AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ZIMBABWE-CHINA ECONOMIC RELATIONS SINCE 2000

BY

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A Dissertation submitted to the Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE), Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Master of Science Degree in International Relations.

Bindura, Zimbabwe
2014
DECLARATION

I, BRIDGET MAKIWA, do hereby declare that this dissertation is a result of my own research and that all other people’s work has been fully acknowledged. I further declare that, it has not been submitted before any degree or examination in any other university.

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Student’s Signature Date Supervisor’s Signature Date
BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

RELEASE FORM

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TITLE OF DISSERTATION: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ZIMBABWE-
CHINA ECONOMIC RELATIONS SINCE 2000.

PROGRAMME FOR WHICH DISSERTATION WAS PRESENTED Master of Science in International Relations (MSc IR)

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Signed: ____________________________

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family who taught me that even the biggest task can be achieved if done step by step.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude goes to the Lord Almighty for giving me the strength and wisdom to conduct this research. My gratitude also goes to Mr R. Chipaike, my supervisor whose advice, insightful criticism and encouragement helped in fulfilling this research. This dissertation would not have been a success without the participants whose intellectual contributions made the research process fruitful.
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AFECC</td>
<td>Anhui Foreign Economic Construction Company</td>
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<td>BUSE</td>
<td>Bindura University of Science Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIPC</td>
<td>China Power Corporation</td>
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<td>DIMAF</td>
<td>Distressed Industries and Marginalised Areas Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOCAC</td>
<td>Forum on China and Africa Co-operation</td>
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<td>GNU</td>
<td>Government of National Unity</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication Technology</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>MDC</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change</td>
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<td>NORINCO</td>
<td>North Industries Corporation</td>
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<td>NRZ</td>
<td>National Railways of Zimbabwe</td>
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<td>UZ</td>
<td>University of Zimbabwe</td>
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<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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<td>ZANU (PF)</td>
<td>Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)</td>
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<td>ZBC</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Broadcasting Services</td>
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<td>ZESA</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Electricity Supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZIMASSET</td>
<td>Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transmission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents
DECLARATION .............................................................................................................. ii
RELEASE FORM ........................................................................................................ iii
DEDICATION ............................................................................................................... iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................................................................. v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ........................................................................................ vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS ............................................................................................... vii
Contents .................................................................................................................. vii
LIST OF TABLES ......................................................................................................... x
ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................ xi

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION ............................................................................ 1
1.1.1 Statement of the Problem .................................................................................. 3
1.2 Aim of the Study .................................................................................................. 4
1.3 Objectives of the study ....................................................................................... 4
1.4 Research Questions ............................................................................................ 4
1.5 Assumption of the Study ................................................................................... 4
1.6 Justification of the Study .................................................................................. 5
1.7 Limitations of the study .................................................................................... 5
1.8 Delimitation of the study .................................................................................. 6
1.9 Chapter Summary ............................................................................................. 6

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .... 7
2.0 Introduction ....................................................................................................... 7
2.1 Theoretical Framework ..................................................................................... 7
2.1.1 Classical realism theory ............................................................................... 7
2.1.2 Interdependency theory .............................................................................. 10
2.2 The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and Zimbabwe .................. 12
2.2.1 The reciprocity of Zimbabwe-China economic relations .......................... 15
2.2.3 Zimbabwe: A major beneficiary from economic ties with China? .............. 20
2.2.4 Sino-Zimbabwe relations: China exploiting Zimbabwe .............................. 25
2.2.5 Zimbabwe and China economic relations politically motivated ............... 28
2.3 Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 30
BIBLIOGRAPHY ................................................................................................................................. 65
APPENDICES ........................................................................................................................................ 72
Interview Guide ....................................................................................................................................... 72
LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

The study analysed Zimbabwe and China’s relations, particularly economic relations. Though engagement (political, social, economic, cultural, etc) between Zimbabwe and China has been interpreted by a number of scholars, this study sought to explore how economic partnership between the two countries is beneficial to Zimbabwe in particular. The study was informed by classical realism in analyzing how states are motivated by the need for survival in their bid for partnerships. The interdependence theory also contributed towards the research examining how states cannot survive alone and the need to interact to maximize the benefits while minimizing costs. States engage each other with the sole reason to maximize profit in each partnership while minimizing disastrous partnerships. Data for this research was obtained through critical discourse analysis of newspaper articles, literature published by various scholars and interviews. Interviews were conducted with members from the academia from Ministry of Higher Education personnel, Bindura University of Science Education staff, University of Zimbabwe staff, Political and economic analysts, Zimbabwean citizens working for Chinese firms and also ordinary citizens. The study also interviewed officials from the Chinese Embassy to find out their views regarding Zimbabwe-China economic partnership. The interviews were conveniently sampled from the population. The researcher relied on those interviewees most accessible to her and those familiar to her. This study strongly argues that the economic partnership between Zimbabwe and China is beneficial to Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has pursued this policy from some years and should pursue it further. The Zimbabwe-China economic partnership between the two countries as established by the study, are not only beneficial to Zimbabwe alone but are reciprocal.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of Study

Zimbabwe and China enjoy an ‘all weather friendship’ which has translated into long term economic relations Xianyi (2007) that has spanned over three decades. There is however no similar interpretation among the media and scholarship regarding Sino-Zimbabwe relations especially in relation to Zimbabwe. Western media and critics in the academia argue that Zimbabwe is a dumping market of cheap Chinese goods whilst parting with their vast and abundant raw materials for China’s fast growing industry (Thompson 2012, Edinger and Christopher 2008, Besada, 2013). A proper historicization of China-Zimbabwe relations cannot be appreciated outside Chinas’ relations with the African continent which date back centuries ago to the early Han dynasty (140-87BC), when Chinese and African contact first occurred long before China’s rapid economic growth (Besada 2013).

China and Africa both share a unique experience at the hands of their colonial masters under humiliating slavery and colonialism. China offered military assistance to many African countries in their struggles for independence against their colonial masters. At a grander political stage African nations helped China get a seat at the UN in 1971 (Thompson, 2012). It is against this background that in 1955 the Bandung Conference Declaration brought together for the first time 29 Asian and African nations (Mawdsley, 2007). As China’s relations with the Soviet Union and the West soured, Africa became its new political and ideological ally (Konings, 2007). China could been seen to be fulfilling a political, military and ideological role with most African states including Zimbabwe. It could also be seen as implementing a system of alliance against other continental giants by allying herself with African nations.

China assisted some Third World countries during the different phases of its involvement with Africa, including revolutionary ‘national liberation’ struggles of the 1960’s and self-reliant development in the 1970’s (Van Ness 1998, Larkin 197). However, it became apparent that economic ties became prevalent as China transformed from being viewed as a Third World poor economy to a global economic giant. Earlier on in the 1990s, China’s New African Policy and strategy was focused on trade and investment flows with Africa.
This new policy resulted in the inaugural meeting of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) that was convened in Beijing in 2000, (Mawdsley, 2007) whose principles’ were similar to those of the 1955 Bandung Conference Declaration. Having faced international isolation after the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 where china was imposed with sanctions by the West, China reinvigorated its political interest in Africa and embarked on a proactive Africa diplomacy (Taylor 2006). This entailed the promotion of diplomacy rather than confrontation, economic development rather than revolution and international engagement rather than isolation (Besada, 2013). This foreign policy was catalyzed by President Jiang Zemin’s tour of Egypt, Kenya, Ethiopia, Mali, Namibia and Zimbabwe (Almanac of China’s Foreign Economic Relations and Trade 1997). During his tour, he called for the rejuvenation of traditional projects aided by Chinas’ increased political cooperation and expanded economic ties. It can be established that Chinas’ relations with Africa are interdependent, against the backdrop of China’s dependency on their demand of energy resources, markets and investment opportunities for its booming industries as well as its job seeking workers. (Besada, 2013)

China’s foreign policy on Africa should however not be seen as merely a quest for resources but its diplomatic strategy to ally itself with Africa against the West and the world, as it has pledged aid, investment and economic cooperation of African countries Zimbabwe included (Besada, 2013). It can be argued that Zimbabwe’s sour relations with the West after the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (USA) imposed illegal economic sanctions on Zimbabwe provided an opportune moment for Sino-Zimbabwe relations to cement. China provided an ‘all-weather’ friendship (Xinhua, 2007). Zimbabwe and China share a long history dating back to the days of Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle against Britain. Zimbabwe received military assistance and training of her military personnel from China (Eisenmann 2005, Thompson 2012, Deacon 1974). Just before Zimbabwe attained her independence, Mugabe had first met Chinese officials in 1979 and diplomatic relations where formally established in 1980 (Eisenmann, 2005).

After the imposition of sanctions and Zimbabwe’s subsequent isolation from the Western world, and the fate China had faced earlier Mugabe in a speech said, “….. Zimbabwe is returning to the days when our greatest friends the Chinese …., we look again to the East where the sun rises and no longer to the West where the sun sets” (Smith, 2006). This speech signaled Zimbabwe’s renewed relationship with China which defined Zimbabwe’s famous Look East Policy.
Thompson (2012), however argues that China is interested in Zimbabwe because of its raw materials and is one of Mugabe’s few ‘friends’ since the time Zimbabwe was isolated by the West. Zimbabwe constitutes China’s biggest source of platinum and iron ore which it desperately needs to keep its growing industries running (Brookes and Ji, 2006). China has secured excessive mining rights, invested in construction and other investments as well as offering Zimbabwe lines of credit at low interest rates worth millions of dollars-improving bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Zimbabwean government has a lot of similarities with Beijing in terms of development and development approaches. China is now a world communist capitalist nation, notions which can be seen to have influenced President Mugabe to recognize that the economic structure of Zimbabwe like that of China is based on capitalism. (Government of Zimbabwe 1982, and Astrow, 1983). Both Zimbabwe and China are committed to the development of capitalism and modernization, however from their own terms which may differ from the dominant Western approaches. Harare aims at developing an indigenous business sector in Zimbabwe (Moyo 1992). Similar views are shared by the Chinese government which has development along its own terms of development. China’s human development and economic growth and development have benefited from Zimbabwe’s plethora of resources while offering tangible benefits to host economies in the process (Baseda, 2013). This study is interested in critically exploring China and Zimbabwe economic relations. It explores how these relations have benefited both countries. The study however places more emphasis on how Zimbabwe has benefited from these economic relations. The study uses a critical qualitative approach to critically assess the extent to which economic engagement between the two countries from 2000 to 2014 has benefited Zimbabwe.

1.1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite Zimbabwe and China enjoying an all-weather friendship (Xianyi 2007), there is lack of unanimity regarding the assertion that “China’s engagement with Africa and Zimbabwe in particular has produced mutual benefits” (Baseda, 2013, Thompson 2012, Edinger and Christopher, 2008). China has benefitted more from this relationship with Zimbabwe more than the so-called liberated ordinary Zimbabweans (Musewe 2014). He also asks the question, “when will we stop and realize that China has only interests of China at heart” According to a political
analyst, Eldred Masunungure, Zimbabwe needs to review its relationship with China, “Bilateral relationships are not permanent and must be subject to constant review. The problem with Sino-Zimbabwe relational issues is that they have been more political than economic. According to Masunungure, this is where we get duped because we have failed to re-cast our dealings with the Chinese in purely economic terms” Thus this study seeks to critically explore and analyse Zimbabwe and China economic relations.

1.2 Aim of the Study
The major aim of this study is to assess Zimbabwe’s economic relations with China and how these relations have been beneficial to both countries but most importantly critically assess how they have been of benefit to Zimbabwe.

1.3 Objectives of the study
The objectives of this study are;

- To explore the nature of Zimbabwe-China economic relations.
- To analyze the Chinese investment into the Zimbabwean economy.
- To assess how both Zimbabwe and China have mutually benefitted from the economic ties.

1.4 Research Questions
The following research questions guided this study;

- What is the nature of Zimbabwe and China economic relations?
- Are Zimbabwe and China economic relations mutually beneficial?
- In what way does Zimbabwe benefit from its economic relations with China?
- What policies are in place to promote Zimbabwe –China economic relations?

1.5 Assumption of the Study
It is the assumption of this study that relations (economic) between and among member states (Zimbabwe and China) are never neutral and mutually beneficial. This study assumes that economic relations between Zimbabwe and China are skewed in favour of China.
1.6 Justification of the Study

The area of Zimbabwe-China relations have been examined and viewed by scholars such as I. Taylor (2006) and D. Brautigam (2008). Much existing literature on China and Zimbabwe relations have valorized how China as a growing global giant has used Zimbabwe as a market of cheap goods and commodities while extracting raw materials for their benefit. The literature seem to suggest that these relations are not mutually beneficial. This study critically explores economic relations between these two countries and will bring knowledge that will contribute to the ongoing Sino-Zimbabwe relations. This research will establish how these relations can benefit Zimbabwe and point to how Zimbabwe can maximize its benefits from this relationship with this fast growing global giant which may help boost Zimbabwe’s economy. This research will aid local policy makers by giving them information that can shape, direct or aid policies on foreign economic relations in Zimbabwe.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The Zimbabwe and China economic relations are considered a very sensitive issue hence extraction of information was difficult as respondents were not forthcoming. The Look East Policy is a Government initiative, this compromised objectivity in the responses by policy makers and those in government. The researcher made use of in-depth structured and unstructured interviews, archival research to gather policy documents and a critical discourse analysis to scrutinize policy documents. Time and financial constraints to travel and conduct interviews were experienced as the research entailed consultations with various respondents. Critical documents on agreements were not made available to ordinary people, students and other interested individuals. However, the researcher managed to access some of the relevant documents and managed to hold interviews with some of the key participants.
1.8 Delimitation of the study

This study was premised on critically exploring Zimbabwe-China relations. Although these span across many spheres this study focused on economic relations between the two countries. The study focused on economic relations between the two countries from the year 2000 when Zimbabwe’s economy shrunk significantly resulting in a desperate situation for the country, to 2014.

