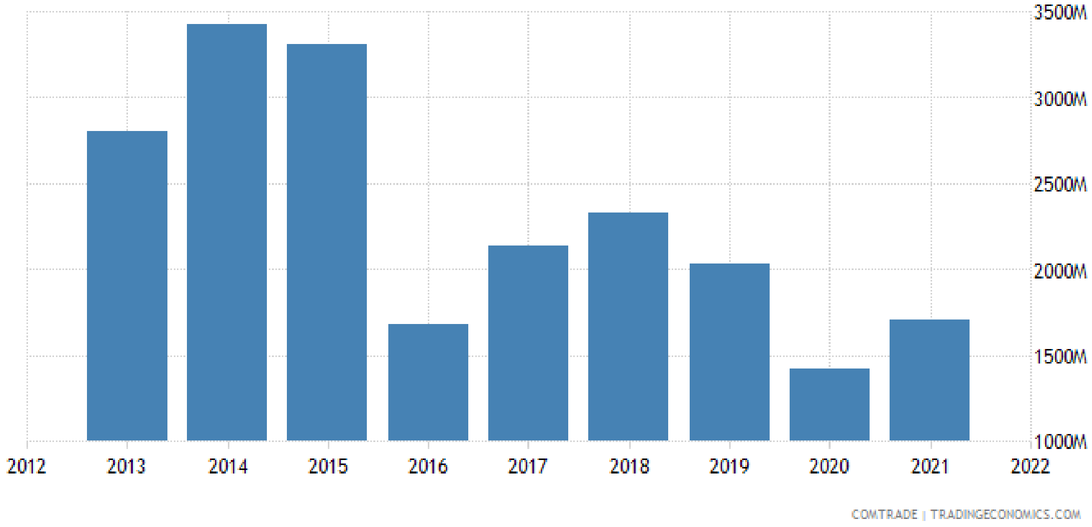


Figure 14: Angolan Imports from China (2013-2022 in Millions)
Source: The UN COMTRADE database on International trade

Analysis

Angola Imports from China was US$1.71 Billion, whereas Angola Exports to China was US$20.32 Billion during 2021.

China was in fact Angola's main exports in the second quarter of 2022 with a share of 14.3% according to official data. Additionally, as of the present day the Chinese and Angolan trade reaches 30% growth.

6.5 External Debt

In this second section, we will measure China's percentage in the external debt of each country; Morocco and Angola.

It's important to note that a big portion, of the said debts that the following countries owe China is part of the funding under the BRI project.

