



Midlands State University
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Our Hands, Our Minds, Our Destiny

Faculty of Arts

Department of History

An assessment of the impact of Look East Policy on Zimbabwe infrastructural development between 2003 and 2016.

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Declaration

I Alfred Mapiko declare that this research is original and has not been submitted to any other university. The sources I used have been acknowledged.

Date November 2016

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Signature

Dedication

This research is dedicated to my mom, auntie, my daughter Lioba and all my colleagues who supported me financially and spiritually by word of prayer and advice.

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List of acronyms

CNMGC.....	China National Materials Group Corporation.
EMA.....	Environmental Management Agency.
EXIM BAN...	Export and Import Bank.
ESAP.....	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme.
EU.....	European Union.
FOCAC.....	Forum on China Africa Cooperation.
FTLRP.....	Fast Track Land Reform Programme.
IMF.....	International Monetary Fund.
LEP.....	Look East Policy.
MOFAZ... ..	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe.
RMS.....	.Road Motor Services.
USA.....	United States of America.
UNWTO.....	United Nations World Tourism Organisation.
WB.....	World Bank.
ZANU P.....	Zimbabwe African national Union Patriotic front.
ZIDERA.....	Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act.
ZIM-ASSERT..	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation.

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Abstract

The study is an assessment of the effects of the Look East Policy (LEP) on Zimbabwe's infrastructural development.. Its aim is to collect, describe and analyse the extent to which the infrastructural development of Zimbabweans has been affected by the Look East Policy from 2003 up to 2016. The findings of the research were that the policy had yielded both tangible and intangible benefits as well as negative effects but, not without criticism and impediments. Some of the findings fuse with the theoretical framework developed earlier from the literature that was consulted. Out of the narrative emerge variables that have influenced subsequent analysis and discussion on the effects of the Look East Policy on Zimbabwe's infrastructural development. The study contributes much to the enlightenment of the current as well as future academic figures of the infrastructural benefits as well as negative effects of the Look East Policy.

Introduction

This study explores the effects of the Look East Policy on infrastructural development and its socio-economic impact in Zimbabwe between 2003 and 2016. It examines the underlying impact using context specific references and the perspective of the actors themselves both the Zimbabwean government and the Eastern Bloc with much focus on China. During the decade of socio-economic and political challenges that run from 1998 to 2008, Zimbabwe was isolated from mainstream international development by the international community. Zimbabwe-Western relations soured as the West had imposed sanctions on President Robert Mugabe and his inner cabal following the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP).¹

Zimbabwe adopted the Look East Policy (LEP) seeking to cooperate with the Eastern countries namely China, Malaysia, Singapore, India and Russia among others but current manifestations have pointed to China as the main focus of attention. The motives of the LEP have been varied and it is undisputable that the policy has yielded both tangible and intangible benefits but not without criticism and impediments. It is also imperative to note that public policies are as successful as the extent to which they are co-owned and executed by the public and government. Citizen's knowledge levels, attitudes and perceptions are a window to determining the level of buy in to the policy, and ultimately its success. China willingly stepped in to fill the foreign aid gap left by the West.² As Zimbabwe's prospects of developing are shaped by a range of issues from domestic governance and politics to externally driven issues such as foreign aid, its association with the Eastern countries was somehow the only option left.

The study will discuss how Chinese have managed to help in infrastructural development issues in Zimbabwe as well as malpractices associated with them. The cooperation between Zimbabwe and the eastern block is heavily influenced by their historical background,

development trajectories, international events in the increasingly crowded and ever changing international system, how China had helped Zimbabwe to deal with infrastructure construction and maintenance. China seeks to establish a more significant presence in Zimbabwe as reinforced by Forum on China –Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) ‘s focus on infrastructure among other factors.³

Historical background

The Look East Policy between Zimbabwe and the Eastern Block was established in 2003 though diplomatic relations have already existed before following a pledge by countries like China to assist in post-war reconstruction. During this time, Zimbabwe was still a darling of the international community as Western states such as Britain, United States of America (USA) including the European Union lined up with aid to enhance Zimbabwe’s policy of national reconciliation. Relations however turned sour when Zimbabwe adopted the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) in 2000.⁴ The West strongly criticized the FTLRP for not upholding the principles of good governance and respect of human rights.

Against this background, the relationship between Zimbabwe and the western countries as well as the United States of America deteriorated as its domestic policies were perceived to be in complete contradiction with the western interests. As part of the West’s grand scheme to exert political and economic pressure on Zimbabwe, the US promulgated the punitive Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA) in December 2001, to curtail development aid and impose sanctions against the Zimbabwean government ‘s top officials. Similarly in February 2002, the European Union (EU) imposed “restrictive measures” on Zimbabwe through targeted sanctions, travel bans and arms embargo under article 19 of the Cotonou Agreement.⁵ The deepening of the post 2000 crisis was that aid for infrastructural development as well as technical support to Zimbabwe declined sharply.

Confronted with these numerous challenges, Zimbabwe adopted the Look East Policy (LEP) mainly focusing on China. China guided by the pragmatic realism embraced the Look East Policy, stepping in to fill the gap left by the West.

Problem statement

The study examines the effectiveness of the Look East Policy as an instrument capable of improving the infrastructural development in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe was isolated from mainstream international development by the international community. Evidently, Zimbabwe had been isolated by key development partners such as the European Union (EU), United States of America (USA), Australia, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB). The incessant denigration, withdrawal of development aid and technical support from the West is indeed testimony to this isolation. Despite the adoption of the Look East Policy (LEP) in 2003, numerous concerns have been raised of the effectiveness of the policy in solving Zimbabwe's infrastructural development challenges. The majority of Zimbabwean people are still speculating on the infrastructural developmental effects of the policy since the official adoption. The infrastructural contributions brought by the Look East Policy are at jeopardy as most Zimbabwean people are struggling to find its infrastructural significance in the history of their nation.

The Look East Policy brought with it a lot of infrastructural benefits that helped in solving some of the development challenges of Zimbabwe's infrastructural issues. China in particular provided equipment for road maintenance and construction. Vehicles of Chinese make used in construction are also seen at numerous construction points. However with as much publications of researches narrating the history of the Look East Policy in Zimbabwe since 2003 when it was adopted, little has been written to recognize the contributions of the policy towards improving the infrastructure. This poses damage to the history of the nation itself as

it does not seek to accommodate the contributions of the policy on the infrastructural issues. This clearly reveals that there is a vacuum in the history of Zimbabwe concerning the contribution of the Look East Policy where as the nature of history does allow a vacuum on this episode. This study will prove that the Look East Policy is worth and full of history since it has both tangible and intangible benefits. Through this study it can be evidenced that most of the texts on the contribution of Look East Policy on infrastructure are not balanced as the literature tend to be one-sided. The one-sidedness might be a result of a number of factors that shaped a writer's perspectives on the policy. These include the dominant ideology of the post independence epoch; nothing would come out of Africa. This confirms the conditions which led to the production of literature which is one-sided.

Hypothesis

Has Zimbabwe enjoyed significant infrastructural development through the Look East Policy?.

Justification of the study

The study seeks to examine the effects of the Look East Policy on infrastructural development. The Zimbabwean government officially adopted the policy in 2003 and is now mainly guided by their aim to achieve the goals of the national economic blueprint named .Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIM- ASSERT). The study explores how the policy has improved the infrastructural agendas as well as maintaining some of the infrastructure that was already erected in Zimbabwe. Many researchers have written a lot about the Look East Policy but much of the available works have failed to draw a balanced line of thought stressing on the negative part of it. They have tended to neglect the positive part of it hence this study will give a balanced line of argument since the policy has yielded a lot of tangible and intangible benefits though negative effects exist as far as infrastructural development in Zimbabwe is concerned.