1.9 Chapter Summary

The chapter introduced the study and gave a background that informed the study. It presented the historical background that birthed Zimbabwe and China relations and how these normal relations have over the years translated into economic relations. This chapter also sets the pace for the study, laying out research objectives, research questions, statement of the problem, assumptions, justification of the study, limitations and delimitations. The next chapter gives detailed views by various authors on Zimbabwe-China economic relations.
2.0 Introduction

This chapter is on literature review and theoretical framework. It reviews the literature on Zimbabwe and China economic relations including some of the works by (Chigora 2009, Besada 2008, Yin and Vaschetto 2001, Chan and Patel 2006, Xinhua and other local newspapers such as The Herald and The Daily News). Literature on China and Zimbabwe relations was reviewed in themes. The current chapter also reviewed theories that informed and guided the study. These include classical realism and interdependency theories.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Classical realism theory

This study was guided and informed by classical realism. Realism is concerned with the world as it is than how it ought to be. In other words, it is an empirical rather than a normative paradigm (Morgenthau, 1956). In this gloomy world, concepts such as the balance of power and the security dilemma become the main realist analytical tools (Buzan, 1997). Realists consider the state as the principal actor in international affairs and special attention is afforded to great powers as they have the most leverage on the international stage (Mearsheimer, 2001). Furthermore, it is the national interest that animates state behavior as they are essentially rational egoists, guided by the dictates of raison d’état (Brown 2005).

For classical realists, the emphasis for any state must be on ‘relative’ gains only, owing primarily to the anarchic nature of the international system (Hobson 2000). The main tenets of classical realism have been identified as statism, survival and self-help (Dunne and Schmidt 2011). With statism, realists believe that nation states are the main actors in international politics. As such it is a state-centric theory of international relations. They believe that the international system is governed by anarchy, meaning that there is no central authority.
Therefore international politics is a struggle for power between self-interested states, self-help, no other state can be relied upon to help guarantees the state's survival. This approach was informative for this study as it sought to establish how Zimbabwe through engaging China strived to survive and embitter its economy. That the “state behaviour is largely shaped by the material structure of the international system” (Mearsheimer 1995) is another conception that guided this study to see how Zimbabwe’s Look East Policy is such a behaviour, a plan of action that it has undertaken to alleviate its economic woes. Zimbabwe’s international structure, unfavorable relations with Western countries was also considered as the driving force of material searches in China. Thucydides acknowledged some kind of structure in the international system such as the laws governing human behaviour, (Baylis and Smith 2008). According to Thucydides, human beings are inherently egoistic and self-interested to the extent that self-interest overcomes moral principles. To attain security, states try to increase their power and engage in power balancing for the purpose of deterring potential aggressors. He says there is no place for morality in international relations and that “…we know that decisions about justice are made in human discussions only when both sides are under equal compulsion, but when one side is stronger, it gets as much as it can and the weak must accept that.” (Baylis and Smith 2008).

To be under equal compulsion means to be under the force of a law and thus to be subjected to a common law giving authority, since the above laws do not exist, the only right is the right of the stronger to dominate the weaker (Korab-Karpowicz 2006). According to Marchiavelli, a rule cannot always act in ways that are considered good because, in order to maintain power, one is often forced to act treacherously, ruthlessly or inhumanely. One must be prepared to vary conduct as the winds of fortunes and changes in circumstances constrain him,” (Machiavelli 1988). Machiavelli considers the prime responsibility of rulers as attempting to seek the best possible advantages which would enable the defense of their state and ensure its survival (Jackson and Sorensen 2007). This directly influences this study to see how the government of Zimbabwe has attempted to pursue the best possible policy directions for the benefit of the nation. These actions and policies include the “Look East Policy” which was one of government’s initiatives to ensure survival. Machiavelli’s doctrine denies the relevance of morality in politics, and claims that all means whether moral or immoral are justified to achieve certain political ends. The state has no higher duty than that of maintaining itself. Among
Morgenthau’s principles, was his belief that politics like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature (Morgenthau 1948). Power or interest is the central concept that makes politics into an autonomous discipline.

Rational state actors pursue their national interests therefore, a rational theory can be constructed; it is not concerned with the morality, religious beliefs, motives or ideological pretences of individual political leaders (Morgenthau 1948). Carr’s (1946) concept shows that standards by which policies are judged are the products of circumstances and interests. His idea is that the interest of a given party always determine what this party regards as moral principles and hence, these principles are not universal. Carr (1946) argues that there are neither universal values nor universal interests. Those that refer to universal interests are in fact acting in their own interests. They think that what is best for them is best for everyone, and identify their own interests with the universal interests of the world at large. Hobbes’s (1616-1648) concept of anarchic state of nature, as seen as entailing a state of war and such a war is of every man against every man. He explains that, driven by acquisitiveness, having no moral restraints, and motivated to compete for scarce goods, individuals are apt to invade one another for gain. Individuals are also driven by pride and desire for glory, whether for gain or safety, or reputation, power-seeking individuals will thus endeavor to destroy or subdue one another. This theory helped to understand how Zimbabwe, at the turn of the new millennium, received widespread condemnation from the western countries and was subsequently put under sanctions by most of these countries. It further helped appreciate how in its endeavor to curtail the effects of the sanctions, Zimbabwe came up with the “Look East Policy”.

The policy saw the development of cordial relations between Zimbabwe, South East Asia, and the Far East countries, such as the People’s Republic of China, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, India, and Pakistan. This also gave birth to several joint agreements between the Mugabe government and these countries. On the other hand China as a way of fulfilling their economic interests engaged relations with African countries like Zimbabwe in order to access raw materials for its economic development. This theory guided this study to see how Zimbabwe engaged China as its economic partner in its bid to revamp its economic woes. This theory aided
the researcher to understand how Zimbabwe has pursued the Look East Policy in its bid to have an economic advantage from these relations.

2.1.2 Interdependency Theory

In explaining interdependency theory Keohane and Nye (1997) assume that states and their fortunes are inextricably tied together. Zimbabwe and China can be viewed as such states whose economic fortunes are inextricably tied together. This study assumed that these two countries have a give and take relationship based on reciprocity. Keohane and Nye go a step further and analyze how international politics is transformed by interdependence (Crane and Amawi 1997). The theorists recognized that the various and complex transnational connections and interdependencies between states and societies were increasing, while the use of military force and power balancing are decreasing but remain important. In making use of the concept of interdependence, Keohane and Nye (1997) differentiated between interdependence and dependence in analyzing the role of power in politics and the relations between international actors. China has been said to use soft power in its endeavor to secure relations and acquire resources. According to Nye (1997), soft power “is the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants without force or coercions”. On the other hand, Zimbabwe engaged China in order to restore its economic fortunes. There could arguably for this study be said to be no dependency but a state of economic interdependency which explains why the Asian economic giant has been pursued as a better tradesman than the Western countries. Interdependence theory stipulates that an ideal relationship is characterized with high levels of rewards and low levels of costs. Rewards are “exchanged resources that are pleasurable and gratifying,” while costs are “exchanged resources that result in a loss or punishment. There are different types of rewards and costs, emotional, social, instrumental, and opportunity” (Sprecher1998).

Opportunity rewards and costs are associated with the opportunities that arise in relationships. Opportunity rewards are those gains that a person is able to receive in their relationship, which they would not be able to receive on their own. Opportunity costs occur when a person must give up something that they normally would not for the sake of something deemed more beneficial in a relationship. With every relationship there is an outcome. These outcomes are determined by
comparing the amount of rewards present in a relationship versus the amount of costs present. Relating this to Zimbabwe and China, rewards, outcomes and exchange were seen to be the guiding rule in this economic partnership as informed by this theory. However, the theory is used as an eye into how this partnership has benefited the two countries as each enters this transaction for its rewards. According to interdependence theory, people mentally account for rewards and costs so they can evaluate the outcome of their relationship as either positive or negative (Afifi, Anderson and Guerrero 2007).

This study used this approach to evaluate the successes and demerits of this partnership by analysing the policy stipulations and other economic transactions between the two countries to see the extent of benefits of this partnership to Zimbabwe. Interdependency is usually done with some sacrifice to a states’ sovereignty in order to enjoy the benefits that come with it. Cooper (1972), likened economic interdependence to the dollar value of economic transactions among regions or countries either in absolute terms or relative to their total transactions. He further argued that, “as with marriage, the benefits of close international economic relations can be enjoyed only at the expense of giving up a certain amount of national independence’ this helps understand why states sometimes agree to international regimes (based on certain sacrifices that have long term repercussions of some sort”(Cooper 1972).

Relations of interdependence often occur within and may be affected by networks of rules, norms and procedures that regularise behaviour of states. Rules in world politics are not coherent and there exists no overarching authority (Rourke 2001, Mansbach and Riffarty 2008). As a result of this absence of well-ordered rules, there is need to integrate structure with process. Complex interdependence sees interdependence from a cost-benefit perspective. It refers to situations characterized by reciprocal effects among countries or among actors in different countries (Keohane and Nye 2001). In explaining complex interdependence, the twin term of sensitivity and vulnerability must be given due consideration. Sensitivity implies the reaction to change in a policy framework on a country that is as a result of interconnectedness among countries, each policy taken by one country has a reciprocal effect on another country. Vulnerability emphasizes that in the face of policy change that might make one state to be affected, are there available alternatives for states to follow and to what cost. This study was
interested in finding out how Zimbabwe and China economic relations are a matter or interdependence. Some literature argued that these relations are a give and take reciprocal partnership that sees both economies mutually benefiting from partnership.

2.2 The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and Zimbabwe

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was established in the year 2000. It is a multilateral platform for exchange and cooperation between China and African countries that have formal diplomatic relationships with China, and covers various aspects of politics, trade, economy, society and culture (Li Anshan et al, 2012). FOCAC is a bilateral trade agreement between China and Africa which China initiated with the push by African governments to establish a “new kind of partnership” (Alves, 2008) premised on how to face the new challenges of the global economy as well as to protect the legitimate interests of Africa and China. China’s own sensitivity over Western competition in Africa and the urgency of building a permanent cooperation mechanism also prompted the Chinese government to accept the suggestion by African countries to establish a FOCAC (Li Anshan et al, 2012). According to Li Anshan et al (2012), there are 27 member agencies in China involved in FOCAC policy making and implementation, all of which are continually adjusted according to the situation. Africa has more than four levels of institutions participating in policy-making and implementation.

The China Monitor (2006) documented that under FOCAC China North Industries Corporation (NORICO) granted reprieve to Hwange Colliery Company after a US$6.3 million debt accrued after the purchase of equipment. Hwange Colliery Company received machinery including two drilling machines, from Sweden, two shuttle cars from Joy Mining in South Africa, 10 terex dumo trucks, two Atlas excavators and one Terex water browser from Norico in China. It further documented that the mining company’s official statements revealed that production had doubled in its opencast and underground mines due to the purchase of equipment. Economic development critics such as Brautigam (2009) have noted that development aid to Zimbabwe has been rather modest, while the Economist Intelligence Unit (2008) has noted that links between China and Zimbabwe do not appear to have translated into hard cash. This is further hampered by the fact that FOCAC is fairly a young initiative to warrant much scholarly criticism as
pessimists of the initiative would have it. It has only been a decade and some years after FOCAC was initiated and there is still need for some time to allow its initiatives to take root and which would allow for further assessment. However, what was evident in the literature available was that whatever groundwork that was laid so far in FOCAC, proved to be a success as evidenced by media reports on the matter in the Zimbabwean public press. Nonetheless, most of these positive media reports were not sceptically treated as they are from state controlled media which has vested interests in the portrayal of government policies.

Under FOCAC Zimbabwe has had significant economic growth in trade as documented by The Sunday Mail (10/08/14) that Zimbabwe managed to export goods worth US$672 million to China while imports were valued at US$118 million dollars, recording a positive trade balance of US$554 million dollars with the East since 2010. Zimbabwe has been a recipient of huge financial support from China as well as did other African countries in a policy that has seen African economies rise. However, this view is not shared by The Zimbabwean (01/10/2014) newspaper which has described FOCAC and Zimbabwe’s Look East Policy as ‘a poisoned chalice’. The newspaper published an article which said that,

…there are absolutely no meaningful benefits to be derived by Africa if small and weak African nations continue to enter into fragmented and uncoordinated bilateral economic contracts with China. The fourth Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) held in Egypt last month set the tone for China's desire to structure and outline its foreign and economic policy, in Africa. Because of the abundance of natural resources such as minerals and oil on the African continent, China is taking its economic relations with Africa very seriously (The Zimbabwean01/10/2014).

Scholars further argued that nations like Zimbabwe are on the losing end of this deal as China is at heart purely a capitalist nation bent on exploiting weaker states like Zimbabwe. They argued that China is in Africa to benefit from the vast natural resources that are necessary to fuel the Chinese economic boom. While this has been shared by other critics, it remains that analysis of China and Zimbabwe relations are in a binary form. One side is of those against them and another of those for them. While not claiming neutrality or objectivity this study will further interrogate the nature of these relations. Ambassador Lin Lin further castigated the claims that
China is bent on exploiting African countries dismissing these claims as the deliberate result of Western funded propaganda machinery bent on tarnishing the country’s image ahead of mutually beneficial relations China enjoys with Zimbabwe and other African countries (The Herald/15/10/14).