Morocco's external Debt

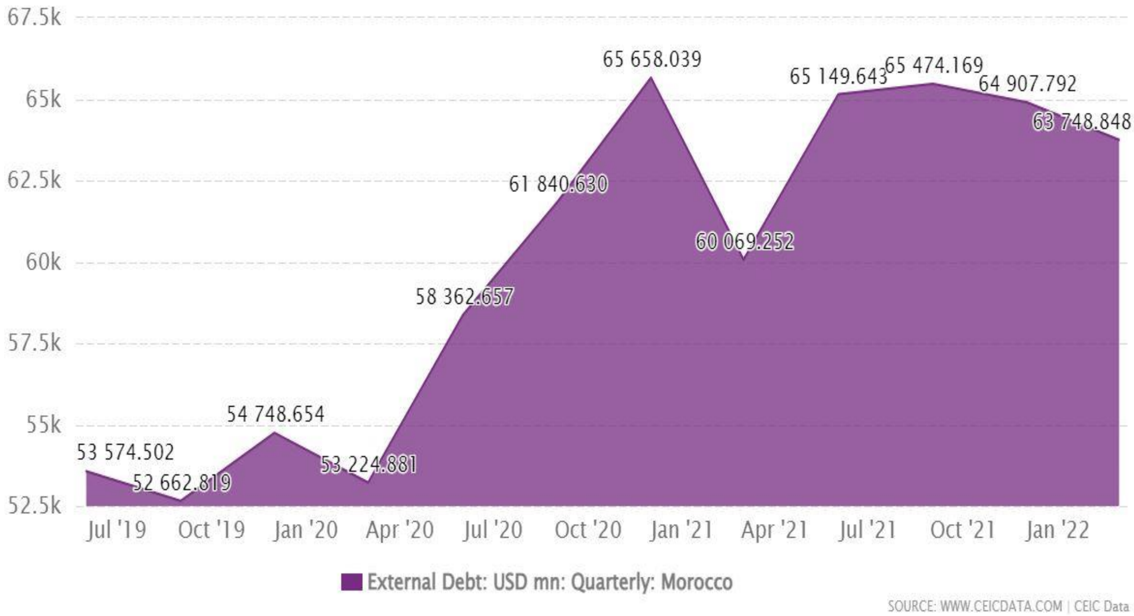


Figure 15: The External Debt in Morocco (Last Updated March 2022)
Source**:** https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/morocco/government-debt--of-nominal