Objectives

The objectives of the study cascades from Zimbabwean government's vision to improve the lives of the nationalities through policies aimed at sustainable development and economic growth and among them are Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIM-ASSERT).

- How the Chinese did come into the construction sector of Zimbabwe.
- Assess the socio-economic and environmental effects of Chinese construction companies in Zimbabwe.
- Alleged oppressive labour policies on the local people who work in the construction sector as well as the increase in completion for jobs.
- Environmental effects of the construction projects.

Research questions

- Trace the coming of Chinese into the construction sector.
- What achievements has Zimbabwe enjoyed in the construction sector?
- What are the general labour conditions in Chinese construction companies?
- What are the social, economic and environmental challenges that have been brought by the Chinese construction companies?

Literature review

Mudavanhu, S. defines the Look East Policy as basically a country's relation with states in the East such as China, Japan, Malaysia, Korea, Russia and India.⁶ For Zimbabwe the Look East Policy was adopted in response to the sanctions that were imposed on Zimbabwe by the western states as well as the United States of America soon after the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP). Zimbabwe faced challenges in securing development funds from

Western states due to these sanctions and continues to face infrastructural development challenges. The western states ceased to provide developmental aid as well as technical support through provision of construction machinery and engineering personnel. Projects that were initiated during the cordial era were abandoned at once and no blue print was left. Big infrastructural establishments such as the Kariba Dam that was constructed by the Italians needed renovation time and again. With the abrupt cut off of the infrastructural aid, the Zimbabwean government began to face challenges.

The Look East Policy (LEP) has generated two polarising sets of scholarly views with mixed reactions on how it has affected infrastructural development in Zimbabwe. Some scholars have argued that it is a misguided policy by the ZANU PF dominated government aimed at restoring political hegemony.⁷ However some purports that it is a beneficial policy that had helped Zimbabwe to realise her infrastructural development agendas at a time when the western powers have imposed crippling economic sanctions. These scholars have gone to say it was crucial that it allows the Zimbabwean nation to take matters into their own hands and getting rid of Western economic hegemony.

There is a significant body of research on the theme of the Look East Policy's development effects. However it is important to note that much of the works have failed to capture the infrastructural developments that have been brought about by the policy. Therefore, there is need for this literature review to spot and find the ways to identify gaps in the theme of the infrastructural development brought by the Look East Policy. This research is consisted of two main elements of the literature. These comprise of the developments made so far as well as socio- economic and environmental effects in areas where the developments took place. Chinese operators are principally dynamic in the construction sector in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has enjoyed a lot of infrastructural development between 2003 and 2016. The Chinese through a construction company Anhui Foreign and Economic Construction

Company erected a National Defence College in the outskirts of Harare along Mazoe road.⁸ It was a 3 year project that was completed a way ahead of schedule. The National Defence College has become an emblem as well as a physical manifestation of the Look East Policy's contribution to Zimbabwe infrastructural development.

In September 2004 Chinese constructed a cement, tile and brick factory. It is a fifty million cement, brick and tile plant in the outskirts of Gweru. It was spearheaded by the China National Materials Group Corporation (CNMGC). Four hundred people were employed at the plant during the construction stage.⁹

One of the accomplishment cases recorded on one January 2008 was the acquisition of 97 trucks from china. The (RMS) Road Motor Services acquired vehicles comprising of 68 North Benz tractor trucks that were to be used in the construction of roads in Zimbabwe. 16 North Benz delivery truck, 8 triaxle tipper trailers and five fuel tankers were also procured at the same time from (CAMCO). The vehicles were procured through the Exim Bank of China concessionary loan to replace the old and unserviceable fleet.¹⁰

China donated construction equipment to the Zimbabwe defence forces on May 5 2016. The equipment will enhance the capacity of the Zimbabwe defence forces housing construction set to be launched at the end of the year 2016. The herald quoted the secretary of defence forces Trust Maposa saying that's the official handover of the equipment was done on May 4 2016.¹¹

The midlands state university is said to have contracted Chinese construction firm to built hostels for the students at the main campus in Gweru. The hostels have been named china town basing on the fact that they were built by the Chinese. This reveals a significant

development on the matter of infrastructural development as far as the look East policy is concerned.¹²

The Standard of 29 May 2016 reported that Anhui Foreign Economic Construction Group handed over a primary school in Lupane in Matabeleland North Province.¹³ This serves a good example on how the relationship of Zimbabwe and countries from the East is benefiting the nation. Education is always important and this will enable the youngsters around the area to benefit from the development.

Anjin Investments, a mining company co-owned by the government and the Chinese constructed two schools around ARDA Transal. The handover of the school was accompanied by 100 HP flat screen computers which were to be used in the science laboratory on the same secondary school. A clinic was also constructed by the Chinese at the same site where the school were built. The clinic was furnished with modern equipment.¹⁴ The clinic was built to cater for the health of the relocated masses as well as those who had already been in the area.

In Mahusekwa in the outskirts of Marondera, the construction of a hospital has brought relief to the poor Zimbabwean in the area. The hospital is also known as the China-Zimbabwe Friendship Hospital. It was built under a Chinese Aid scheme to help Zimbabwe in providing quality healthcare services to its populace. People around the area have been walking a 30km distance to the nearest hospital. S. Chireya, a 22 year old mother who had brought her child for immunisation expressed gratitude for the construction of the hospital saying it was a great achievement. The construction of the project took two years and it was formally opened in 2013.¹⁵

The Chinese also constructed a shopping mall in Belvedere suburb called Cheng Piazza adjacent to the national sports stadium yet another Chinese architectural monument. This has

contributed to the beautification of the site when it comes to infrastructural development. However the construction of the shopping mall has been mired by controversy. The Daily news of 2 June 2013 published that the Environmental Management agency (EMA) tried to stop the construction of the mall on grounds that it was built on gazetted wet land but failed to be stop the construction process. Wetlands save a variety of ecological services including feeding downstream waters, recharging ground water supplies and wild life habitat.¹⁶

The government of Zimbabwe imported equipment such as graders, bulldozers, tipping trucks and equipment for road tarring. An article in the Herald in August 2004 mentioned that these kinds of orders used to be contracted out to British and American companies. Since their respective governments have imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe these companies no longer get the essential pre-financing credits from their governments for delivering on the order.¹⁷

In 2013, the Harare City Council secured US \$ 144 million loan from the China Exim Bank for the rehabilitation of its outdated 60 year old Morton Jeffrey water treatment plant so as to end the perennial water shortages experienced by the city. The renovation of the 60-year-old Morton Jeffrey Water Treatment Plant has increased water supply by 60 million litres of water per day and this has improved water supply in suburbs like Mabvuku which was one of the worst hit by water shortages. A few jobs were created for skilled locals to work with engineers from the China Machinery Equipment Corporation that was tasked to do the work.¹⁸

In 2012, china gave 162 million USD concessionary loan to Zimbabwe to refurbish a key airport ahead of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) summit. The renovation started in April 2013 and it include the extension of the current runway and build a second 4, 000 metre long runway, a 100,000 square meter tarmac, a 20,000 square

meter new terminal, and a car park. The widening of the airport road to Victoria Falls Town was to be completed by December 31, 2014, while the construction of the new runway was expected to be complete by April of 2015.¹⁹

The Herald of 7 October 2016 stated that the Chinese are also currently in the process of expanding the Kariba South Hydro- Electric station which is expected to be complete by 2018. Zimbabwe is on course to meet its 2018 deadline for the completion of the Kariba south hydro power plant, with 48 percent of the work already done. The \$400 million project will add 300 megawatts to Zimbabwe's power grid. The construction started in 2014 and is carried out by China's SinoHydro.²⁰