Since 2000, China’s global policy (a phrase that underpins FOCAC initiatives) boosted investments and trade in Africa through Chinese State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) which operate in the continent. This agenda has been heavily structured via ministries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) and financial institutions (China Exim Bank, China Development Bank and China Africa Development Fund) to boost trade, investments and aid. The go global Chinese policy has driven Chinese investment overseas in search of new markets and raw materials for its booming manufacturing industry. The Herald (01/10/14) reported that China has announced plans to establish a solar power station and a clear gas power station in Zimbabwe under the auspices of FOCAC. The two power stations to be built by the Chinese in Zimbabwe are part of eight measures aimed at advancing China and Africa practical co-operation that were announced at the 4th ministerial meeting on FOCAC.

China built two schools in Zimbabwe as well as a hospital and an agricultural demonstration centre at Gwebi. Two more schools are currently under construction in Harare and Lupane (The Herald, 01/10/14). The FOCAC is hailed for its non-political stance when dealing with African countries. Quoted in The Herald (01/10/14) Ambassador Lin Lin said that Zimbabwe under FOCAC should take advantage of China’s non-political approach to business and use China’s available financial resources which can be accessed for development. However this non-political approach exposes China’s deep capitalist motive that aims to maximise available profit at all costs. It is contested by this study that the non-political engagement approach is one of passive neutrality that aims at extracting as much wealth from Zimbabwe as possible without political interferences which derail Chinese siphoning mechanisms.

While African countries and Zimbabwe may borrow money from China under these bilateral trade deals, even at low interests rates, it still remains a point that China will be getting a piece of the local resources and gaining access to some of the most valuable deals (Besada, 2013, p. 88)
that will go a long way into its development at the expense of local economies. Zimbabwe has however benefited from FOCAC as alluded by the former Zimbabwe Secretary for Regional Integration and International Cooperation for Foreign Ministry, Tadeous Chifamba in an interview with Xinhua, (10/09/14) highlighted that, “Zimbabwe has benefited from FOCAC programmes and projects, which include the provision of rural schools and clinics, the setting up of an agricultural technology demonstration centre and the provision of educational scholarships.”

These also include a number of interest free loans as well as small grants from China. China has also been active in financing agricultural production and mechanization (Xinhua, 10/09/14). Under FOCAC China has also been involved in transport and infrastructure development, including rural electrification, telecommunications, the National Railways of Zimbabwe, national carrier Air Zimbabwe and airport upgrading. Zimbabwe was the first African country to take delivery of Chinese built MA60 aircraft several years ago (Peoples’ Daily, 26/02/06). Since then, several other countries have followed suit. The above mentioned developments could be taken at face value to allude to the fact that Sino-Zimbabwean relations are beneficial. It still requires a lot of assessment as FOCAC is still in its progressive stages to see how its partnership and engagement with Zimbabwe has benefited Zimbabwe. The task is sometimes stalled by the fact that has been lamented by scholars in the field that sometimes statistics and actual undertakings between these two countries are not always made public information. However it remains grounded in this study that FOCAC relations have been beneficial to Zimbabwe and that opportunities for development are significant and promising.

2.2.1 The reciprocity of Zimbabwe-China economic relations

There is a building consensus among present scholarship and stakeholders that Zimbabwe and Chinas’ relations are economically sustainable and mutually beneficial to both economies. From the fall-out of Zimbabwe-European Union (EU) relations, Zimbabwe’s marriage with China is seen as a policy that can be pursued despite mounting criticism from the EU and some sections of stakeholders in Zimbabwe. It is emerging that the Asians are a better economic partner which is why China and Zimbabwe relations have been described as ‘all weather friendship’ (Xinhua, 2007).
Friendship entails that both parties involved are mutually benefiting from the relationship. Zimbabwe and China economic relations are an example of a partnership that spans the economic, political and socio-cultural divide. Nonetheless, a Marxian perspective to economic relations has always viewed relations within societies as based on unequal exchanges, which will be a basis of critiquing this partnership. While they may be based on mutuality and reciprocity, this study appropriates a Marxian perspective to unearth the points of unequal exchange to reveal that how such valorised reciprocal partnerships may be skewed in favour of one country at the expense of the other.

China’s human development and economic growth and development has benefited from Africa’s plethora of resources while offering tangible benefits to host economies in the process (Baseda 2013). In the case of Zimbabwe, China’s intellectual and technological expertise has been a welcome contribution to manipulating Zimbabwe’s vast wealth for its development, while the host nation has offered China with investment opportunities. This can be seen as an exchange of expertise and assistance between the two countries, however as in all relationships as alluded earlier by appropriating a Marxist approach will find out that within societies relations are about struggle and power, they are about exploitation of one class by the other (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels 1848). Applying this point of view to Zim-Sino relations may help present scholarship at this to explore how Zimbabwe and China’s economic relationship which has been praised may actually be replete with inequalities and exploitation of one nation by the other.

China's well-coordinated trade, investment, and aid activities have been instrumental in building infrastructure for sustainable economic growth in Zimbabwe (Yin and Vaschetto 2011). In a demonstration of mutuality Gideon Gono, then the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe said, “I would like to unveil to the Chinese people the vast investment opportunities that...abound in Zimbabwe including our natural resource endowments” (Xinhua, 23/04/2005). This indicates that Zimbabwe at the time in question opened its economic doors to Chinese investment which resulted in a number of economic transactions and sprouting of policies with economic reciprocity between the two countries. For example the Chinese company National Aero-Technology Import and Export Corporation and China North Industries Corporation (NORINCO) financed multi-million dollar expansion projects by the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority and the Hwange Colliery Company. China then pledged to engage Zimbabwe
in more multi- million dollar deals mainly in the mining sector. Indeed these may be pointers to a give and take relationship but clearly critics have often pointed to the effect that one country may be taking more while the other may be giving more. (Thompson 2008 and Besada 2013) observed that it is not very clear how Zimbabwe will repay China on these loans and development funds and it may be the case that Zimbabwe has been exclusively opened up to Chinese mining giants which are interested in chrome, gold, nickel, iron ore and platinum for its growing industries. It should be laid to open how the Chinese are interested in Zimbabwean minerals at the expense of other economic activities such as long term agriculture and manufacturing which entails direct investment into the land.

While Zimbabwe and China’s’ economic relations are said to be all weather and reciprocal it must be stressed out that the mutual exchange may not be so horizontal because the Chinese unlike their Western counterparts do not have a culture of building long term settlements and infrastructure. Moreover Zimbabwe is increasingly becoming burdened by debts to the Chinese government which have accumulated over the past man years of borrowing. Besada (2013) explains this further when he argues that instead of buying rights for future exploration and development in Africa and Zimbabwe the Chinese have been seen to concentrate more on purchasing equity shares in established oil and mineral fields. However, The Herald (22/08/2014) headlined China and Zimbabwe friendship built on mutual cooperation refuted allegations of economic colonialism of Zimbabwe by China. Part of the story read,

…the two countries have stood together in weal’s and woes…in recent years China and Zimbabwe have enjoyed high level political exchanges, and economic and trade relations, effective financial and humanitarian aid cooperation as well as fruitful people to people exchanges.

From the above it can be established that Zimbabwe and China have arguably common grounded relations, yet by merely looking at the political economy of The Herald newspaper and communication in general one may quickly raise questions to the extent of this patriotic journalism as noted by Ranger (2009) that extols everything the ZANU PF government does. Such media reports have been dismissed by critics of the Zimbabwe and China partnership as romanticising any dealings between the two countries even when there is nothing to write home about.
That China is reported to perform badly on the world scale of humanitarian aid and assistance to governments in comparison to its Western counterparts which can be used to expose Chinese hypocrisy in its engagement with Zimbabwe to the extent that the once valorised reciprocal economic relations may be deemed negatively skewed in favour of China. The Herald (22/08/2014) newspaper also reported that China and Zimbabwe have benefited from people to people exchanges over the years which have seen the two countries benefit from state and official visits that have seen the country’s relations grow steadfastly through dialogue, economic pledges and diplomacy. These are in the field of education, culture, arts, human resources which include a professional Chinese crew who are in Zimbabwe shooting a tourism documentary which will boast Zimbabwe’s tourism industry and promote it as a good tourist destination in Asia and the world at large. “Sincerity, real results and good faith” are the words that Chinese president Xi Jinping used last year when he visited Africa adding that his government treats Zimbabwe with sincerity and views them as complete equals. This is against the background that the two nations share a common history dating back to the colonial struggle when China aided Zimbabwe liberations efforts (Chigora, 2009). This is perhaps the beginning point to analyse Zimbabwe and China economic relations and how their sincerity began before China was a power house in the global economy. The diagram below illustrates Zimbabwe-China mutual visits.

Table 1.1: Visits by Top Chinese and Zimbabwean Officials, 2000-2009. Thompson (2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Chinese Foreign Minister Tang</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Zimbabwean Speaker of the Parliament Mnangagwa</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Zimbabwean National Chairman of Zanu-PF Nkomo</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Chinese Standing Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party Wei</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Position and Name</td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Chinese Vice Chairman of the National Committee of the CPPC Wan</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Zimbabwean Minister of Justice and the leader of Zanu-PF in the Parliament Chinamasa</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Zimbabwean President Mugabe</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Zimbabwean Deputy Prime Minister Mutambra</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Zhai</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Chinese Member of the CPC Standing Committee Gao</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Chinese Vice Premier Wang Qishan</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above is a clear indication of mutual relations and reciprocity of relations among state delegation teams between the two countries. Chinese delegations visited Zimbabwe just as Zimbabwean delegations visited China to the times amounting to equal trips which should be applauded. Zimbabwe has benefited from bilateral trade while China has had investment opportunities which will be discussed further in the next section. The Zimbabwean media especially state controlled public newspapers have been on praise singing momentum to valorise Zimbabwe and China relations especially after President Mugabe’s visit to China while the private media questioned the extent of the benefit of the visit when it appeared the President was given promises of support and development aid at a time the country needs financial injection. According to reports in (The Herald 26/08/14) President Mugabe bagged nine (9) deals from China in a trip to the Asian country. These include among them agreements that will see China providing financial support to Zimbabwe’s economic enablers such as roads and railway
networks, telecommunications, agriculture and tourism which will help fulfil the Zimbabwe Action for Sustainable Social Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) (The Herald 26/08/14). The article further reported that Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa signed two master loan agreements with the China Export and Import Bank and the China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation which provided securitisation framework for infrastructural development.

Further, another economic and technical co-operation provision or emerging food donation by the Chinese government to Zimbabwe and a concessionary loan agreement for Netone Network Expansion Phase Two was signed. Foreign Minister Simbarashe Mumbengegwi was reported to have signed agreements for mutual exemption of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and service passports while Tourism Minister Walter Muzembi signed agreements between his ministry and the Ministry of National Tourism Administration of China on co-operation in the field of tourism whose implementation will lead to increased revenue streams from Chinese visitors to Zimbabwe (The Herald/26/08/14).

While the public media valorised these deals, the private media especially (The Daily News 01/09/14) mocked them in a story Headlined “Mugabe returns home with signatures’ which said that”…”Mugabe jets into Harare today from a begging trip in China only holding a bag of secretive agreements and signatures but with no cash to revive an economy which is virtually on its knees…” a number of questions can be thrown at these deals and the manner in which China engages Zimbabwe in general. Could it be the Chinese are dictating and setting the pace for engagement and Zimbabwe has to dance to their tune or that the friendship particularly with Mugabe and not Zimbabwe per se is now ‘old’ as some critics have suggested. It remains to be answered as this study will explore how Zimbabwe and China economic relations have benefited Zimbabwe and explore the opportunities for further engagement.

2.2.3 Zimbabwe: A major beneficiary from economic ties with China?

Zimbabwe’s mutual engagement with the Republic of China is a major step in the country’s development and the country should be seen as a major beneficiary from this economic policy of partnership. Zimbabwe has received economic support from China in the form of loans, grants, agricultural equipment, debt cancellations, investments and development projects in the
manufacturing sector, mining sector and rural and urban development among many other benefits (Edinger and Christopher, 2008). To boost Zimbabwe, China has secured agreements to develop Zimbabwe’s agriculture, mineral resources and Zimbabwe has benefited immensely from technical assistance and agricultural equipment and capital injection into agriculture and mining sectors (www.theguardian.com 2013: Accessed 01/02/2011). Media reports (public media such as The ZBC, The Herald and The Sunday Mail and Chinese international news agency media such as Xinhua) have documented that China has emerged as one of Zimbabwe’s biggest economic partners since its relations with the EU soured. The trade volume of Zim-China in 2013 surpassed US$1.1 billion doubling the previously pegged US$562 million in 2010 (The Herald, 22/08/14).

The newspaper further documented that Zimbabwe exports to China are high amounting to US$688 million while imports from China are US$414 million. According to (The Herald, 22/08/14) by 2013 China’s investment in Zimbabwe reached US$602 million which is the largest in any African country. It is further documented that the China Exim-Bank provided US$I billion worth of preferential loans and commercial loans to Zimbabwe over the last three years. Zimbabwe has benefited credit and investment and lower tariffs which come with trade with China as opposed to the European countries whose tariffs are often very high. This policy has been aided further by the fact that China has a policy of non-political interference with the internal affairs of Zimbabwe and other African countries it deals with.

A lot of money and resources have been injected to resuscitate Zimbabwe’s thermal power stations (Hwange Colliery Company) and the Zimbabwe Electricity Power Supply Company (ZESA), not to forget the national sports stadium (Stiftung 2004, Besada 2008, Chigora 1999). Some of these developments were documented some years ago in literature, though seemingly a bit outdated they still stand as evidence of Zimbabwe and China relations a reason why this study will not reprint the same figures that have been printed by previous scholars. Zimbabwe has engaged China in mining deals worth millions of dollars. While these many deals have been signed and agreed upon little is actually known about how these loans and credits will be repaid back. The terms and conditions of China’s interest free loan and concessions from Chinas’ Export and Import Bank are rarely made public and its’ difficult to distinguish between these and
commercial loans (Edinger and Christopher 2008, Besada 2008) prompting scholars such as Lancaster (2007) to argue that these ‘statistics do not exist’ and if they do they are relatively small. This is based on the fact that China has performed badly in terms of humanitarian aid assistance compared with the Western governments.