Chinese percentage in External Debt

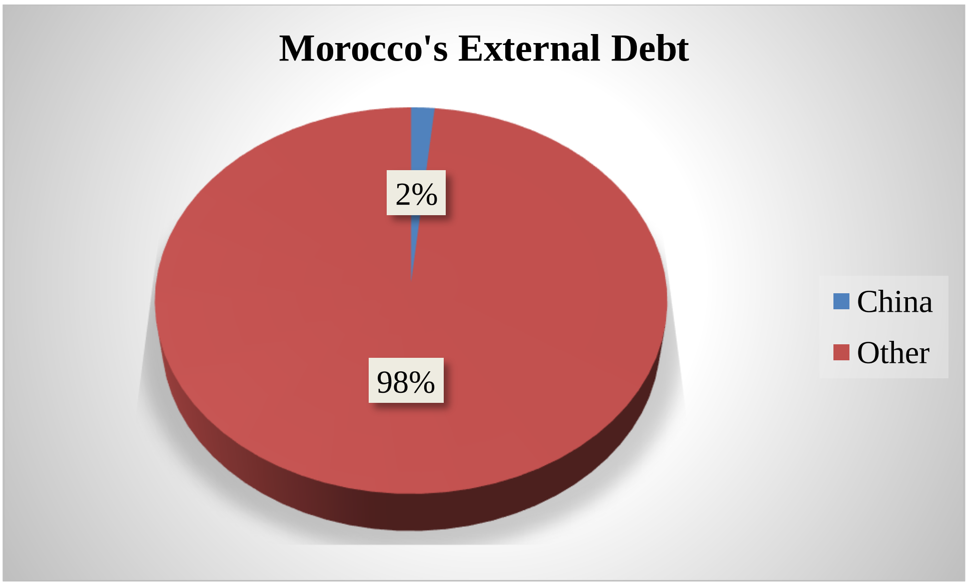


Figure 16: Data Research

Angola’s External Debt

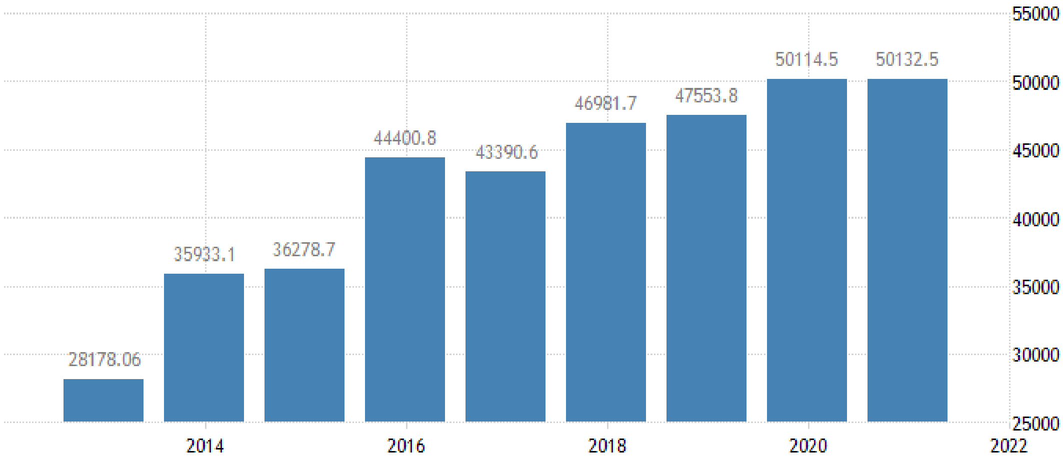


Figure 17: Angola's External Debt
Source: The UN COMTRADE database on International trade

- External Debt in Angola is expected to have reached **51500.00 USD Million** by the end of 2022.

Chinese percentage in the Angola’s External Debt

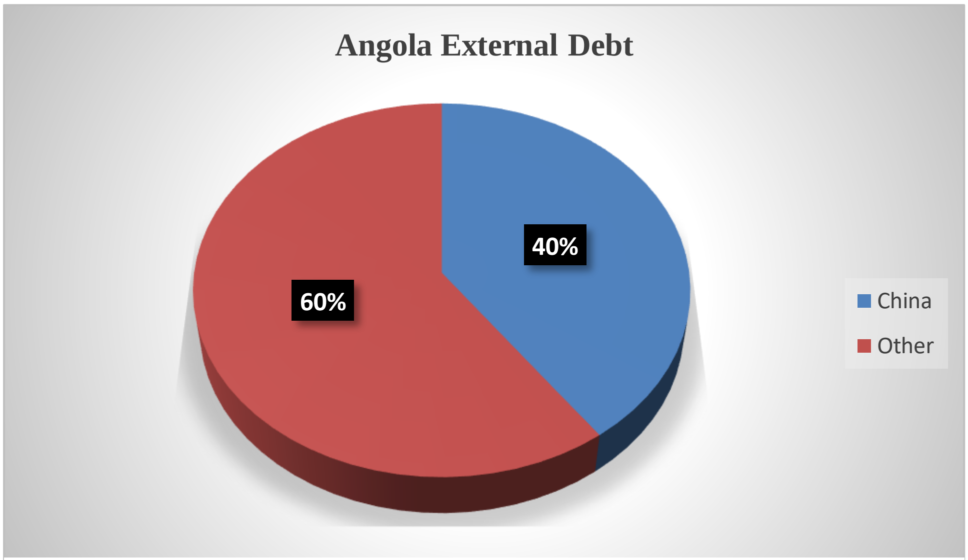


Figure 18: Data Research

Analysis

As of March 2022, Morocco’s external Debt is estimated to have reached 63.7 USD Billion and a deficit of 671.0 USD Million in Sep 2022. In 2014, Morocco has took a loan of 348 USD Million.

However, in 2020, the Moroccan Chinese bilateral trade reached 4.76USD Billion.

Moreover, in the last 25 years, the annual rate of the Moroccan export to china is 9.05%, whereas the annual rate of the Chinese export to Morocco is 15.1%.

Except that, the Chinese investment, even though it is said to change, has only been of the estimated amount of 1.6 USD billion. Morocco is slowly being entrapped in the Chinese debt book policy since it already has a debt of $1030.55 million, making the country more obliged and inclined toward China. From this, we conclude the Chinese debt percentage of the Total external debt of Morocco is only 1.62%.

Whereas when it comes to Angola, the debt percentage is about 40 times more than the one of Morocco. This portrays the implementation that Angola has in the BRI project compared to Morocco.

This can also be viewed as a future vision if Morocco was to engage more with China and to be tempted by offers, hence engaging more as planned and promised by the Chinese government’s official statement, that it seeks to enhance the bilateral relations more.