The expansion of the Kariba hydro-plant is one of several projects Zimbabwe is pursuing to reduce its power deficit. The country currently generates about half of its 2,000MW peak electricity demand. Zambia, which shares Lake Kariba with Zimbabwe, completed a similar expansion of its Kariba north plant in 2014. Officials have said the collapse of Zimbabwe's mining and manufacturing industries has seen a 40 percent collapse in electricity demand to about 1,400MW currently. Kenneth Maswera, general manager of the Kariba South plant, told journalists during a tour of the site. He said,

“In terms of overall project progress, combining offsite and onsite civil and electrical works, we are at 48 percent as of May 25”.²⁰

Speaking during the Kariba site visit, Energy and Power Development permanent secretary Partson Mbiriri said,

“Zimbabwe was on course to be self reliant in electricity generation by 2018. Zimbabwe is importing power from regional suppliers, Hydro Cabora Bassa of Mozambique and South Africa's Eskom to reduce its generation deficit. Come 2018,

there will be no need for imports. We are hoping that we will be well ahead of effective demand. That will be very satisfactory, not the current situation where we are failing to meet demand”.²¹

Mbiriri also revealed that China Africa Sunlight’s 600MW Gwayi solar power project was nearing financial closure in terms of the process of completing all project-related financial transactions. He went on to say they were in China last week to finalise financial closure and we are confident we will bring that to finality soon.²²

The Chinese also constructed and handed over China-Africa Friendly Primary School to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education at a colourful ceremony held at the school site in Lupane. The school which was built at a cost of US\$1,5 million will cater for children from more than 700 households. Chinese Ambassador to Zimbabwe Huang Ping said,

“His country supported education as it was critical to growth of the nation as a whole. Education is always critical to the development of a country and Zimbabwe enjoys great strength with its highest literacy rate in Africa of about 92 percent. As Zimbabwe’s all weather friend, China is more than willing to assist Zimbabwe to carry forward such fine educational tradition and cultivate more talents with competitive edge in the labour market, said the Ambassador”.²³

The construction of the primary school in Lupane was very important since it would empower the young with educational knowledge for the betterment of their lives as well national growth at large.

However, despite all the successful construction projects that have been completed by the Chinese construction companies under the agreements of the Look East Policy, some commentators have expressed concern on how the projects have been done as well as the

material used during the construction process. An engineering consultant who identified himself as J. Phiri in the private sector has expressed doubts regarding the success of the recent Chinese investment in the construction sector citing that the machines which the Chinese use are not appropriate for the kind of clay that one finds in Zimbabwe. He went on to say that the Chinese construction engineers do not take advice from anyone.²⁴ He said he was once part of the engineers who were assigned by the government to oversee the construction work that was undertaken at the Zimbabwe Defence College along Mazoe road in the outskirts of Harare.

Some of the local construction companies have also complained that the Chinese were taking away all the contracts leaving them without jobs. Mukarakate a local construction company owner said millions of jobs were now at threat because of the Chinese construction companies who bring in their own engineers instead of recruiting the local workforce.²⁵ He went on to say the government doesn't seem to understand or they do not mind that its new policies have pushed many locals into bankruptcy. Furthermore, Chinese investment tends to be focused on Chinese companies on the ground and does little for long-term development or assistance in Zimbabwe. The attempts to dilute Chinese influence have been dashed.

The Chinese construction companies have also been associated with gross disregard of labour laws. The Labour Act of Zimbabwe Chapter 28:01 states that the employees are entitled to membership of trade unions and workers committees if they desire.²⁶ However the Chinese construction companies have refused their employees the right to join trade unions and workers committees. Going against this regulation would simply lead to dismissal. As a result construction workers have endured to work under harsh conditions in fear of expressing their feeling and the abuses. They could not do so in fear of losing their jobs.

There was a lot of cross fertilization of ideas and knowledge in the construction sector between the Chinese engineers and the local builders who worked with them. The local construction sector benefited through the acquisition of technical designing of structures such as the Chinese parapet construction style. In the villages surrounding Mahusekwa, there are a lot of houses which were constructed using Chinese styles of designing that were exhibited at Mahusekwa Hospital. Business complexes have also undergone a fundamental change in their designing appearances. The traditional styles of pillars on the veranda has been totally neglected and adopted the new one that saw verandas being left hanging in the air with only one end being mounded on the wall.

Unfamiliar construction material also featured in the market with the advent of Chinese construction companies in Zimbabwe. Large corrugated iron sheets which were unfamiliar to the general populace in the Zimbabwean construction sector are now a common feature on many houses since they are now provided by Chinese construction material traders scattered all over Zimbabwe. New types of tiles have also come into the market. Corrugated iron sheets are designed, embrodered with special clay material and well cut such that they appear like cement tiles. These tiles have been confirmed by numerous construction worker as being durable and long lasting as compared to the cement tiles that the local construction industry has used since time immemorial.

Sources and methodology

The study made use of triangulated methods to collect data in order to capitalize on the strengths of both the qualitative and quantitative research methods. A multiple of sources were used which include newspapers, maps collections of personal paper, interviews and national polices. Libraries were also used by the researcher. Emphasis was placed on the analysis of a limited number of events and their interrelationships. The choice was premised

on observing as well as establishing patterns to understand the state of affairs as it exists answering the why, what, where, how and who questions. The methodology is split into three broad areas namely primary and secondary data collection and direct observations so as to take advantage of the strengths of each methodology thus address their inherent weaknesses. Qualitative information was summarised accordingly. Data presentation is where data collected is organized, compressed and assembled.²⁶ The researcher took note of ethical considerations throughout the study

Interviews

Face to face interviews were used as a way of collecting data. The researcher held interviews with construction workers, business people, politicians, and the general public from concerned areas to hear from their mouth about how the Look East Policy has gone so far in developing infrastructure in Zimbabwe. Interviews provide in-depth accounts of different opinions and ideologies that support the documentary research. This enabled gathering of extensive data which is reliable, suitable, and adequate for the study.

Sampling procedure

The key informants included construction workers, politicians, business people and the general public especially those who worked on the construction sites who have first hand information on what exactly transpired. The construction workers are also important because they were contracted into the construction companies working with Chinese experts. Sampling is important because it helps the researcher to obtain information from the knowledgeable people. The simple random sampling method was also employed for respondent selection. The sampling points were Mahusekwa business centre, Rupere Village, Samuriwo Village, Chivizhe Village, Farirai Village, Anjin Primary and secondary Schools and Cheng Plaza.

Movements were done in four directions until the sample was covered and this was done in order to produce a balanced assessment. Five interviews were done in each direction. A screener was used for respondent selection. The screener involved the number of years such a person has lived in that particular area. The randomly selected individuals must have been living or conducting business in that area for a minimum period of 5 years. This was done to acquire information from people who knew the experiences of the areas before the establishment of certain infrastructural projects.

Data collection instruments

For quantitative research approach a structured quantitative questionnaire with research questions which covered all the objectives of the study was used as the data collection tool. The questionnaire contained pre-coded close-ended questions and a considerable number of open ended questions. A questionnaire is any document that is used as an instrument with which to capture data generated by asking people questions. On the other hand for qualitative research data collection was carried out using discussion guides with open ended questions and responses were recorded using a tape recorder so that the audios could then be used to create transcripts. A note book was also used to record important points during the interviews. A discussion guide is a document with an unstructured format used to direct qualitative data collection in both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

Data collection procedure

Quantitative personal interviews for quantitative research were administered to obtain quantitative data. This was done to enhance efficiency of the data collection process and quality control of data. A personal interview is an organized conversation between a researcher and a respondent whereby the researcher will be recording responses on a structured or semi-structured questionnaire. Self compilation data collection procedure was

not used so much unless in cases where data collection process could be slow and there could be a probability of getting poor quality data.