According to Shinn (2007) during FOCAC in 2009, China announced the cancellation of 168 debts owed by 33 African countries and this included Zimbabwe. This translated into African leaders increasing trust and appreciation towards Asian. Zimbabwe has been one of the countries that has benefitted from the cancellation of debts by China and it has assisted the country in accessing more loans from the Chinese government. Despite the economic sanctions on Zimbabwe, aid from the West had also declined where the engagement of China helped to ease some of the country’s economic challenges. (Zimbabwe and China face a similar fate of sanctions and isolation from the Western). President Mugabe in a speech said, “Zimbabwe is returning to the days when our greatest friends where the Chinese …we look again to the East where the sun rises and no longer to the West where the sun sets” (Smith 2006) signaling Zimbabwe’s renewed relationship with China which described Zimbabwe’s famous “Look East Policy”. This shows that Zimbabwe and China relations have always been present and only now have they been reaffirmed in Zimbabwe’s favour.

Zimbabwe benefited from this engagement though it must be brought to the forefront that, much as Zimbabwe has received aid, aid does not always come cheap especially when the host country is endowed with vast mineral and raw material deposits. This has prompted aid critics such as Dambisa Moyo (2009) to argue that aid of whatever nature to African countries has not worked and will not work. It is therefore to borrow her words “dead aid” Moyo (2009). While Dambisa Moyo dismisses aid especially Western donor aid she gives a recommendation to African countries like Zimbabwe to embrace foreign direct investment and trade with China. What Dambisa Moyo and others of the scholarship do not seem to realize is that China is not in the habit of directly investing in Africa or Zimbabwe in particular. Unlike the former colonial masters, Britain, China has not had a policy and culture of long term investment which is why almost everything coming from China to Zimbabwe is inferior and has been labeled “zhing
zhongs” (Chigora, 2009). The sincerity of Chinese investment in Zimbabwe has been questioned by a number of critics especially when it is measured against Western investment.

A comparative analysis of what Zimbabwe has given or pledged to give China in return for her to receive grants and assistance must be looked into to determine the extent of how Zimbabwe has benefited from the economic trade partnership. This will be the challenge of this study to bring some of these issues to light as some of the figures are not made public. Brautigam, (2009) points out that China is not focused on giving “aid” to Zimbabwe, but conducts business with the country though it provided $103 million in official development aid from 2004 to 2009 through grants, concessional loans, contributions to the World Food Program, and construction of two schools and a hospital. Zimbabwe and China have brokered deals that ought to benefit Zimbabwe and transform it into a better economic powerhouse but critics have pointed out that this has not been so because of Harare’s lack of commitment to honour these agreements as it has failed to meet payments and conditions that apply Brautigam (2009). For example, China International Water and Electric Corporation planned to clear 100,000 hectares of land and build an irrigation system, but withdrew when Mugabe ceased making payments.

After President Mugabe’s visit to China in September 2014 media reports reported increasing further Chinese support for Zimbabwe while others condemned the trip as flawed and full of empty promises. Among other highly publicised developments is the construction of the Kariba South Power Station. Speaking in The Sunday Mail (07/09/2014) George Charamba said that China is set to ignite Zimbabwe’s economic revolution that will create thousands of jobs within the next three years. The same publication said that Zimbabwe will benefit from a plethora of agreements which include key economic areas such as mining, road infrastructure, energy, railways, agriculture and telecommunications along with the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social and Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET).

The Sunday Mail further argued that with the assistance from China, President Mugabe launched the Kariba South Power Station project which is set to employ over 700 Zimbabweans in its initial commencement though more will be employed as the project develops. Though the figures may seem small at the onset it can be seen as a welcome development that will see Zimbabwe
have electricity which will go a long way in Zimbabwe’s economy. There have however been unconfirmed rumours in the private media that these projects and most of the agreements are not viable and are only as one newspaper put it “pies in the sky” for Zimbabwe because they are only promises of engagement and support without any tangible output (The Daily News 01/09/14). The China National Aero Technology Import and Export Corporation pursued a $1.3 billion venture in coal power generation for six years before giving up in frustration with Zimbabwe’s lack of progress in raising electricity tariffs (The Sunday Mail 07/09/14).

Thompson (2012) is of the assertion that Zimbabwe economic relations with China has not really benefited the country rather it has benefited a few elements in the country particularly those in ZANU PF because of rampant corruption in the country and ministries that conduct the agreements. Moreover even in the workforce general local workers in Chinese firms and industries have complained about mistreatment and abuse by the Chinese. Nonetheless Zimbabwe and China have enjoyed and seem to continue enjoying economic relations that Zimbabwe stands to benefit a lot from. Patel (2006) has dismissed critics of the “Look East Policy” noting that there is some “compatibility between their national interests, even if the benefits or loses may be unequal but there is reasonable mutual satisfaction, then the engagement is worthwhile for both.”

Patel however contends that the “Look East Policy” should not be viewed as the sole policy of action but should be complementary to other economic endeavours such as engagement with the West. His argument however grounds and affirms benefits accrued or to be accrued form partnership with the Eastern countries particularly with China. Chan (2006) however dismisses Zimbabwe as naïve if they think China is out to help them as did they during the liberation struggle because they do not have the money nor the will. Moreover their economy is now capitalist in nature and capitalists are not known for being philanthropists. He contends that the problem with Zimbabwe is that it is looking to a bygone era in nostalgia, an era when the Chinese were of mutual benefits, that is before they went capitalist.
2.2.4 Sino-Zimbabwe relations: China exploiting Zimbabwe

While there is a local state media agenda to valorise Zimbabwe and China relations as all good and mutually beneficial, there is yet another school of thought that seems to suggest otherwise. Instead they see Zimbabwe as being exploited by China and whatever bilateral relations Zimbabwe is engaging with China are at the detrimental of the former. China is a growing world economic giant whose expansion like that of the Western countries during their times were hinged on ties with Africa. Africa is deemed as an eldorado, a source of raw materials and markets for finished goods not only for Chinese products but for Western products as well. Zimbabwe is endowed with rich mineral resources and investment opportunities that the Chinese government sets to benefit from. Chinese support for Mugabe has translated into economic opportunities for China, but not governance improvement in Zimbabwe, (http://www.opendemocracy.net/globalization-G8/south_2658.jsp). While the relationship between Zimbabwe and China is deemed economically strong and viable it is also unequal. According to Sokwanele (2005) for China, Zimbabwe is an economic small fry, but for ZANU PF, China is the only way out of a deep hole. As Western nations and banks pull out of the country and apply sanctions, China is increasingly one of Mugabe’s few foreign allies and partners and this is working to Chinas advantage.

Zimbabwe is deemed a high risk investment country by the West. By overlooking these allegations on Zimbabwe, China stands to benefit a lot from its policy of engagement with Zimbabwe since other western countries have distanced themselves from Zimbabwe. It follows that China has no competition in Zimbabwe and is therefore at will to do as she wants with less friction. Zimbabwe relations with China have been lamentable since their commencement and critics have always thought that China has benefited immensely from these relations. China moved into the scene after Zimbabwe’s relations with the West soured. Akonolafe (2007) noted that given that background, the East (which does not impose a bandwagon of conditionalities) is to African countries a “better devil” to dine with. The idea is that they are still an economy whose economic relations like any other between and among member states are exploitative. However, prospects for a longtime relationship are even better, especially given that Asia now
controls close to 70% of the world’s foreign reserves and has advanced in terms of technology (Akonolafe 2007).

Thompson (2012) however argues that China is interested in Zimbabwe because of its raw materials. Zimbabwe constitutes China’s greatest source of platinum and iron ore for its vast growing industries (Brookes and Ji, 2006). China has secured excessive mining rights, invested in construction and other investments as well as offering Zimbabwe lines of credit at low interest rates worth millions of dollars improving bilateral relations between the two countries. Despite China’s activities being well intentioned, it has been observed that the relationship between China and Africa evolves in ways to suit more the Chinese economy than the African (Sunday Times Reporter, 2006). This study critically looks at how Zimbabwe and China relations have evolved over the years to validate or refute earlier notions of an exploitative relationship between the two countries as earlier schools of thought have postulated.

Other studies have pointed to how China has made a dumping site out of Zimbabwe by exporting cheap products that Zimbabweans have dubbed “zhing zhongs” (a derisive term to describe anything substandard) (Agence France Presse, January 25, 2005 in Taylor (2006). According to Sokwanele Special Report (2005) China’s relationship with Zimbabwe should be considered as purely business in competition with the West over resources in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. This can be judged by the lack of China’s commitment to humanitarian aid in Zimbabwe. Compared to Zimbabwe’s former colonial masters Britain, China is at the bottom list of humanitarian aid assistance to Zimbabwe and the world at large (Thompson 2012). China has become a major source of imports as the Zimbabwean economy recovers from years of contraction, with the country exporting mainly tobacco to the Asian giant. More and more Chinese companies are involved in Zimbabwe's economic development. Some of them include Chinese company Anjin a joint diamond mining venture between the Chinese and the Zimbabwe government as well as Anhui Foreign Economic Construction Company (AFECC) which has been involved in two major construction projects in the country. Looked at closely this is not very different from the Western economic imperialism that third world countries have complained about. It can arguably be said that Zimbabwe has simply replaced Western capitalist imperialism with communist domination. The latter is preferred because it is concealed in a
pseudo participatory and near equal approach. It might be assumed that Zimbabwe’s efforts for reengagement with the West who provide better suitable markets may be the country’s long term economic solution as critics have charged (Somerville, 1982). Taylor (2006) argues that in the wake of economic and political disaster with the West, China opportunistically entered the fray and solidified historical relationships with Zimbabwe.

China’s “no-questions-asked” stance towards Mugabe’s three-decade-long rule should be skeptically looked at in the broader context of political and economic policies of member states. Issues of democracy and respect of human rights have always been indices that nations who want to engage Zimbabwe consider before giving a helping hand to Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is viewed to continue to do badly on the world scale of democracy and respect of human rights but China still engages her without question, which must be questioned. China herself is not the best country in terms of human rights respect and tolerance and this must be an outcry for many a Zimbabwean that this relationship may actually be one of exploitation of the locals by the Chinese. It will be worthwhile for this study to find out the nature of these relations. This study like any other on the matter could find out more palatable information by focusing on the negative side of economic relations between the two nations that the traditional approach to valorize them. This is because often by looking at the negative impact of Zimbabwe and China’s economic partnership can more positive results of economic engagement be exposed and analysed.

This approach is plausible for a study like this because previous scholarship such as (Yin and Vaschetto 2011, Besada, 2013 and The Herald, The Sunday Mail newspapers), have tended to document how Zimbabwe has benefited in the process they have valorized these relations as mutually beneficial yet in every relation within society as Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels have argued that unequal relations and struggle for power prevails. Thus by appropriating a Marxian perspective to look at inequalities may result in shading more light into the actual growth and benefits of Zimbabwe and China relations. Chan (2006) succinctly captured how China is bent on exploiting Zimbabwe’s economic advantages.
Chan (2006) noted that,

The Chinese will not ride to Zimbabwe’s economic rescue. The Chinese want to gain economic benefits from Zimbabwe. They want to use Zimbabwe as a springboard into other African countries. The Chinese cannot believe how exceptionally naïve the Zimbabwean government is being. The Zimbabwean “Look East Policy” is a sign of desperation, having trashed a long list of other foreign policy options.

This assertion captures clearly China’s motive in economic engagement with Zimbabwe which is to manipulate Zimbabwe’s trust and loyalty as well as dire need for economic partnership and international ally to their advantage. This study agrees with Chan and Patel (2006) that no country will cross oceans and fly over seas only to liberate the economy of the host country at no benefit. No equal reciprocation can facilitate this unless in it an exploitation of the other usually hosts economy that acts as a motive for engagement.

### 2.2.5 Zimbabwe and China economic relations politically motivated

Zimbabwe and China relations can best be understood by historicizing them to the days when China supported political regimes and Zimbabwe’s liberation efforts from Britain. This is to say that Zimbabwe and China are connected at a more political level than the economic. Zimbabwe and China’s relations can be seen as pseudo economic relations in light of the view that from the onset there may never have been economic relations to talk about. One may question that if they had been; why would it be that since 1980 Zimbabwe had never made a deliberate policy to engage the East directly in business relations. History tells of long standing economic relations between Zimbabwe and her former colonizers, the western powers. Zimbabwe’s engagement with China must be seen as far from a deliberate economic policy than it is more a political propaganda action that President Mugabe and his ZANU PF party embarked on as a populist policy. China could have been seen to have fulfilled a political, military and ideological role with most African states including Zimbabwe when she rhetorically championed Third World countries during the different phases of its involvement with Africa, including revolutionary ‘national liberation’ struggles of the 1960’s and ‘self-reliant development in the 1970’s (Van
Ness 1998, Larkin 1971) which explains how its contact with Zimbabwe has always been political or rather military than economic.