However, in the present tense, we notice an intensified economic interdependence between Angola and China, in favor of China.

Another example, can be the Chinese debt percentage in Uganda. Uganda's irrational debt to china represented approximately 32% of Uganda's external debt, to China alone, whereas China represents 6.9% of Egypt's external Debt according to the Central Bank. Whether Debt enslaves a state to another is hard to generalize, this depends on the terms and conditions of the contract signed and future actions that the state might take in a situation of debt distress.

Except the one undeniable fact is that a debt distress clouds the states' judgment, creates economic jeopardy for the state, and opens an area of vulnerability with the debtor**.**

6.6 Findings

The effect of the BRI implementation can be divided into two sections: direct effects and indirect effect.

The direct effect can be characterized as: the debts owed to China, level of investments, while indirect effects can be under the enhancement of Trade rate.

As observed china has great consequences on the economic growth and trade deficit/surplus of African countries it was involved with throughout the years. Some more than others and the majority of those tend to be a weaker poor countries in desperate need of funding more than the West is willing to give.

As the previous and current research in the last two chapters, we conclude that China has been more involved with Sub-Saharan countries more than north countries. That is mainly due to the West’s influence.

Leading to a potential explanations n to why morocco is of a lower numbers than Angola in terms of the established Bilateral relations that China previously deemed “an ambition that still far to be reached, but on the right path to”.

In its specificity, factors of state’s motivation do interfere with the found statistics above; which is valid in the case of Morocco and most northern countries that fit similar criteria heavily influenced by the West.

Based on our Case study, the Chinese footprint in the northern side of the continent is surely but slowly expanding, it has a promise to implement itself and its fist in the countries more but it is heavily challenged by the Wests’ withhold on the said countries, here in Morocco. In fact, one of the leading motivations of morocco to being the first to implement in the initiative, it to set free from that western fist hold it has on the countries. Morocco is one the countries that are still strongly influenced by the Wests’ actions and is flexible to the West’s needs, mentioning its biggest trader: France.

This flexibility can vary from changing the religious regime weekend calendar: from Thursday and Friday to Saturday and Sunday matching the trader country, as well as flexible national hour changes in specific periods.

Except that, in the road to free itself from one influential relation, running towards Chinese promises and projects; Morocco might find itself in the fisthold before it realizes.

China has explicitly expressed its interest in the country and that it is willing to enhance its bilateral relations with the country from only a pragmatic relation to something more.

Since China's goal, is to exercise its political and economic dominance. The question that can be asked here, however, is whether China's goal is to increase its evolvement with the country or decrease the country's evolvement with the West.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

From this research, we can conclude that China is quickly gaining a reputation as an important player in the African continent, more so in the low income Sub-Saharan region than of the North regions. Through the particular, if we were to quote Mr. Xi Jinping’s words “the project of the century”, in other words the Belt and Road Initiative; the ambitious program that aimed to link China with the rest of the world through a series of infrastructure projects. The BRI, due to the huge scale of the project, has had inevitable criticism, which some of actually comes from a place of logic rather than fear or threat of Chinese dominance. It’s an absolutely colossal project which is scheduled to involve 60 % of the world population.

The BRI basically Webs together a lot of projects, it could be building things from scratch, upgrading infrastructure, counting out loans, making investments.

In fact, there are a lot of different initiatives and the Belt and Road has become more of a label to capture a lot of what is happening.

Keeping in mind that the list for BRI, is actually hard to pinpoint since there is no actual list of everything and everyone that is actually involved. The fact that the BRI, the “project” has become increasingly vague and amorphous since, sure raises eyebrows.

To this day, there is no clear definition of what is and is not a Belt and Road project, even different levels of its own government disagree on the terms. Look at a map of all "participating countries" and it becomes as large as to lose all meaning.

In order to do that they need access to these various resource countries and also markets.