In this study personal interviews were also conducted where conversations between the researcher and the former workers of the construction companies especially those from the neighbourhood was undertaken. The movement was done from one village to another or one location to another collecting data using this technique. For qualitative research in-depth interviews were done with the villagers around Mahusekwa. EMA officer in Belvedere Suburb and an engineer since they were some of the key informants on the information required. An in-depth interview consists of an unstructured and informal interview used to explore the underlying predispositions, feelings, needs, desires and emotions of research participant toward issues affecting their lives.

Ethical considerations

Confidentiality was one of the main priorities during the conduction of fieldwork. This was done to encourage respondents to provide important information which they might have been afraid to say for the reasons of their own safety. Teachers on the Chinese constructed schools always wanted to remain unknown for the safety of their lives and jobs. At the introduction of every interview respondents were assured of confidentiality in all the responses they were to give. Explanations were given promising respondents that whatever they said was not going to be disclosed to anyone. Consent from the local authorities was sought before information about the activities of construction companies was sought or before every interview was carried out. Individual who were not comfortable to participate were not forced to do so.

Language was also another important aspect or consideration for the study. The local language was used in order for the people from relatively rural areas like Mahusekwa as well as ARDA Transal to feel comfortable and understand the questions they were asked. In

Mahusekwa area people use Shona as their main language and English questions were translated into Shona.

Desktop survey

Secondary sources were used to explore their views on the matter. They were used to supplement the information that was acquired in primary data sources to come up with sufficient information to the study. Materials used include newspapers, internet, journals and research papers about how the Look East Policy has affected the infrastructural matters of Zimbabwe as a nation as well as the impact on the general life of the citizenry. Unpublished material was also made use of since some of the people felt really afraid to be disclosed since the policy was adopted by the incumbent government.

Survey

A survey including a combination of quantitative and qualitative information that unveils the effects of the Look East Policy was used. A field survey was conducted to find the exact matters on the ground. This was important since it would help the researcher to merge information obtained with matters on the ground.

Delimitations

The study is limited to Zimbabwe and Look East Policy's infrastructural effects on Zimbabwe during the period 2003-2016. The effects encompass the improvement of conditions for promotion of education in rural and resettlement areas, business, industry for income generation, water supply improvement of health and medical services. In order to achieve these goals, several schemes are combined together to derive maximum benefit.

Limitations

The precision of the information could be compromised as a result of the subjective nature of foreign policy strategies. These are not always disclosed to the public hence having access to some of the information may be difficult. Some of the information is considered to be highly confidential. Government officials are always unwilling to disclose some of this information. To address some of these challenges, the researcher will complement primary data with secondary data.

Dissertation layout

Introductory chapter

This section gives an overview of the chapters in this report and gives a brief summary of the contents of each chapter.

Chapter one

This Chapter examines how the Chinese and the Zimbabwean government have established relations since the colonial era. It also explores how the Chinese ended up into the construction sector of Zimbabwe. It examines how the friendship between the two nations began and evolved and how that historical bond contributed to the current economic cooperation that encompasses infrastructural development.

Chapter two: socio-economic impact of the Chinese construction projects

This chapter explores the socio-economic impacts of the Chinese construction companies in Zimbabwe. These are the effects on the people involved both in the construction process and the people around where the project has been undertaken.

Chapter three: an overview of the environmental effects of the construction projects.

This chapter examines how the infrastructural projects have affected the environment. Environmental effects usually involve the people around the site where the project has been undertaken. Wildlife and the disturbance of the natural ecosystems will also be discussed. The effects include both positive and negative.

Conclusions

This chapter draws conclusions of the study outlining why the research is important based on its findings. The positive effects as well as the negative effects of the Look East Policy on infrastructural development would be summarised.

End notes

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Chapter one

1.0 Introduction

The Look East Policy's effects on the infrastructural development of Zimbabwe began to gain momentum merely two years after the official adoption of the policy in 2003. Only two years after the official adoption of the policy, the government began to receive road construction and maintenance equipment.¹ The roads have been long overdue for servicing due to the economic difficulties which the nation was under. Cordial relations between China and Zimbabwe have existed before the attainment of independence by Zimbabwe. The Chinese provided Zimbabwe with arms and training expertise during the bush war.

After the attainment of independence, diplomatic relations were officially established. China extended loans to the Zimbabwean government to help in the post war reconstruction process. Chinese engineers also came to Zimbabwe and carried out a lot of construction projects that include the national sports stadium. This friendly relation is responsible for the current cooperation between the two nations. The friendship has led to the signing of numerous deals in the key sectors of the economy including construction contracts through different construction companies from China. Chinese construction companies began to invest in Zimbabwe soon after the signing of the Look East Policy.

1.1 Background to Chinese engagement with Zimbabwe in the colonial times

The Chinese engagement in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular in the 21st century has been a controversial issue among scholars. China though had been giving aid to numerous African nations especially during the liberation movements had not firmly taken roots in Africa. Many scholars have propounded that China is geared towards replacing the dominance of the United States of America (USA), France, Britain and other former

colonialist states. China's interaction with Zimbabwe goes as far back as 1979 during the bush war against the Smith regime. China provided support for the training of ZANU military wing as well as providing arms. It was under china that ZANU military tactics transformed and underwent fundamental change from conventional military tactics embracing the Maoist strategy that called for mass mobilization.²

It is crucial to note that the regime which took which took power after the war of liberation continued to cherish the Chinese model of leadership hence they adopted a lot of Chinese principles into their system of government. On the Independence Day the two countries established diplomatic relations that is 18 April 1980.³ It is said merely two months after the establishment of diplomatic relation, the then Zimbabwe's foreign minister Simon Muzenda visited China to express gratitude for the help that Zimbabwe enjoyed during the war of liberation.

1.2 Post independence interaction of Zimbabwe and China

Zimbabwe and China continued to cooperate after independence. Several visits have been done between the two nations which actually explain the existence of cordial relations. The relation had been shaped mostly by events in china such as the Tiananmen massacre of 1989. This was a Chinese government's brutal crackdown on demonstrating people which saw 300 people dead.⁵ The incident attracted a lot a lot of criticism mostly from the Western states who described it as extreme barbarism. It was on this juncture that President Robert Mugabe in particular supported the Chinese government returning the favour that Zimbabwe owe china. He asserted that,

“There must not be any dictating to China by anybody.

Let the Chinese evolve their system...It is dishonest of the west

To try to preach democracy when they themselves have been guilty of not practicing democracy for so long a time. It is therefore imperative to note that the friendship between Zimbabwe and China began a long time ago and even grew stronger in post Independent Zimbabwe”.⁶

1.3 China’s support during the Zimbabwean crisis

Zimbabwe had enjoyed significantly cordial relations with the West from the time it attained independence in 1980. Twelve years later, Zimbabwe adopted ESAP, Economic Structural Adjustment Programme and the life of the common people began to deteriorate. The situation continued to deteriorate with the Zimbabwean economy nose diving and inflation skyrocketing. Later in 1999, Zimbabwe embarked on Fast Track Land Reform Programme which soured relations between Zimbabwe and the West. The United States of America and the Western union imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe leading to the total collapse of the economy. Zimbabwe became isolated and unable to secure funds from the IMF and World Bank. As a result of the isolation by the international institution that is IMF, World Bank as well as institutions like the European Union and the Common Wealth, the level of economic meltdown continued to slide tremendously.⁷

On the international arena countries that include the United States of America, France and England decided to tighten sanctions on President Robert Mugabe and his 13 close allies in the ZANU PF party. It was reported that the economy of Zimbabwe contracted by as much as 40% with inflation rising from 25 percent in 1997 to 231 million percent in July 2008.⁸ In this tense situation, the Western powers as well as their counterpart the United States of America intensified the isolation of the Zimbabwean Government.