Before joining the ZANU PF party Professor Jonathan Moyo the current Minister of Media Information and Broadcasting Services commenting on Sino-Zimbabwe relations in The Zimbabwean Independent newspaper noted that it is more of a political slogan stemming from Mugabe’s problems with the West. He said that,

The “Look East” mantra was not a policy by “any stretch of the imagination”. There is no such a policy. It’s a political slogan. It’s typical of the ZANU PF leadership to parade slogans as policies. The ‘Look East’ slogan lacks substance and that’s why it was so embarrassing to see the president and government officials wildly excited because of only two aircraft bought from China by Air Zimbabwe” (The Zimbabwean Independent, 10/12/04)

Another critic of Zimbabwe and China relations John Robertson argued that Chinese economic relations with Zimbabwe should be mistrusted as China has never been interested in serious economic relations with Africa demonstrated by its failure to establish permanent economic structures in terms of development as was done by the British when they colonised Zimbabwe. This is an action which according to Robertson can be interpreted to mean a plan of action that is not permanent and is only a short term establishment which will end any time when they have finished siphoning resources. John Robertson has questioned the practicability of the Look East Policy and has recommended that the government needs to mend its relations with the IMF, World Bank, the USA, and European countries in order to revive the economy. He said that,

China itself is looking to the West, and there is no way we can sustain our economy by limiting trade to China, or one or two other Asian countries, because that will give the country short-lived relief. Let's make sure that we talk to the IMF so that it can resume financial assistance, for that is how we could once again get steady forex inflows …

These should also be criticized in light of China’s emerging global supremacy which is a threat to the West. It makes political sense for China to establish deeply entrenched relations with Zimbabwe and other African countries as a political or military alliance system against the Western powers.
This system of alliance can be seen to have been at work when in 1971 in a politically calculated move when African nations helped China get a seat at the UN in 1971 (Thompson; 2012). Against this background one can say that China and Zimbabwe relations are far from economic, rather they are calculated political moves.

China together with Russia vetoed for Zimbabwe when the Western powers wanted to impose sanctions that would cripple Zimbabwe’s economy at the United Nations Security Council Resolution in 2008 (The Guardian, 2008). Chan and Patel (2006) in supporting the idea that Zimbabwe has been modeled to some degree in Chinese political ideology argued that “the indigenization and black economic empowerment policies and the fast tract land reform programme since 2000 are part of the pursuit of socialism”. It is more of a political stance than any other motivated by economics in this regard. This study will further seek to critically analyse Zimbabwe and China relations and how these have unfolded in light of the global politics as well as the possible motives and implications that this policy has.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature related to the study as well as the theories that informed the study. Literature reviewed suggested that Zimbabwe and China economic relations are reciprocal and mutually beneficial; however some schools of thought suggest that Zimbabwe is an economic eldorado for China. Yet another school of thought suggests that relations between Zimbabwe and China are politically motivated that they are economically spearheaded. The need for alliances may be fostering engagement. The next chapter will focus on the research methods and methodology employed in this study.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods of data collection, research design and data analysis used during the study. It also defended the choice of methodology and methods used and gave a critical appraisal of some of the methods and tools used during the study. The population and sampling of the study population was also dealt with in this chapter. This study made use of archival research, desktop research and face to face interviews to collect data. Interviews were helpful in this study as they provided the researcher with a deeper insight into the study area by allowing the researcher to probe the interviewee for emphasis on central concerns raised.

3.1 Research Approach

A research paradigm is the basic belief system or a worldview that guides the investigator not only in the choice of method but in ontological and epistemologically fundamental ways; it represents a world-view that defines for its holder the nature of the world and the individuals’ place in it and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). This is a qualitative research and interpretive in nature. This approach was plausible to be used in this study as it allowed the researcher to formulate judgments and interpretations to the range of discourses under study. These discourses and interpretations are fraught with struggles both in terms of how they may be subjective or biased in their approach (lack of interpretation here or over interpretation may be owed to the researchers’ ability or lack of thereby). This approach is therefore open to multiple interpretations and contestation by other researchers and cannot also be separated from their own background, history, context and prior understanding however subjective they can be (Marshal and Rossman 2006).
3.2 Research Design

Kumar (1999) postulates that; a research design is a procedural plan adopted by the researcher to answer questions of validity, objectivity and accuracy. It can be understood as a procedural plan for considering what data to gather, from whom to gather it, how to gather it, when to collect it and how to analyze the data so as to answer research questions. This was a qualitative research study and qualitative research techniques were employed in gathering data, presenting data and analyzing data. This was largely a qualitative descriptive study of Zimbabwe and China’s economic partnership. It however sought to give more detail to how Zimbabwe has benefitted from this partnership. This approach was advantageous for this study because it merely sought to describe the nature of economic partnership between Zimbabwe and China that have spanned over a decade. This approach is incorporated in this study because it is flexible and rigorous once it has framed the area of analysis which will help the researcher to formulate sound qualitative judgments of research findings. This was used to influence the choice of sample and research tools used in the study. This study made use of qualitative content analysis and discourse analysis of selected archived materials and material gathered from desk top research written by other scholars on Zimbabwe and China economic partnership as well as interviews. Discourse analysis was used to scrutinize material retrieved from interviews with the sampled population (cabinet ministers and embassy members from the Chinese embassy among others). The Chinese embassy was a source of archive material as well as the Zimbabwean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Zimbabwean Herald, Newsday were also sources.

3.3 Population

The word population in research does not have the connotative meaning as would be attached in layman’s language; here it resembles a pool from which elements of study will be selected from which may be representative of the bigger picture. This study critically looked at Zimbabwe and China economic relations. It conducted archival and desktop research of what has been documented on the topic by other scholars which acts as a platform to lay arguments that informs this study. The Researcher conducted interviews with officials especially those from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Tourism and Trade who are
responsible for interactions with the Chinese government. Officials from the Chinese Embassy were interviewed to find out how they have conducted economic relations with Zimbabwe and how these have benefited both countries, Zimbabwe especially. The study conducted interviews with ordinary citizen Zimbabweans especially those who work with the Chinese in their local firms to find out their perception of Zimbabwe and China economic relations. These people often constitute an information rich base as their assessments are fraught with struggles over how they are affected daily by these relations in their workplaces. The study relied on in-depth interviews with political and economic analysts as well as members from the academia from the Bindura State University and the University of Zimbabwe on how they view China and Zimbabwe economic partnerships. Their views were important for this study as they helped formulate and direct public opinion on the subject. These were conveniently and subjectively selected to answer research questions.

3.4 Delimitation of the study

Zimbabwe and China relations span for over two decades and they date back to the time when Zimbabwe was still under colonial misrule. There is a vast field and time frame to which one can conceptualize Zimbabwe-China relations. This study focused on the period from 2000 to (present) 2014. The period contains a lot of activity which range from political, social, economic and cultural. This study however placed its emphasis on economic relations alone as considerable effort has been made to study political relations which are an interest area. Interviews were conducted with key personnel in relevant ministries such as The Ministry of Finance, The Chinese Embassy and economic analysts. Members of academia from the Bindura State University and the University of Zimbabwe were also selected to answer research questions.

3.5 Sampling method

Sampling is the selection of units such as people or institutions for a study. It is about selecting a representative portion from a bigger population as the basis for estimating or predicting a fact, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group (Searle cited in Ndau 2013). This study used the
purposive sampling technique. The researcher purposively selected a sample of interviewees using her personal judgment what is known as judgmental sampling of those aspects of the population that make my study valuable and that make it easy to access and deal with. The researcher purposively selected those political and economic analysts whom she is well acquainted with and has access to. This approach was also used to select those ministries which are not daunting to work with though efforts were made to consult even those difficult ones. This approach used even in the selection of individuals that is the general citizens and employees working in Chinese owned or controlled firms for interviews. This sample population presented challenges for the researcher as these communities are hard and difficult not only to find but even when you do so their time to converse is often limited.

3.6 Data collection methods

3.6.1 Interviews

This study made use of qualitative data collection methods to gather data from the field. The study made use of in-depth interviews and the interview guide was also adapted into a questionnaire for those who were not able to be interviewed, to gather data. These were administered to officials from the respective ministries cited earlier both from the Zimbabwean government and the Chinese embassy. In-depth interviews were helpful in this study as they gave a wide and deep insight into the issues under investigation. An interview is a conversation between one who asks questions and one who responds to questions. The intent is that the one who asks questions gets answers that answer to his/her research (Kvale 1996). It is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest (Kvale, 1996). There is the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production and emphasizes the social situations of research data. Interviews are a way of getting participants to talk about their experiences on a subject matter in the process giving their perceptions and interpretations with regards to a given situation. It is a peoples’ expression from their point of view.

The researcher used interviews to ask questions on Zimbabwe and China economic partnership to 3 Ministers and 8 officials from the selected ministries as well as the Chinese embassy. These
were also conducted to gather data from political and economic analysts as well as citizens’ views on Zimbabwe and China relations. Interviews of an in-depth nature are plausible for this study as they will provide the best window on how people think and feel. Because of their unstructured nature they allowed the researcher to ask ranging questions even those not planned as the interview progressed. Interviews were used to augment general findings from questionnaires. They were used on selected individuals as highlighted above.

This built up of questions provided a rich wide and deep form of data regarding the subject. Interviews are however compromised by their subjectivity and bias especially in terms of responses. Politicians and officials tend to talk a lot and so do political and economic commentators. Some of them often tend to lie and be extreme to one side or the other. The researcher therefore had to be in control of the situation though language and contexts presented constant challenges for the interviewer. These were however resolved and data was gathered.

3.6.2 Archival research

Archival research is a form of conducting research where the researcher visits archives in the form of previously published or unpublished material stored in this case in government departments (Ministries) and the Chinese embassy which has documented something on Zimbabwe and China economic relations. The researcher visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and Trade as well as the Chinese embassy and asked for official documents that have documented the subject under investigation. This helped the study to formulate an understanding on the subject at least from an informed official position though not all the relevant documents were availed to the researcher.

3.6.3 Desk research

This study also incorporated desk research. Desk research entails that one sits on their laptop or computer and surfs the internet and related websites to find out what has been published and
made available on the subject. This acted as another important source of information that forms an understanding on the matter.

3.7 Data analysis methods

3.7.1 Critical discourse analysis

Data for this research was analysed using a critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis is informed by the Frankfurt school of thought. It is a critical approach which studies the way social power; dominance and inequality are constructed, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts (Rasmussen, 1996). According to Foucault (1977) discourses are practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. He makes importance of critical discourse analysis as emphasizing on interpretative context and the rhetorical organization of discourse. The aim of discourse analysis is to reveal the power relations, biases and prejudices which are embedded in language, and which allows a statement to be understood as rational or interpreted as meaningful (Pedersen, 2009).

It is also critical of the subjectivity, inequalities and bias of certain cultural texts and how they serve to reinforce certain hegemonic views over others. It is a form of discourse analysis that studies the relationship between discourses and how their ideological content creates hegemony. In the words of Fairclough (1995), the objective of critical discourse analysis is to uncover the ideological assumptions hidden in texts or oral speech in order to resist and overcome various forms of power over or to gain an appreciation that we are exercising “power over,” unbeknown to us. This tool is incorporated in this study as an analytical tool that can expose and critically look at Zimbabwe and China economic partnership as they are represented in various literatures and the media. It is obvious that whatever has been documented on the relations exposes certain cultural and political biases of the authors. Even material gathered through interviews was subjected to a discourse analysis to extract the ideological biases of the speakers. This was central to the study as it was premised on subjective language.
3.7.2 Qualitative content analysis

Qualitative content analysis is a type of secondary data analysis used to analyze texts, including, interview transcripts, newspapers, books, manuscripts, and websites to determine the frequency and appearance of specific words or ideas. According to the Social Science Methods, (2009) the results of content analysis allow researchers to identify, as well as quantify, specific ideas, concepts, and their associated patterns, and trends of ideas that occur within a specific group or over time. Like discourse analysis content analysis is premised on revealing and unpacking the meaning hidden in texts for more insight into a study area. It can be qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative content analysis tends to be more critical in approach that quantitative content analysis. It can best be used where deeper meaning is implied while the other is used in rigorous scientific methods. This study is largely qualitative hence qualitative content analysis was used on archive materials and material gathered through desktop research of published material. It is however compromised by subjective judgments.

3.8 Ethics

Ethics are generally understood to be issues of morality and relate to the conduct of oneself in the best morally acceptable ways. In research these are the do’s and don’ts when conducting research. Research processes and findings should be ethical. This study acquired consent from the government departments and ministries and everyone from which data was gathered. The researcher made it a point that data found and given with trust and utmost confidence from interviewees will not be mis-represented to suit the findings of study. The researcher for the purposes of this study did not use names of individuals who may feel they do not want their names published; however for some individuals there was no exception as their name carries weight which will validate the study findings. Pseudo names were used in this regard. The researcher treated information given to her with privacy and academic protection of such material were employed.
3.9 Data presentation

This was largely a qualitative interpretive study. Data for this research will be presented in a qualitative thematic form. Each theme will carry an argument supported by scholarship of a single mind to present argument. This approach has the advantage when dealing with subjective issues it allows the researcher to present their arguments in a broad and open manner as possible allowing for interpretation and analysis.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter was on research methods and methodologies. It has provided the methods that will be used to gather data and interpret data as well as present data. The following chapter presents and analyses research findings.
CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and analysis research findings. This study explored economic relations between Zimbabwe and China from the year 2000 to present (2014). This study was qualitative in nature hence in-depth interviews of a purposively sample were used. The study conducted interviews and distributed interview guide questions to economic analysts, political analysts and selected members from the academia as well as personnel from the Ministry of Finance and The Chinese Embassy. Desktop and archival research also facilitated the gathering of data. Research findings are presented in qualitative thematic analysis. The researcher also interviewed members from the general public to gather their views on how their individual perceptions on Zimbabwe and China economic relations. These were conveniently selected from workmates and friends and family as well as associated with whom interaction was made. Some of the respondents pointed to the idea that Zimbabwe stands to benefit from economic engagement with China while others were skeptical. Their findings will be presented in the discussion below. This study established that there are binaries in terms of interpreting or describing the effects of Zimbabwe’s economic partnership with China as will be presented in the findings.