All his interconnectivity and huge amount of money involved means the belt and road initiative is, of course, also political. In another sense, we can explain that what China is trying to do here is to create a big web of economic interdependence. China's BRI is obviously about trade. So it's telling other countries: "Look, you lack roads, you lack bridges, you lack railways, and you lack power stations, a power grid. What we can do is come in, lend lots of money and our companies can come and build this for you".

Then, once a country is economically dependent on China, clearly it will have a geopolitical impact as well.

By providing this support, China is basically exporting its version of economic development in Africa. However, economic interdependence and geopolitical power is not a "Debt Trap".

On the other hand, there are still others that view the initiative as an opportunity to strengthen ties between the two continents. One can say from this is that China's priority is to transform itself into a major power by taking advantage of its enormous market potential and becoming a global economic leader. It is aiming to achieve this goal by building the infrastructure needed to facilitate trade and transport, it hopes to create a mutually beneficial relationship between China and Africa, even though it can be relatively more beneficial to China than it is in Africa in most cases, but that is a given.

Theoretically, in this research the concept of cooperation is not a priority nor is it an absolute reality, rather a way for participating parties to reach gain, relative gain. In this case China's gain. The projects provided by China, and it not exactly rocket science, might be introduced as "help" (e.g. the 2008 crisis, the Arab Spring damages, creating labor opportunities), but are at the core also conveniently and sometimes even more so beneficial to China (e.g. Deployment of Chinese employees in project sites, unfair salary policies in favor of Chinese workers, Hambantota port strategic location, as well as the Egypt administrative landmark for China, etc.).

This research I seek more to point out the extent in which one end influences the other without necessarily victimizing the other end.

In fact, there is a way to explain China's actions without them being benevolent nor necessarily evil.

If we take a look at the influence of China in Africa, mainly the Sub-Saharan countries with the concentration of the Sino-African relations takes place, in its reality; there are two factors one should consider: the corruption level and the Chinese aid effect. Concerning the Chinese aid affect the odious principle even if it can be risky, it can at least avoid the worst case scenario.

Whereas, regarding the corruption that takes place; then context can be needed. The case of example already presented in this research can be that of the Hambantota port hat was in relation with the Sri Lanka president; since it launched on his birthday portraying his personal engagement, as well as $7.6 million of project funds were secretly diverted to his failed re-election campaign.

As a matter of fact, if there is a “pattern” to China’s overseas investments, it might be frequent, though not universal, corruption. Bribes and kickbacks are widespread across much of the developing world, and Chinese companies seem generally willing to pay them. But again, corruption is not a “Debt Trap”.

When the issue involved a rising power; the fruits of the research and the articles written can be tainted with a significant amount of misunderstandings. It is also important to keep in mind that at the sense of every misunderstanding there is initial truth that prompted the rumor, and have been continuously spun around due to a lot of possible factors, and at the end there is a result to a sort of “fact”, that to be believable has to be aligned with the current event, this is not a conspiracy theory but an issue of security dilemma nonetheless, anxious and fearful states of possible outcome from other opposed states.

The “debt-trap” narrative is right to identify an inherent power differential between giant China and the (mostly) much smaller countries it lends to.

Africa is not a country. Every nation that borrows from China is different.

But, by portraying China as the only party with agency, it neglects the unique circumstances of each nation and absolves corrupt local politicians of all culpability.

Now, China may not set out with this intention, but one might argue that once it sees an opportunity, it takes advantage.

On another hand, an important effect of China's actions is fundamentally portrayed in its promotion of globalization in its promoting of economic development, encouraging trade, increasing cultural exchange, supporting sustainable development. Overall, the BRI represents China's efforts to promote globalization by building stronger economic and cultural ties with other countries and regions.

However, the initiative has also faced criticism and controversy in some countries, particularly over concerns about debt sustainability, transparency, and geopolitical implications.

It also has become a trend to become fixated on the bad effects of China in Africa, while dismissing the fact that its actions are contributing greatly to the globalization.

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