Having been subjected to the punitive ZIDERA and suspension from major international institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, the situation in Zimbabwe became unbearable

both for the government and the general public. However it is reported that when the issue was tabled on the United Nations (UN) summit China refused to endorse the idea citing that the Western powers were meddling into the internal affairs of an independent nation. China was later supported by Russia as well the then South African president Thabo Mbeki who asserted that the Zimbabwean situation does not pose a threat to its neighbours including South Africa.⁹

China chipped in during the economic crisis extending loans to the Zimbabwean government that helped Zimbabwe to sustain the economy as well as its infrastructural needs. Graders were procured for the development of roads especially in the rural areas where roads have for a long time been neglected without maintenance. Rural district councils were allocated graders to upgrade rural roads and a lot of work was carried out though some could not be sorted to the best levels since they were too damaged.

1.4 China's entry in the construction sector of Zimbabwe

The Chinese entry into the construction sector of Zimbabwe is not a new phenomenon. Long back before the adoption of the Look East Policy, the Chinese have constructed a lot of structures in Zimbabwe. These include the national sports stadium of Zimbabwe and several government buildings and houses.¹⁰ China had earned some trust and respect from the Zimbabwean government since they had carried out other successful infrastructural projects like the construction of the Zimbabwe National sports Stadium.

China 's principal entry into Africa at large and Zimbabwe in particular is access to natural resources to feed their ever growing industrial expansion at home.¹¹ There has been a considerable influx of Chinese into Zimbabwe since the adoption of the Look east Policy. For purposes of analysis, Chinese investors in Zimbabwe are categorised into large corporate investors and individual investors. Well known of these in Zimbabwe are Anjin, Sino-Steel

and Anhui among others. Large corporate are usually negotiated between the governments involved and these in most cases are well protected. They are also operating as joint ventures since they are usually merged with government owned companies. In some cases they are exempted from complying with some regulations and rules.

The second category consists of individual or independent investors who either sneak into the country or come through the Zimbabwe Investment Authority. These usually do not enjoy exemption from the investment regulations. They ought to comply with the set regulations in the country they are operating in.

Zimbabwe is a nation which is still developing and requires a lot of infrastructural development. The contraction contracts are of particular interest not only to Chinese but also the other developed countries like Britain and the United States of America who have dominated the construction industry in Zimbabwe before the advent of the Chinese. It is reported that a lot of Chinese construction companies have been awarded construction project by the government though very little has been disclosed about the deals.¹²

Chinese construction companies have been building dams, houses, clinics, schools in different parts of Zimbabwe. This study seeks to explore how the construction of infrastructure by the Chinese has affected the Zimbabwean nation since the adoption of the Look East Policy.

1.5 Conclusion

The cooperation between Zimbabwe and china can be traced back soon after Zimbabwean independence. China helped Zimbabwe during the liberation struggle with arms as well the training of guerrilla forces who were fighting against white minority rule in Zimbabwe. The friendship went on into post independence Zimbabwe supporting each other. China supported

Zimbabwe with construction a way before the adoption of the look east policy. China undertook great infrastructural work like the construction of the national sports stadium. The Chinese even went on to renovate it whenever it needed renovation. China supported Zimbabwe during the Zimbabwean crisis extending low interest rate loans at a time when the West was advocating for increasing sanction on the Zimbabwean government.

End notes

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Chapter two

Socio- economic impact of the Chinese construction projects

2.0 Introduction

The Chinese infrastructural projects brought about improvement in the health services, relief on some hospitals that used to serve many people perhaps beyond their capacity, educational development as well as availability of accommodation. Industry was also boosted through establishment of manufacturing plants. The construction of dams provided clean water for the local people in Buhera.¹ Employment was also created after the projects were complete. However it is worth consideration to note that some Zimbabwean employees who were contracted by the Chinese to provide general labour complained about the abuses they endured under their Chinese bosses. There was a general disregard of labour laws when it came to employee treatment. Wages were also low and working hours were too long. In some case no contracts were signed but people were recruited at daily basis early in the morning and given their salary on sunset. It is the mandate of this chapter to assess the impact brought by the Chinese construction companies in Zimbabwe.

2.1 Social impacts of the Chinese construction projects in Zimbabwe.

2.1.1 Labour abuses of workers by the employers

The Chinese employees are not allowed to join trade unions, workers committees or any other union that represent the interest of the workers. They are often threatened by dismissal if they are found to have joined any union. They ended up failing to link with trade unions as they feared for their jobs. The labour Act of Zimbabwe Chapter 28.01 states that, the employees are entitled to membership of trade unions and workers committees if they desire.² Trade unions help in the improvement of the workers working conditions and protection from

abuse by the employer. Chinese construction companies are believed to be the worst suppressors of labour laws in the construction industry. Some workers have complained about their safety arguing that their life is always at risk. Some reported that workers were given protective clothing once on the beginning of a project. Even if the project run for a year or two years, no more protective clothing was given to them. They were encouraged to bring their own protective clothing.

2.1.2 Relocation and rehabilitation.

Some construction projects impacted directly on the people as their land was needed for infrastructural development. In the case of Chiyadwa where construction of houses, diamond processing plants for the mining company and its employees was undertaken, a lot of people were displaced into nearby areas such as ARDA Transau. Numerous people were relocated to as far as Chimanamani and Chipinge as they did not like to go and stay in ARDA Transau. They described the relocation process as a forced process where their rights of choosing where violated.³ A lot of people are complaining that the mining company is not supporting them as they agreed when they were relocated.

2.1.3 Changes in the community's livelihood activities

As in the case of the ARDA Transal community which was relocated from Marange, prior to the construction of mining facilities in Chiyadzwa, they lived on buying and selling, weaving as well as open cast mining in search of diamonds and other minerals like gold. The construction of the diamond mine affected the economic lifestyle of the Chiyadzwa community. Some of the people complained that they were not used to farming that they were now practising at ARDA Transau farm where they were relocated.⁴ The Anjin Diamond mining company promised to take care of the people but it was failing to fulfil some of the promises. One male who had three wives and nine children complained that three rooms

which he was given by the company as compensation for being relocated was not enough for him and his family⁵. Most people described the company as an entity that could not care for their interests.

From the information gathered from the natives in ARDA Transau farm, it shows that the people are not happy with the construction and operation of Anjin mine in their area. They said the company wasn't fulfilling the agreements they reached when it relocated the Chiyadzwa natives. They described the company as a dubious and egocentric entity which was interested in making huge profits without protecting the interests of the locals.