4.1 Zimbabwe and China’s economic relations a product of history

This study was interested in finding out how Zimbabwe and China economic relations have been of benefit particularly to the host country Zimbabwe. While the study sought to address this question, it established that relations between Zimbabwe and China date back in history. Both countries have suffered humiliating slavery and colonization under the hands of Western superpowers. China having attained her independence first took it upon herself to assist African countries in the cause of their liberation from British colonial rule. Zimbabwe received assistance from China during the liberation struggle against British colonial misrule. In the 1960s China supported guerrilla movements that waged war against the Smith regime (Thompson, 2012) as
Beijin trained ZANU cadres in China. According to Thompson (2012) and Besada (2013) China’s first contact with Zimbabwe was more politically motivated as observed by Thompson that China’s support for ZANU was part of its anti-Sovietism policy which resulted in the shaping of the ZANU ideology. The party (ZANU PF) has since been informed by a Marxist-Maoist thinking (Thompson, 2012). Patel (2006) also documented the contemporary roots of the “Look East Policy” which date back to Zimbabwe’s 1992 economic thrust to its foreign policy which however acquired a high profile because of the ongoing dispute and stalemate with the west. This concurs with what the researcher gathered through interviews with respondents that the genesis of Zimbabwe and China economic relations far from being political were also economically induced. An academic interviewed ¹ highlighted that Zimbabwe and China economic relations are a direct result of political relations from the liberation era when China aided Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe and China share a fair disdain for imperialist nations like Britain and America because they are former colonial masters. China like the bigger Third World brother is bent on lending a helping hand to other Third World countries like Zimbabwe. Subsequently, this has opened way for Chinese investment in Zimbabwe. This study argues that Zimbabwe has simply revisited its historical pages and revitalized its historical relations with China transforming it into an economic policy it has pursued. The Look East Policy has however mixed feelings as will be discussed in the subsequent themes.

China could have been seen to be fulfilling a political, military and ideological function with most African states including Zimbabwe when she rhetorically championed Third World countries during the different phases of its involvement with Africa, including revolutionary ‘national liberation’ struggles of the 1960’s and ‘self-reliant development in the 1970’s (Van Ness 1998, Larkin 1971) which explains how its contact with Zimbabwe has always been political. The study also established that economic relations between Zimbabwe and China are historically a product not only of China and Zimbabwe’s relationship during the Chimurenga wars of liberation. Data gathered from interviews and desk research also suggested that declining political and economic relations between the West and Zimbabwe consequently birthed Zimbabwe’s “Look East Policy”.

¹ Historian Academic from the University of Zimbabwe in the department of Political and Administrative Studies
Souring relations between Zimbabwe and the West transformed into economic opportunities for China in Zimbabwe. Chipaike and Makwerere (2012) have argued that Chinese presence in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular in an “offensive to dethrone the USA” According to Chigora and Chisi (2009) “Zimbabwe, in particular, after receiving unfavorable treatment by the West, developed a new policy of associating with the East” whose successes are doubted and of mixed feelings. As argued by one academic², whatever reactions to the policy “…it was a reaction to Western imposed sanctions” which directly resulted in Zimbabwe looking east. This coincides with what President Mugabe cited in Smith (2006) “…we look again to the East where the sun rises and no longer to the West where the sun sets.” Ironically the sun rises in the East (China) and sets in the West (Europe) where there is alleged darkness. It is obvious no one wants to invest their money and resources in darkness. One would rather invest in the sunshine offered by the East. However, the sun in the East may not be as sympathetic. The sun is well known for its scorching heat which destroys everything in its path and this could be the Zimbabwean curse. Wherever the sun rises or sets, what is apparent is that Zimbabwe’s policy of economic engagement with China has had a number of reactions from stakeholders and analysts. A political analyst³ said that Zimbabwe has managed to survive years of criticism because it is not an economic policy that emerged out of the bush. It is a product forged out of history, a history which is replete with signs and symbols or revolutions and blood. He further said that, “when a country assists another country out of war against colonialism to attain independence, they are most likely to be the friend to whom you are indebted to. Such is the economic partnership between Zimbabwe and China. It is a product of history”.

4.2 Engagement with China: A policy of economic desperation.

This study established that Zimbabwe’s policy of economic partnership with China is a result of political and economic desperation. Zimbabwe having been isolated from trade and economic co-operation with the West, engaged China in a desperate attempt to revive if not keep its economy hanging until some other alternative policy comes.

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² Lecturer from the Bindura University of Science Education Peace and Governance
³ Political analyst. Harare Polytechnic College department of Mass Communication
China was engaged with the hope that political and economic relations with the West would soon normalize, though this has taken longer than anticipated. In this form of desperation, China coming into this partnership on the upper hand is seen as the benefactor. This sentiment was shared by the majority of respondents who expressed their views that Zimbabwe’s engagement with China is not genuine but as a result of desperation. One academic⁴ said that “Zimbabwe has simply run out of economic options and has turned to China because they are the only ones willing to work with Zimbabwe.” This point is hammered by what Chan (2006) established that Zimbabwe in the face of isolation from the West enthusiastically revived its historical ties with Beijing. This is what he referred to as a nostalgic feeling that ruled Zimbabwe’s engagement with China. However, as noted by the researcher, the ideas and times of the 1980s were certainly different as those of the 2000s which makes this partnership less desirable. Nonetheless, another economic analyst⁵ interviewed argued that Zimbabwe’s “Look East Policy” was one of President Mugabe’s stubborn and desperate attempts to keep the economy surviving for few more years while he adds more years to his presidency”. He further argued that the Mugabe regime faced with a domestic economic and political crisis and opposition from the MDC and international isolation from the West was faced with no other option than to rely on a longtime friend, China”. China was that all weather friend (Xinhua, 2007). This argument is supported by what has been raised earlier in chapter two, when Professor Jonathan Moyo before joining ZANU PF party said that The “Look East Policy” mantra was not a policy by any stretch of the imagination. “There is no such a policy, it’s typical of ZANU PF leadership to parade policies as policies”. The “Look East Slogan” lacks substance and that’s why it was so embarrassing to see the President and government officials widely excited…” (The Zimbabwean Independent, 10/12/04).

This study asserts that the economic partnership between Zimbabwe and China was not only a policy devoid of a blueprint but also that it was a ‘reaction to Western isolation than it was a deliberate policy of action’ as pointed out by a respondent from the Ministry of Finance⁶. He further said that, Zimbabwe never intended to make China its primary source of economic transaction but was simply reacting to the changing economic environment”.

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⁴ An academic in the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development
⁵ Economic analyst from the University of Zimbabwe’s department of Economics
⁶ Ministry of Finance
This is further supported by what Chipaike and Mandara (2013) noted that Zimbabwe’s economic engagement with China could be seen as merely opportunistic and not deliberate. By looking at Zimbabwe’s foreign policy engagement soon after independence stretching to just before 2008 and before the commencement of the China policy, one may see that there was little if no concern for trade with the Asia giant. It is when lucrative Western markets and business turned sour that China was ‘suddenly remembered.’ This prompted some of the interview participants\(^7\) to postulate that “Zimbabwe’s economic engagement with China was simply put a scapegoat.

Another respondent\(^8\) interviewed, further said that Zimbabwe’s economic engagement with China is a short lived policy, and envisaged that once relations with the West are normalized, the Asian giant will be abandoned. “This economic partnership or policy whatever you call it is temporary and will soon end when we have normalized our relations with the West,” said the respondent. However, what has been discussed above supports what Thompson (2012) postulated that “China’s support waned in the 1970s, but picked up again in the 1990s.”

### 4.3 Binaries in interpreting Zimbabwe and China economic relations

This study established that there are binaries among scholarship and stakeholders and the general public with regards to how Zimbabwe-China economic partnership has been of benefit to Zimbabwe. There is a discourse that views Zimbabwe and Chinese economic relations as mutually beneficial and the other that views economic relations between the two countries as not beneficial to Zimbabwe. China is seen as exploiting Zimbabwean markets.

\(^7\) Academic, Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development
\(^8\) Academic, Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development
4.3.1 Economic relations between China and Zimbabwe profitable to Zimbabwe

This study established that economic relations between Zimbabwe and China are prosperous and have potential for economic growth for the host country. Zimbabwe stands to benefit immensely from engagement with China. Trade between the two countries have increased as documented by The Herald (22/08/14) increased to over $600 million by the end of 2013 and increased to over $1 billion by mid July 2014. An official from the Embassy of China\(^9\) in an interview, said that Zimbabwe benefitted from China as China has aided Zimbabwe in a number of projects which include construction of schools in Mazowe and Bindura and hospitals in Mahusekwa and Chinhoyi. He further said that his government has supported Zimbabwe financially in form of loans and monetary concessions worth millions of dollars. Edinger and Christopher (2008) have categorised economic support from China to Zimbabwe into loans, grants, agricultural equipment, debt cancellations, investment and development projects in the manufacturing sector, mining sector and rural and urban development.

These positive developments have been shared by the general public as evidenced by what one member\(^10\) of the general public in Harare said, “given the nature of economic cooperation between the two countries, Zimbabwe’s is to benefit immensely from the mega deals recently signed by President Mugabe while on his trip to China. “As Zimbabweans, we are putting our hopes on China as we have read in the papers that they are supporting us”. Media reports confirmed that President Mugabe signed at least nine (9) deals with the Chinese government which are set to resuscitate Zimbabwe’s economy. These include among them agreements that will see China providing financial support to Zimbabwe’s economic enablers such as roads and railway networks, telecommunications, agriculture and tourism which will help fulfill the Zimbabwe Action for Sustainable Social Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET). (The Herald 26/08/14).

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\(^9\) Economic and Commercial Councilor Official from the Chinese Embassy, Harare, Zimbabwe

\(^10\) A Zimbabwean citizen youth from Waterfalls suburb, Harare
The article further reported that Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa signed two master loan agreements with the China Export and Import Bank and the China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation which provided securitization framework for infrastructural development. China will in line with these deals aid digitization of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) and Transmedia ahead of the June 2015 International Telecommunications Union deadline after which all broadcasters should have switched to digital. These media reports have been well received even by political and economic analysts\(^{11}\) who have given increasing support of Zimbabwe’s engagement with China. An economic analyst said that “the general Zimbabwean citizenry should place hope on the recently signed deals by the President as they are an indication of mutual relations that we may benefit from if we show commitment”. According to the Herald (26/08/14) an integrated project between Zimbabwe and Chinese firms, China Africa Sunlight Energy (CASECO) signed a US$ 2billion deal that will see the firm construct a 600 megawatt thermal power station at the Gwayi by 2017 producing 2.7 million tons of underground coal per year. Further the Gwayi-Shangani Dam as well as the Gwayi-Insukamini Power Station transmission line will be built, reported the Herald of the same day. These are and will be welcome developments when they have been completed.

There is still skepticism over these deals because most of them are still not yet final and they still need to be financed by Zimbabwe’s money or minerals”, commented a member from the academia\(^{12}\). This prompted the private media to criticize these deals saying that from his return from China President Mugabe bagged only signatures as there was no loan or foreign direct investment. An article published in The Newsday (27/03/14) revealed that Zimbabwe is set to benefit from economic partnership with China as the China Power Corporation (CIPC) expressed interest to undertake a US$2, 2 billion Sengwa power project in Gokwe. The project once completed is expected to generate 1200 megawatts under phase 1.

\(^{11}\) Economic and Political analysts as quoted in the media reports

\(^{12}\) Academic, Bindura University of Science Education department of Peace and Governance
However, Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa said that these are still proposals and Zimbabwe may not say at the moment the deals are sealed as investigations are still under way as the CPIC is still carrying out research on the hydro-thermal power projects in the country. Bilateral trade between Zimbabwe and China between January and September 2013 topped US$915 million, which was an increase by at least 30 percent from 2012. Zimbabwe from January to May 2014 exported more than US$ 672 million worth of goods to China and imported US$116 million wares from China, an indicative Zimbabwe has a positive balance of trade with China (The Sunday Mail, 24/08/14).

The Zimbabwe Power Company also signed a US$1 billion mega deal with China firm Sino hydro Power Station following President Mugabe’s visit to China. In light of this evidence, an academic\textsuperscript{13} interviewed said that “Zimbabwe should further strengthen relations with China, but should be cautious when undertaking these deals because China is shrewd but can lend a helping hand to Zimbabwe”. The Herald also reported that Hwange Thermal Power Station units 7 and 8 add 600 megawatts to the national grid (The Herald, 11/10/14). There is little doubt that if these deals commence especially in the energy sector Zimbabwe is set to have enough electricity to light up its homes and run its industries. Zimbabwe depends on electricity for a number of activities such as farming. Zimbabwe has an agro-based economy and most of its winter crops especially wheat depend on electricity for irrigation.

A member of the public interviewed\textsuperscript{14} who is also a farmer from Mazowe said that engagement with China “is a welcome development that will boost Zimbabwe’s agriculture activities and see Zimbabwe return to having food self-sustainability and maybe be an exporter of grain as it once was”. He further elaborated how Zimbabwe has a ready market for its tobacco which is being avoided by other European markets and a source of agriculture and farming equipment. Local business people\textsuperscript{15} from Harare supported that reviving local industry was a challenge for Zimbabwe currently as cost of repairing and replacing equipment is very high.

\textsuperscript{13} Academic, Bindura University of Science Education Department of Peace and Governance
\textsuperscript{14} A farmer in Mazowe.
\textsuperscript{15} Local business people from the Harare CBD
“It is better to make use of what is being bought from outside” He gave an example of the cost of production of a men’s shirt as coming to US$25 compared to the same shirt from China sold at US$5. This is however against the fact that China has cheap labour as it makes use of prisoners unlike Zimbabwe that is governed by labour laws, hence cost of production will not compete with China products. There was once a programme called DIMAF, that Zimbabwe put to test in a bid to exempt duty on machinery and equipment for the industry but still cost of production remained high. “Partnership is an option for Zimbabwe at present”.