2.1.4 Impact on health facilities

The construction of a hospital by the Chinese in Mahusekwa in the outskirts of Marondera has enhanced the delivery of quality health service in that area. The hospital was commissioned in early 2013. The area was one that only a few people could pay a visit. Over the past two years things have changed significantly after the construction of a Hospital by the Chinese. The Mahusekwa hospital also known as the China-Zimbabwe friendship hospital was constructed by the Chinese under their aid project to help Zimbabwe in her bid to provide quality health services in rural areas of Zimbabwe where 70 percent of the population live. The Hospital has uplifted Mahusekwa from being a remote area to a recognisable area. G. Munyai a resident from Rupere village nearby the Hospital said,

“The Hospital is being visited by people from places as far as Harare”.⁶

A 22 year old woman who had brought her child for immunisation also praised the construction of the hospital saying they used to travel about 30 kilometres to the nearest hospital to immunise their children. She said,

“It was actually a blessing to have the hospital in their neighbourhood”.⁷

On ARDA Transau farm where the Marange people were relocated, there is a hospital which was constructed for the people to enjoy quality medical services. This has contributed so much to the delivery of quality health services to the people. People are no longer walking for long distances to seek medical services. Children are now protected from infant diseases which used to kill them in the Marange area. Cholera and typhoid which used to haunt people back in Marange is now a thing of the past.

A water purification plant was also constructed by Anjin Diamond Mining Company. This has provided the local people with clean fresh water which has actually lessened chances of cholera and typhoid which used to haunt the people back in Marange. Water is pumped from the nearby river Odzi purified and pumped into storage tanks ready for drinking. Cases of water borne diseases were drastically reduced. In Marange, cases of cholera have decimated people over the past years. The relocation and the installation of such a clean source of water is quite a blessing. The facility was handed over to ZINWA for maintenance and service. ⁸

.2.1.5 Impact on education development

The construction of a primary and a secondary school for the relocated people in ARDA Transau was a great contribution to the improvement of education in Zimbabwe. The secondary school consists of a science laboratory with computers that enable student to get access to the internet.⁹ This helps in producing well equipped students who are always up to date with the current trends of development as they are exposed to the internet said a female science teacher at Anjin Secondary school. Unlike in Marange where some people could not send their children to school due to long distances, they are now able to send them to school. ¹⁰

A hotel called Golden Peacock Villa was also constructed by the Chinese in the city of Mutare in Manicaland Province. The construction of the hotel does not only add beauty to the view of Mutare but it has created jobs for so many people around the city. Mathew Takura, the executive marketing manager of the hotel expressed a lot of gratitude for the construction of the hotel citing that it had created a lot of employment for skilled people especially those who had studied catering. Zimbabwe is facing high levels of unemployment hence they should be given enough gratitude.

2.2 Economic effects of Chinese construction projects in the society

2.2.1 Creation of employment opportunities

Construction is an economic activity that contributed a lot to the creation of employment to the general public. The brick and tile plant that was established in the outskirts of Gweru managed to employ nearly 400 people during its construction. Also when the construction of the mining facilities in Chiyadzwa, Cheng Plaza, Mahusekwa hospital in Marondera, school in Masholand Central in Chikomba and other projects around the country began, a lot of people were employed working in the mortar mixing and driving sectors. Those who were skilled in the operation of front end loaders, graders, hydraulic tipper trucks, caterpillars, forklifts and other construction machinery were employed by the Chinese construction companies. This enabled a lot of unemployed Zimbabweans to take care of their families and relatives.¹¹

A number of males interviewed in Chivizhe Village claimed to have benefited a lot from the construction projects. L. Chingara praised the project citing that her husband managed to send their daughter to school and completed her ordinary level studies which she had left due

to lack of funds. The daughter proceeded to advanced level and eventually won a scholarship to study in Algeria.¹²

However it is important to note that the research observed the top jobs were given to the Chinese and the locals were allocated physical demanding jobs. The Chinese usually brought with them their experienced experts. No local was given a leading position in the research that was done. Also in cases where the local engineers were sent to monitor the progress, they were disregarded by the Chinese.¹³ It is reported that there was some disagreements between the Chinese and the local leadership on the matter regarding the jobs given to the local people.

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The presence of Chinese construction companies in certain parts of the country have contributed to business growth. The construction of facilities such as schools, clinics, mining centres have a chain reaction of benefits which they come along with. Business and market is boosted through construction of such facilities. According to business owners at Mahusekwa business centre where a hospital was constructed, their sales actually rose threefold after the hospital became functional.¹⁴ A lot of people who come for treatment often buy food stuffs and groceries as they go back to their homes. The area has also become a centre at which vegetable vendors sell their produce as since people convene there for treatment and the vendors take advantage.

2.2.2 Creation of market for potato and fruit farmers

The construction of Golden Peacock Villa hotel in Mutare by Anjin has created quite a good market for the potato and fruit producing farmers who Honde Valley as well as those from plots in Nyanga. There are numerous farmers who have entered into agreements with the hotel administration to provide potatoes, apples, carrots and other vegetable products. The farmers would be given their money a few days after they have delivered the potatoes or the fruits. This shows that the construction of the hotel is quite a blessing to the local farmers who are selling their produce to the hotel.

2.2.3 Demographic change

During the construction of most projects Chinese projects, there was an influx of people from different walks of life in search of employment. When Mahusekwa Hospital and Anjin primary and secondary schools were under construction there was an influx of people from different places who were dominantly men. These include the Ndau, Zezurus from Harare as well as the locals from the nearby towns of Marondera and Mutare. They comprise of skilled and semi skilled labour. Some were employment hopefuls who were looking forward to be employed. At one time the Chinese construction companies developed a tendency of recruiting workers daily. J. R. Chigumba a former employee of the construction company at Mahusekwa hospital said that,

“The process of recruiting every day was called hire and fire”.¹⁵

.The increase in number of people on the construction sites brought with it an increase in crime incidences. There was no contract which was signed between the employer and the employee. At the end of the day the workers were given their salary which usually ranged from seven dollars to nine dollars. Shabbeens developed in the nearby homesteads where

employees of the Chinese construction companies went and spent their daily salaries. Prostitutes were also attracted to these sites hence the issue venereal diseases developed. A local traditional healer in Samuriwo Village centre claimed to have cured a lot of people who were affected by various genital sicknesses.¹⁶

2.2.4 Retardation of development

The failures by the Chinese firm complete the construction of Marovanyati dam in Buhera has been a subject of scrutiny by writers. The firm is said to have won the tender and promised to complete the project in time. The firm gave reasons of lack of funding from the government but locals claim that the firm was not trustworthy and the material they brought was not proper for the construction of such a big dam. The dam was earmarked to be the source of livelihood to hundreds of households in a district that suffers perennial drought. The district has a long history of being affected by drought and the construction of the dam was seen as one of the greatest measures towards reducing drought in the area.

2.2.5 Development of off season employment

Prior to the coming of Chinese construction companies, a lot of people in rural areas where much of the projects were carried out were predominantly agrarian. They used to be busy only during the rainy season. With the coming of the Chinese construction companies' people began to move during off season to construction sites to seek employment. These areas include Chikomba in Bindura, Mahusekwa in the outskirts of Marondera and ARDA Transal. This was also coupled with the fact that most parts of Zimbabwe have not been receiving enough rains for farming communities to thrive. This has left a lot of people with no option but to go and look for employment on the construction companies owned by the Chinese to earn money. Their traditional agricultural practice has been gradually left. Some have gone to work as miners on the newly constructed Diamond mine in Chiyadzwa.

2.2.6 Effects on women, teenage girls and unemployed youth

A considerable number of parents around Mahusekwa business centre and some in ARDA Transal confirmed that they lost their teenage girls to the construction workers especially drivers who were given better salaries. Tipping truck drivers are said to have picked up girls on their way to and from school. Some of the teenage girls ended up being married by these drivers but quite a number of them are said to have been neglected after being impregnated. This has increased the responsibility to parents of such victims who are now suffering with HIV and other venereal diseases. M Maronga a local in woman in ARDA Transal said, “

“Lost her daughter in 2014 who was a victim of gonorrhoeae”.¹⁷

The girl was involved in an affair with one of the tipping truck drivers who had gonorrhoea and eventually she got affected until she died.

The research discovered that most of the parents from the nearby rural villages around where construction work took place live on vegetable, onion, tomatoes, maize and firewood selling to the business community around them, nurses and teachers who are now working on the finished projects of Mahusekwa and Anjin Hospital as well as Anjin primary and secondary schools. Quite a number of them claimed that the projects have changed their lives a lot by providing market for their produce. The research also identified a number of women who are suffering from HIV who were again victims of the construction projects as they used visit construction sites during the night to sexually satisfy construction workers in return for money. The construction workers did not brought their wives with them to the sites they were working on. Wives only came at the end of the month to collect money and went back home. As a result, it was so easy for them to be lured into relationships with the local women.

Chinese bosses are reported to have been in relationships with local girls and women. A certain woman near Mahusekwa business centre was reported to have given birth to a child who had Chinese hair. It was believed that the woman was once in a relationship with a Chinese engineer during the construction of Mahusekwa hospital. The child was reported to have died from an undisclosed illness.¹⁸

As for the youth, the coming of Chinese construction companies in their neighbourhood was somehow a blessing. Unemployed youths who were between the ages of 20 to 30 years were favoured by the Chinese contractors to work on construction site. The Chinese employers believed that the young people had the vigour to work in the construction work since it is a physical demanding job.

2.2.7 Self reliance

The main objective for the establishment of infrastructure by helping organisation or by foreign nations is to make the community self reliant. The community or nation that has been helped should be able to manage the infrastructure after the supporting organisation or nation has stopped or has handed the infrastructure over. Information gathered by the researcher shows that the infrastructure constructed by the Chinese such as water purification plant in ARDA Transau as well as school are responsibly taken care of since the time they were handed over to responsible authorities. Anjin primary and secondary schools have managed to open projects such as poultry and vegetable growing at the schools which is generating funds for the institutions for further growth and development.

The water treatment plant in Odzi ARDA Transal relocation site was also handed over to the local water authorities (ZINWA) that is Zimbabwe National Water Authority. Anjin provided water treatment chemicals that would run the plant for only half a year and the local water authority (ZINWA) would carry on from there. This would teach the local people to be

responsible in taking care of infrastructural material that is important to the society as a whole.

2.2.8 Importation of skills and effects on local labour

The Chinese construction companies have been accused of importation of skills which is disadvantaging the local skilled labour force. The importation of engineers, builders, welders and other skilled personnel in the construction sector has raised some concerns over the matter. The locally produced engineers are overtaken by the Chinese who are brought in by the construction companies. This is working against the principles of the Indigenisation and Empowerment laws that encourage the buy home idea as well as the empowerment of locals. A sizeable number of interviewed people in different places where the Chinese have undertook construction work have expressed displeasure with the importation of skilled labour. In case were they were employed they were put under the supervision of Chinese engineers despite their high level skills.

However the importation of skilled labour has contributed to a lot of cross fertilization of ideas. There exchange of ideas and knowledge in the construction sector between the Chinese engineers and the local engineers as well as builders who worked with them. The local construction sector aquired technical designing of structures such as the Chinese parapet construction style. Some houses surrounding Mahusekwa Hospital, were constructed using Chinese styles of designing that were exhibited at Mahusekwa Hospital. Business complexes have also undergone a fundamental change in their designing appearances. The traditional styles of pillars on the veranda has been totally neglected and adopted the new one that saw verandas being left hanging in the air with only one end being mounded on the wall.

Unfamiliar construction material also featured in the market with the advent of Chinese construction companies in Zimbabwe. Large corrugated iron sheets which were unfamiliar to the general populace in the Zimbabwean construction sector are now a common feature on many houses since they are now provided by Chinese construction material traders scattered all over Zimbabwe. New types of tiles have also come into the market. Corrugated iron sheets are designed, embrodered with special clay material and well cut such that they appear like cement tiles. These tiles have been confirmed by numerous construction worker as being durable and long lasting as compared to the cement tiles that the local construction industry has used since time immemorial.

2.2.9 Conclusion

The effects of the Chinese construction projects in the Zimbabwe consist of both positive and negative. The projects have effects both on the people of Zimbabwe and the environment in which they were established. The researcher observed that the positive effects outweigh the negative effects. The benefits brought about by the hospitals, schools and mining machinery constructed by the Chinese construction companies are of great value to the nation as a whole. However there were negative effects that encompass abuses that were exercised by the Chinese construction companies to the employees that include the total disregard of labour laws which are meant to protect the workers. Former workers of the construction companies have also complained about working till late without payment for overtime. The failure by some of the Chinese firms to complete their tenders has also contributed to retardation of development to the nation as a whole. They one Chinese firm that was constructing Marovanyati dam in Buhera District failed to complete their work. Having noticed this, it shows that the infrastructural effects of the Look East Policy have not been always beneficial to the nation but they were accompanied by some negative impacts.

End notes

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Chapter three

Environmental effects of infrastructural development

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is going to focus on the environmental effects of the infrastructural projects that have been undertaken by the Chinese in Zimbabwe. Environmental effects usually affect the local population who reside in areas where infrastructural projects have been undertaken. The production of waste as well as interference with the natural ecosystems in that environment can be regarded as some of the effects of construction projects. Environmental effects might also be positive as they bring about beautification to the environment as a whole. A beautiful structure makes the environment attractive.

3.1 Noise pollution

During the construction of the Mahusekwa Hospital, a lot of noise was made by the heavy vehicles which ferry material to the construction site. Noise pollution maybe defined as unwanted sound that may be annoying, unpleasant and distracting. According to one business man at Mahusekwa business centre called Mr Tsumba said,

“Vehicles used to move to and from the site even at night. He also said the Chinese used to work even at night making noise that they could hardly sleep. Graders and caterpillars that cleared the area and the road to the site were another nuisance to the locals. He said the noise was just too much”.¹

3.2 Air quality

The residents close to where the construction projects took place have also complained about the unpleasant air they smell during the day when machines are in operation. Mr Mamutse

claimed that the air was filled with carbon monoxide which they claim was very unpleasant to smell. The dust which rose from the ground when the area was being cleared and prepared for construction was another problem which the people found it difficult to cope with. Clouds of dust overshadowed the atmosphere for some time when the earth moving machines were in operation.²

3.3 Effects on water quality

The improper disposal of waste from the construction sites by the Chinese companies is hazardous to the environment. Some of the waste was left heaped on the eastern side of Mahusekwa hospital. Rains have taken some of the waste into the river near the hospital. The life of livestock, people and wildlife is at risk due to the disposal of waste into natural ecosystems. Anjin construction company which undertook the construction of Anjin primary and secondary school was blamed for dumping their refuse on the river banks of Odzi river. Odzi River supplies a number of areas with drinking water. It is also a drinking point to a lot of wildlife and livestock.³

3.4 Effects on natural ecosystems

The Cheng plaza, Chinese shopping Mall which was constructed in Belvedere near the national sports stadium is said to have been constructed on gazetted wet lands. The Environmental Management Agency (EMA) is said to have approached the authorities on the matter but the attempt was shot down.⁴ The construction of buildings on wet land is dangerous to the environment. It disturbs underground water bodies which are essential to locals as some have wells.

The establishment of mining plants around Chiyadzwa has been criticised by a number of people who reside in Chakohwa and some downstream near Bechenough Bridge. The people

who reside downstream have complained that the diamond mining plants were releasing toxic chemicals into the river which eventually contaminate all the rivers downstream which link with Odzi River.⁵ They expressed great concern over the issue saying the mine plant had put their life at risk since they relied on the rivers for drinking water. They also complained that their livestock as well as wildlife in the Chishakwe range were at risk. The Buhera areas which encompass Chiyadzwa are a dry area and receive very little annual rainfall hence the people had resorted to livestock rearing. The contamination of water by the mining plant therefore poses a great risk to their lives.