According to Information received from the Chinese Embassy official documents, China was in the process of drilling 500 boreholes nationwide with no repayment provision. Transport industry is being resuscitated eg. NRZ vehicles, buses, and aero planes. However, an Economist\textsuperscript{16} argued that the challenge of these projects and equipment supplied are not durable as most of them have not lasted for long. Another problem to add to this catastrophe was that given by a government official\textsuperscript{17} that when such deals or agreements are made, technical experts are not involved who are able to assess the durability and quality of machinery bought. Despite the low quality products from China, argued one academic\textsuperscript{18} “It is us the local Zimbabweans who actually go and buy the cheap quality products why do we have to blame the Chinese. The Chinese produce for all levels so it is up to the buyer to choose depending on his/her pocket”. The onus remains on the buyer, as it is the Zimbabwean business people who go to China and buy cheap low quality goods hence blame should not be put on China alone for producing low quality products.

\textsuperscript{16} Industrial Economist
\textsuperscript{17} Official member from the Ministry of Finance, Harare
\textsuperscript{18} A member of the academia from the University of Zimbabwe, Political and Administrative Studies Department
4.3.2 Economic engagement with China disastrous

The policy of economic engagement with China is disastrous. It is a policy Zimbabwe has embarked on naively and one that will lead to continued economic exploitation as opposed to economic freedom. A number of scholars, critics and stakeholders have expressed concern regarding Zimbabwe’s economic partnership with China pointing out that Zimbabwe is pursuing this policy at its own disadvantage. Chigora (2009) has pointed to the effect that Zimbabwe has been reduced to a dumping site of cheap Chinese goods (zhing zhongs) which have flooded Zimbabwe’s market. An academic in an interview argued that, “it is not the Chinese who bring these substandard commodities to Zimbabwe, but it is Zimbabwean small scale business man/women who import substandard goods. This is because they have little money to import high quality goods for resale to a poor market. They make do with what can be bought at whatever profit”. While this has been a traditional criticism against economic partnership with China it is still a point that continues to be raised by stakeholders and critics that China dumps inferior products to Zimbabwe as it continues its cold war against the USA in a scramble for Africa. A point which has also been noted by scholars such as Chipaike and Makwerere (2012).

The Sokwanele Report of 2005, argued that for China, Zimbabwe is an economic small fry, but for ZANU PF, China is the only way out of a deep hole. Zimbabwe is in this regard seen as nothing but an eldorado, a source of raw material and a market of Chinese finished goods. China is in Zimbabwe because she has a large growing industry back home which needs to be sustained and fueled by Zimbabwean minerals such as coal and platinum. This study is in agreement with Stephen Chan that China could be in Zimbabwe to exploit Zimbabwe’s traditional trust for the Asian giant into economic opportunities that come from having an economic base in Zimbabwe.

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19 A member of the academia from the University of Zimbabwe, Political and Administrative Studies Department
Zimbabwe acts as a base station of China while she spreads her tentacles elsewhere in other African countries. Chan (2006) strongly warned that “the Chinese will not ride to Zimbabwe’s economic rescue. The Chinese want to gain economic benefits from Zimbabwe. They want to use Zimbabwe as a springboard into other African countries.” This has also been lamented by members of the public interviewed in Bindura and Harare who said that Zimbabwe has been reduced to a source of cheap raw materials and cheap markets of Chinese manufacturing industries. “It is lamentable how we cannot fight this off because we have no other option”, commented the public. This statement is in agreement with Chan (2006) that this is not only sign of desperation having trashed a long list of other foreign policy options but that this and other actions of desperation are nothing but disastrous to Zimbabwe. Engagement with China is a delay of the inevitable collapse of the Zimbabwean economy if it is not augment by trade elsewhere. That China is using Zimbabwe as a springboard to other African countries is a concern which was raised further in an interview with a government official who indicated that “of all the high profile visits by the Chinese government officials none of the high ranking officials visited Zimbabwe since 2010. Instead they went to Sudan, Angola and South Africa among other African countries and an indication that they avoided or are still avoiding direct investment in Zimbabwe”. This is further evidenced by what has been published in (The Herald, 11/09/14) in a story headlined Underway: “The recolonisation of Africa”. The article argued that Zimbabwe and Africa are recipients of technology and expertise to counter British influence in her former allies. The argument being that China is only in Zimbabwe as a way of trying to cut and replace British imperial ties replacing them with Chinese economic ties which bring pseudo benefits to host African countries in a bit to lure them.

20 Members of the public in Bindura and Harare
21 Foreign Affairs official
This study is therefore in agreement with Makwerere and Chipaike (2012) that China’s presence in Zimbabwe is a well calculated cold war strategy to out maneuver the West. China’s presence in Zimbabwe should be worrisome to say the least. Both China and the West are scrambling for Zimbabwean resources (Chipaike and Makwerere 2012). This scramble as noted by Nesbert Ruwo an investment banker based in South Africa in an article published in The Standard (14-20/09/14) is more economical manifesting in the scramble for deals in mining, transport, manufacturing sector, power and industry. Military colonization in the 21st century is not only costly but widely internationally condemned but economic colonialism in condoned if not fiercely promoted by governments.

Given China’s insatiable appetite for resources, she is leading the international pack for resources to support its growing industry back home, points which have been raised earlier. Chinese presence in Zimbabwe and Africa is not a benevolent act, but one of calculated intent to its benefit. Perhaps this is true that the Chinese are avoiding foreign direct investment in Zimbabwe because of political uncertainty which has made Zimbabwe a high risk investment country. Besada (2012) and Thompson (2013) have documented that China still engages with Zimbabwe on basis of political none interference. This can be viewed as a deliberate attempt by the Chinese government to seemingly be passive about Zimbabwe’s politics like any other country that wants to silently siphon Zimbabwe’s resources like one economic analyst commented. He pointed out that “if China is truly interested in investing in Zimbabwe directly, then it would like any other investor nation be concerned about issues of political instability and democracy in Zimbabwe”.

22 An economic analyst from Harare Polytechnic College
Its deliberate silence on this issue exposes the Chinese hidden motives. If at all their current economic partnership with Zimbabwe is to be analysed it can only be analysed as being a partnership of the horse and the rider. China is riding on Zimbabwe’s back to gain economic access, supremacy and control of the African continent ahead on Britain and American and any other Western power”, he said.

Put in other words, China is economically colonizing Zimbabwe. Media reports of possible adoption of Chinese currency once circulated. These could only be some signs of economic imperialism. Zimbabwe has a lot of money and minerals with the Zimbabwean (25/09/14) claiming that about $200million has been siphoned out of the country to the China Bank via the Hwange Colliery operation. The Sunday Mail (24/08/14) raised concern over Zimbabwe’s partnership with China. The newspaper quoted a senior government official saying that “China is not Father Christmas”. Zimbabwe should be worried that China has no culture of injecting foreign direct investment than it is on landing its hands on infrastructure and mining deals. Engagement with China is even more disastrous to Zimbabwe because according to a study conducted by the Centre for African Studies at South Africa’s Stellenbosch University on China’s role in development of African infrastructure revealed that Beijing even when given mining concessions and infrastructure development contracts often they contract their own companies.

For example Chinese contractors have been hired especially in ICT to provide ICT and expertise which Zimbabwe may already endowed with. These are usually state-owned enterprises to implement agreed projects at the expense of local contractors. This is bad for local businesses that would have been out bided by the Chinese in these projects because they lack capital and superior machinery. The Sunday Mail further lamented how more than half of the material used in these projects are imported directly from China while local manufacturers and suppliers have the same products. A commentary in The Daily News (27/08/14) also agreed with the point raised above noting that the Chinese have been only known to put their money where they provided the human labour from their host country, ideas that have also been documented by (Aleksandra Gadjala and Marek Hanusch, 2010) that China has often dictated to its markets. A
senior government official stated that no less than 50% of contract procurement in terms of equipment, technology and services must come from China directly which is once again promoting and protecting Chinese export business interests. He further criticized China’s funds which have been praised for so long as concessionary and they come with conditionality’s but they are tied to Beijing’s economic interests.

This is true of what Zambia development scholar and writer Dambisa Moyo argued that aid is African and in this case Zimbabwe in particular will not work because not only does it come with conditionalities but it is dead aid. This is in agreement with what Ambassador Christopher Mutsvangwa has said that Zimbabwe should unlearn that China is not Father Christmas (The Sunday Mail, 24/08/14). Another government official revealed that Zimbabwe does not have a policy that governs the engagement of such relations with China. “Any person can engage in partnership with the Chinese people and most of them government and its officials (mostly top government officials) on behalf of the country”. “Key ministries such as the Ministry of Finance is mostly called at ground breaking ceremonies and to issue certificates of cooperation on behalf of government”, he said.

It was revealed that Zimbabwe’s negotiating position is very weak, an example given during an interview was of the National Defence College that was built by the Chinese, currently the government is paying for its construction in cash and at the same time the Chinese have been given mining concessions on top of that which begs the question, If payment is being done then why the mining concessions involved on top of payment being made? The Ministry of Finance is currently working on an Aid Coordination Policy; this is meant to be the first policy to govern trade/economic relations and try to end the porous system that is affecting the country’s economy. This policy as indicated during the interview was proposed during the GNU where it was agreed that Zimbabwe needed a strong policy so as not to lose form its involvement with other countries. “Without such a policy, corrupt activities will continue to be a big blow and challenge to the Zimbabwean economy” said the economist. Another government official revealed that the challenge with relations with the outside world was also fuelled by the

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23 Interview with government officials in the Ministry of Finance
intervention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that does not really understand their mandate as a diplomatic Ministry.

The official mentioned that issues of finance are set up differently depending with the country, “for example other countries have the department of International Finance falling under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance deals with only the domestic affairs. Whereas in Zimbabwe; both Domestic and International Finance departments fall under the Ministry of Finance. “It is an issue that the Ministry of Finance and Foreign Affairs is trying to resolve so that there is clear understanding and mandate of either”, said the official. China is coming into Zimbabwe as a benefactor and the Zimbabwean Government ought to be careful when dealing with the Chinese government warned the economist.

The economist said that if media allegations are that Zimbabwe is mortgaging its minerals to bag Chinese deals and concessions then it is a disaster for future generations. “Zimbabweans should be worried when a head of state is showered with praise while he showers his praise singers with minerals and all sort of national wealth. An article in (The Herald, 27/08/14) headlined “China, Africa diplomats praise President Mugabe” read that “Ambassadors took turn to praise President Mugabe after he addressed them on the developments in Zimbabwe, Africa on his visit to China.” While there is nothing wrong with President Mugabe receiving praises from his partners, it should be worrisome how these praises are concealed with ulterior motives on the part of the Chinese.

At the same occasion the two countries strengthened their historical hatred of ‘imperialists’ which again is a tactic used by China to get closer to Zimbabwe for her own gain which is tragic as described by Chan (2006) that Zimbabwe is simply being naïve in her undertakings with China. Other critics of the historic deals between Zimbabwe and China blamed government for failing to incorporate the private sector in the deals which is currently Zimbabwe’s largest employer, yet they have been excluded from high profile deals commented one economist. He lamented how government is doing everything while marginalizing the private sector arguing that the private sector is being persecuted yet they are the main drivers of the economy.

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24 Lecturer in the department of Economics at the University of Zimbabwe
The exclusion that was done in the Chiadzwa diamond fields were detrimental to the nation because no one was consulted. Most of the workers in the Chinese shops, mines and restaurant raised concern on how they are paid and how their welfare differs from their other Chinese counterparts. Some workers interviewed indicated that the relationship was exploitative because at times they are not paid in monetary form but given groceries at the end of the month, “How do these Chinese expect us to pay for our rentals, send children to school” There was also an issue raised with the Environmental Management Agency in the local press (24/12/13) where the Chinese were engaging local gold panners in areas like Masvingo-Bulawayo road and Chinhoyi where the villages were paid very low prices on the gold compared to the market prices.

Chinese mining giant Anjin is one of China’s mineral siphoning machinery in Zimbabwe as they have looted Zimbabwean diamonds said an economic analyst speaking in (The Zimbabwe Independent 26-02/10/14). He said that what further makes Zimbabwe and China economic partnership disastrous in that these deals are opaque and not very transparent, mixed with corruption and failure to remit funds to treasury. It could be that China is reaping every reward from engagement with Zimbabwe but also Zimbabwe could have developed a culture of corruption and a sinister practice as it has become less accountable to the people with money received from China.

According to National News (9-15/10/14) China was never attracted to Zimbabwe even her indigenization policies more than she saw an opportunity to gain access to the country’s mineral deposits and its political nuance. This study challenges the nature of economic partnership as it argues that politically, China has always supported Zimbabwe but economically it has manipulated support to its own benefit. By manipulating political ties, China is able to penetrate every Zimbabwean market. Zimbabwe’s need of an ally has been to her disadvantage.

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25 Section of workers on Chinese owned and controlled firms in Harare
4.4 Zimbabwe’s economic engagement with China neither good nor bad: Re-engagement with the West more profitable.

Economic analysts interviewed seemed to suggest for this study that economic engagement between Zimbabwe and China is neither good nor bad at the moment. What is more important for Zimbabwe’s economy however, is not an irrational pursuit and continued defense of a single economic policy whose fruits have not been positive. “There is no country which pursues a foreign economic policy focused on one country like Zimbabwe is doing on China”, they argued. This study agrees with others before it such as Chigora (2009), Thompson (2012) and Chipaike and Makwerere (2012) that Zimbabwe and China economic relations have not brought the much anticipated fruit as they have been more about Chinese economic supremacy against Western countries.