Chinese business conglomerates are accused for not complying with Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) proposals provided by the Environmental Management Agency of Zimbabwe (EMA). The much disputed construction of the Long Cheng Plaza on a gazetted wetland in Belvedere was indicative of devious dealings between the local authority and the Chinese company.⁶ The area has been declared a gazetted wetland and no structure was permitted on that site. However regardless of the warnings by the Environmental Management Agency, the construction of the complex proceeded which actually shows a total disregard of environmental preservation. The take no notice of the environmental implications associated with huge development projects will haunt the next generation.

3.5 Land degradation

Construction work is always associated with a lot of land degradation. When the Mahusekwa Hospital, Anjin primary and secondary as well as the clinic were constructed, a lot of land was cleared for the construction to take place. Roads were cleared for heavy trucks to move to the construction sites with construction equipment. Trees were cleared off while doing all this. Trees are important in human life as they serve a lot of purposes and should not be

destroyed. They serve as habitat for wild animals and food for livestock hence the destruction of trees should be limited.

Some villagers around the clinic complained about erosion. The Chinese workers who cleared the area in preparation for the construction of the hospital opened storm drains that drain water from the area into the natural waterways. The storm drains are over flooding the small natural waterways and the water end up destroying village fields. Mr Dube of Rupere Village complained about the destruction of crops during rain season due to these storm drains. He said,

“Drain storms that were dug to drain water from the clinic were disturbing their fields”.⁷

3.6 Beautification

The construction of Mahusekwa in the rural areas outside Marondera was a great achievement in an area where a few could bother to pay a visit. There was nothing that could catch an eye in the area before the construction of the hospital. The area was so remote that a few people could bother to pay a visit. However after the construction of the Hospital, it is claimed that some people travel from as far as areas like Harare to seek medical attention on the hospital.

The establishment of Golden Peacock Villa, a Chinese owned hotel three kilometres outside Mutare has been described as a great contribution in the beautification of the city. People have tended to have a wrong perception about the Chinese workmanship and always become sceptical about the quality of their work. The hotel has actually added beauty to the breathtaking view of Mutare. It is one of the most visited hotels around Mutare.⁸

3.7 Deforestation

Though the look east policy has contributed so much to the infrastructural development in Zimbabwe, it is important to note that it was associated with deforestation in areas where structures were erected. According to a village head preferred not to be named near Mahusekwa hospital, the constructions company cleared a lot of trees when they began the preparations for the construction of the hospital. On ADDA Transau farm, the construction company there also embarked on clearing of trees before they constructed schools and a clinic.⁹

3.8 Conclusion

There are quite a number of infrastructural projects that have been carried out between 2003 and 2016 by the Chinese in Zimbabwe. The infrastructural projects that have been undertaken by the Chinese construction companies have both positive and negative environmental effects. The positive effects encompass beautification of the environment. Roads that lead to hotels and schools are often maintained for the easy and convenient movement of people and material. The maintenance of such roads coincidentally helps the communities around those areas where hotels and schools are situated. However it is important to note that though some benefits exist, negative effects outweigh the positive benefits. Some structures have been erected on gazetted wetland despite the warning from the Environmental Management Agency. Preservation of the environment must be one of the greatest concerns when undertaking projects of any kind. Much of the climatic problems faced by Zimbabwe as a nation are largely a result of failure to manage the environment properly

End notes

1. Interview with Mr Tsumba, Mahusekwa business Centre, 2 February 2016.
2. Interview with unknown, Chivizhe Village, 2 February 2016.
3. Interview with Mr Chikasha, Chakohwa business centre, 27 February 2016.
4. Interview with E.M.A Agent, Causeway Building Cnr 3rd Street, Central Avenue, Harare, 7 August 2015.
5. Interview with G, Marange, 26 April 2016.
7. Interview with M, Dube, Rupare village, 8 November 2015.
8. Interview with Mr Rusere in Chivizhe Village, 8 November 2015.
9. Interview with X ARDA Transau, 26 April 2016.

4.0 Conclusion

This section draws conclusions of the study outlining why the research is important based on its findings. Recommendations are made on what might or should happen to improve the effectiveness of Look East Policy in advancing infrastructural development in Zimbabwe.

4. Conclusion

The research was carried out to discover the effects of Look East Policy on the infrastructural development, social and economic impact in Zimbabwe as well as the malpractices associated with the Chinese construction companies between the period 2003 and 2016. The Zimbabwe-China interaction in the construction sector is not a new phenomenon but it has historical roots that go back to the time when the Chinese helped Zimbabwe during the liberation struggle. Diplomatic relations were established after Zimbabwe gained independence. The Chinese were assigned numerous construction tenders including the construction of the national sports Stadium soon after independence. The Chinese also constructed schools and hospital after independence a long time before the adoption of the Look East Policy.

Following the adoption of the Look East Policy in 2003, the Chinese embarked on the construction of numerous structures that include schools, hospitals, and hotels among others in different parts of the country that include Mahusekwa, Chikomba Odzi ARDA Transal as well as in Matebeland North in Lupane. These constructions have contributed a lot to the development of the nation as a whole. Education has been developed through establishment of schools in areas which have long been overdue in need of schools. No society will ever be able to develop if its inhabitants are uneducated in this ever-changing and developing world.

The youngsters are the future leaders of the world and they should be educated enough to be able to lead responsibly in future.

The construction companies have managed to create employment for the local people especially the youth who are quite strong and fit to work in the construction sector. People had been employed as drivers of tipping trucks, excavators, graders as well as builders and general labour. Some people have managed to acquire tuition money for their children to attend school even at higher learning institutions. In cases where schools and hospitals were erected, professionals like doctors, nurses and teachers were able to secure employment.

New business opportunities have been opened through establishment of large institutions like hospitals and schools which attract a lot of people at a single point like in the fringes of Marondera where Mahusekwa hospital was constructed. Business people have already established grocery and food outlets in these areas and many of them claimed it to be quite profitable. The spread of water borne diseases have also been checked through the renovation as well as establishment of new water treatment plants. The renovation of the 60 year old Morton Henry water treatment plant in Harare has eased up water shortages and ultimately improved provision of clean water.

However despite all the good things that have been brought along by the Chinese in the infrastructural development sector it is important to consider the unpleasant effects that came along with the Chinese construction companies. There is rampant infringement of labour laws prevalent in the Chinese run construction companies. Labour laws are meant to protect the workers from abuse and ill-treatment. They also extend the right of join workers committees or unions to workers but these are denied to workers in Chinese run construction companies.

There is also great concern over the environmental considerations violated by the Chinese construction companies. Chinese conglomerates who jointly established the Long Cheng Plaza in Belvedere suburb have been accused of engaging in underhand dealings and disregarded the decisions of the Environmental Management agency of Zimbabwe. The lat at which the building was erected is gazetted wetland that no structure was supposed to be placed on it. The EMA agents tried to warn but the hid was not considered and totally disregarded.

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Fig 1 shows Zimbabwe Defence College



Fig 2 below shows Golden Peacock Villa 3km out of Mutare



Fig 3 shows Anjin Secondary School in ARDA Transal



Fig 4 shows Anjin Primary School



Fig 5 shows water purification plant in Odzi.



Fig 6 shows Mahusekwa Hospital.



Fig 7 below shows Odzi relocation area site view showing houses, schools, clinic and roads



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