As is currently, the case by the Zimbabwean government is economic re-engagement with the Western powers is not only desirable but necessary and overdue. The West one colonised Zimbabwe and are “like a parent” to Zimbabwe, and like any parent they have invested a lot in Zimbabwe over the centuries which they cannot see lay to waste nor let another country’s economy benefit while they watch said one economic analyst interviewed. This concurs with what Richard Dowden cited in Chan (2006) said that Zimbabwe and Britain need to open channels of communication because ordinary Zimbabweans are suffering and that the whole of Southern Africa will not see progress until Zimbabwe’s economic independence has been restored.

The policy of economic engagement with the East should be undertaken not as Zimbabwe’s sole economic plan of action. It should be pursued as one of many approaches to economic sustainability with Zimbabwe looking at better profitable forms of engagement such as economic partnership with the Western countries.

Zimbabwe needs to look both sides and not to the east or the west alone if she is to prosper economically. This study established through interviews with economic analysts that Zimbabwe

26 Economic Analysts from UZ, Ministry of Finance and Harare Polytechnic College
should continue trade with China, however trade should be continued in terms and conditions more favourable to Zimbabwe as currently is the position. Zimbabwe has a positive trade balance with China which if it maintains it, will see its economy thrive. According to information gathered during the interviews with the Chinese Economic and Commercial Counsellor, Li Yaohui at the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China from 2010 to 2013, Zimbabwe imported 63 percent mechanical and electrical products from China. Our exports still remain a little higher though they need be improved and local manufacturers promoted to meet or downsize on our imports. However, most importantly has been China’s foreign direct investment which Li Yaohui said increased from US$33 million to US$601 million dollars. This is according to him, places Zimbabwe on first position of receiving foreign direct investment from China ahead of any African country. Against this backdrop, Zimbabwe can be seen as a major beneficiary of economic partnership with China. It stands to grow its economy as it can increase agricultural exports to China. Against this background, economic analysts argued that Zimbabwe stands to benefit and grow its economy extensively if it engages both China and the West in economic relations. The same can equally be said about engagements with the Western countries and the rest of the World. Re-engagement has its own advantages as well as pursuing China. But what is apparent is that Zimbabwe will emerge stronger and better by continued relationship with the East and re-engaging the West.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented and analysed research findings. The study was interested in finding how beneficial China and Zimbabwe’s economic partnership is to Zimbabwe. The study largely established that economic engagement between Zimbabwe and China is a product of the two countries’ history. China assisted Zimbabwe and other African countries in their struggles for independence. There is no unanimity in interpreting economic relations between the two countries. This study is of the contention that and China economic relations are indeed mutually beneficial. Zimbabwe has been a recipient of financial aid, technological innovation and technological expertise from China. Zimbabwean manufacturing, agriculture and trade volumes have increased owing to its engagement with China. Zimbabwe’s infrastructure including

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27 University of Zimbabwe lecturer and economic analysts from the Department of Economics
schools and hospitals have also benefitted from economic engagement with China. However, for this study trade and economic partnership with China alone is not sustainable for a country like Zimbabwe, rather Zimbabwe should engage the West and rest of the World. It is clear that for realists, their emphasis is on ‘relative’ gains only and the survival of their states as explained by Hobson (2000). The next chapter concludes the study and gives recommendations.
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter serves to conclude the study by way of a summary and recommendations. Recommendations will be made to the Zimbabwean government and its relevant ministries such as the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stakeholders and the general populace including economists and academia who undertake business and any relations with the Chinese government. Recommendations are given so that the Zimbabwean government can pursue a vibrant and beneficial foreign policy.

5.1 Summary

This study was premised on critically analyzing Zimbabwe and China’s economic relations. The study was a critical analysis of economic activities which include an analysis of trade exchange, loans, monetary and other deals and signings between the two countries from the year 2000 to present (2014). Materials subjected for analysis on Zimbabwe and China economic relations where obtained through archival research and desktop research of what has been previously been published by other scholars, reported by newspapers and documented by different government departments. Data for this research was gathered through in-depth interviews and questionnaires on selected participants. Data gathered through interviews and questionnaires as well as desktop research and archival research was subjected to a critical discourse analysis and content analysis. This study was informed by realism and classical realism theory, where the idea is that the state under whatever circumstances it faces; it is motivated by the need for economic survival (Hobson 2000). It will therefore undertake policies that enhance its prosperity and those of its inhabitants. Zimbabwe and China economic relations can be seen as such a case of survival where Zimbabwe in the face of international isolation resulting from the imposition of illegal economic sanctions engaged a vigorous economic partnership with China. The study largely established that Zimbabwe and China economic partnership is interpreted in binary form.

One side sees the relationship as beneficial to Zimbabwe while the other side sees economic relations as more beneficial to China. This view sees Zimbabwe as being exploited by China. At
one end is a view of scholarship that sees Zimbabwe as a major beneficiary from engagement with China as she has received loans, grants, and signed multi-million dollar projects for the development of the Hwange Thermal Power station, digitization of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, construction of a 600 megawatt thermal power station at the Gwayi by 2017 producing 2.7 million tonnes of underground coal per year and the Gwayi Shangani Dam as well as the Gwayi-Insukamini Power Station transmission line among other benefits. China is however seen as taking advantage of Zimbabwe’s vast mineral wealth to her advantage as witnessed by her interest in mining deals. Chinese company Anjin has benefited extensively in Zimbabwean diamonds at Chiadzwa diamond fields. Further Zimbabwe is used by China as a source of raw materials and a market for Chinese products some of which are inferior, cheap and low quality which have been labelled *zhingzhongs* (Chigora, 2009).

China is in Zimbabwe because she is using Zimbabwe as a stepping stone to venture into more profitable business relations with other African countries. Zimbabwe can arguably be said to be offering an economic base to China. This study is in agreement with Dambisa Moyo (2009) and Chan (2006) that aid from any country is never without conditions and is sometimes dead aid. In this regard this study views China’s presence in Zimbabwe as a part of a grand scheme of economic colonialism. After all economic control over another country’s resources is the new form of colonial domination in the 21st century. While Zimbabwe’s trade and economic cooperation with China is mutually beneficial and at once disastrous, it is this scepticism of the relationship that economic and political analysts interviewed argued that Zimbabwe should desist from pursuing China as its sole international economic partner. The study found out that in line with the realism theory Zimbabwe should re-engage the West if her foreign economic policy is to be profitable and prosperous. No single country can prosper by engaging with a single country in international trade. Other partners need to be consulted too.

5.2 Conclusion

The study was not the first to interrogate Zimbabwe’s economic partnership with China. It has followed the path of previous work which includes the work of Stiftung (2008), Chigora (2009) Chigora and Chisi (2009), Chan and Patel (2006), Besada (2012) and Thompson (2013). These scholarly works have informed this study and gave it a background to the analysis of Zimbabwe
and China economic cooperation. This study sought to critically investigate Zimbabwe and China’s economic partnership to see if it is a profitable venture for Zimbabwe. It is focused its analysis from economic activities between the two countries from the 2000 to present (2004).

This study found out that Zimbabwe and China economic relations are interpreted in a binary nature one of Zimbabwe as the beneficiary and the other of Zimbabwe as being exploited. Zimbabwe and Chinese economic engagement has been received with mixed feelings locally, regionally and internationally. Critics of the policy initiative have spelled doom for the host nation, with China being said to be manipulating economic opportunities offered by a naïve Zimbabwean government (Chan 2006). Zimbabwe and China’s economic relations are a product of historical relations that the two country share. Chinese and Zimbabwe relations date back to Zimbabwe’s days of liberation struggles when China offered military assistance to Zimbabwe against her colonial master Britain (Stiftung 2008).

However, soon after independence around 1992, Chinese engagement was clearly spelt in Zimbabwe’s foreign policy though it was not vigorously pursued until around 2008 when Zimbabwe embarked on the famous “Look East Policy” (Patel, 2006, Thompson, 2013). It was actually in 2003 after Zimbabwe initiated its land resettlement programme that resulted in its relations with the Western colonial powers dwindle. Souring economic and political relations between Zimbabwe and the West where aggravated by the imposition of economic sanctions on Zimbabwe by the West. What resulted was that Zimbabwe was isolated from the West and the rest of the world after she was declared volatile and a high risk investment country. Chan (2006) is of the assertion that resulting from international isolation and exhaustion of all foreign economic policy partners did Zimbabwe bring on board its last remaining option-engagement with the Chinese. Engagement with China was never a deliberate policy intention, but an outcome of frustration and lack of options to pursue. Faced with rising unpopularity, unemployment, inflation, poverty and general discontent at home the ZANU (PF) party naively engaged the Chinese government who much to their amusement “cannot believe how exceptionally naïve the Zimbabwean government is being.” This policy intention was loudly spelt out by President Robert Mugabe when he said that “we look again to the East where the sun rises and not to the West where it sets”, Smith (2006). Zimbabwe’s “Look East Policy” has been received with wide condemnation and celebration.
There are binaries in terms of how Zimbabwe’s economic engagement with China has been received by stakeholders, the academia and the media among other interested parties. Zimbabwe is seen as a major beneficiary from economic engagement with China. Zimbabwe’s trade and industry have been positively transformed through partnership with China.

Industries such as the Hwange Colliery Company have been documented by The China Monitor (2006) that under the FOCAC China North Industries Corporation (NORICO) were granted reprieve after a US$6,3 million debt accrued after the purchase of equipment. The Hwange Colliery Company received machinery including two drilling machines, from Sweden, two shuttle cars from Joy Mining in South Africa, 10 terexdumo trucks, two Atlas excavators and one Terex water browser from Norinco in China.

With Chinese assistance Zimbabwe initiated the construction of the Kariba South Power Station. Speaking in The Sunday Mail (07/09/2014) George Charamba said that “China is set to ignite Zimbabwe’s economic revolution that will create thousands of jobs within the next three years”. The same publication said that Zimbabwe will benefit from a plethora of agreements which include key economic areas such as mining, road infrastructure, energy, railways, agriculture and telecommunications along with the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social and Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET). Zimbabwe has also benefited from nine (9) major deals signed by President Mugabe and the Chinese government. These include among them agreements that will see China providing financial support to Zimbabwe’s economic enablers such as roads and railway networks, telecommunications, agriculture and tourism which will help fulfill the Zimbabwe Action for Sustainable Social Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) (The Herald 26/08/14). The article further reported that Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa signed two master loan agreements with the China Export and Import Bank and the China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation which provided securitization framework for infrastructural development.

However, not all have endorsed Zimbabwe and China’s economic relations. Zimbabwe’s economic engagement with China has been described as detrimental to Zimbabwe. Critics of the economic partnership between the two countries have skeptically viewed Zimbabwe as being an economic colony of China. To borrow Taylor’s words Zimbabwe is to China a small economic fray (Taylor, 2006). This school of thought sees nothing good emerging from the partnership between Zimbabwe and China, if ever there are any results they are disastrous to Zimbabwe’s
China has reduced Zimbabwe to a dumping site of cheap inferior goods which have been labelled *zhingzhongs* (Chigora, 2009). Not only has Zimbabwe been constituted into a market for Chinese poor substandard goods but it is also an eldorado, a source of raw materials for the much needed Chinese growing manufacturing industries. From Zimbabwe China has access to platinum, diamonds and iron ore and coal among other minerals that fuel her industries.

Those who exonerate China from some of these allegations point to the effect that it is not China, its government nor its people who export cheap quality goods to Zimbabwe. Rather it is local Zimbabwean business people who fly to China to hoard cheap goods to sell back home. It is Zimbabweans importing cheap substandard goods for resale at their home markets. The study however established that Zimbabwe’s economic engagement with China alone while neglecting other economic partners—such as its traditional Western economic partners namely Britain and America—is not profitable. There is need for Zimbabwe to pursue a truly beneficial economic partnership with China, while efforts of re-engagement with the West are not only necessary but overdue.

The study however concludes by arguing that economic partnership between Zimbabwe and China is beneficial to Zimbabwe and should be vigorously pursued with caution. Like all partnerships, they may never be horizontal in terms of outcomes, but under all circumstances positive outcomes are being realized from this partnership. Unlike other pessimists of the partnership, this study offers an optimistic view of this economic partnership as a policy that can be of benefit. While the partnership may be viewed as disastrous for Zimbabwe as postulated by other scholars, this study concludes by postulating that from a realist point of view Zimbabwe’s economic partnership with China is indeed beneficial; the economic benefits may not be that reciprocal and of great magnitude but they are something to sing about and more can be realized.

### 5.3 Recommendations

In light of the findings of this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations. Recommendations are made to the government of Zimbabwe and its ministries responsible for crafting foreign policies or engagement with the government of China. Some are also made to the general business persons who have dealings with the Chinese.
5.3.1 To the government of Zimbabwe and its Ministry of Finance and Foreign Affairs, this study recommends that government should not pursue engagement with China as the only solution to Zimbabwe’s economic woes. The government of Zimbabwe and its relevant ministries should pursue mutually beneficial economic policies out of careful planning and thought, not as a result of political pressures that make the policies it enacts seem as scapegoats.

5.3.2 The government through the Ministry of Finance should speed up the finalisation of the Aid Coordination Policy that will enable it to have concrete regulations governing all relations and that all relations to be handled through the proper channels of the Ministry. This will aid in curbing corruption activities as all transactions will be transparent.

5.3.3 Government should ensure that its citizens are protected from exploitation and especially through the labour laws, Consumer Council of Zimbabwe and Standards Association of Zimbabwe.

5.3.4 Government should cease to look into past historic assistance received from China and look at present and future prospects, because while Zimbabwe is naively looking into the past with nostalgia as noted by Chan (2006), China is holding Zimbabwe with a sharp economic muscle. The government of Zimbabwe should re-engage and normalise its economic relations with the West. The Western countries offer competent trade relations and terms.

5.3.5 The study also recommends that Zimbabwe should guard against manipulative conditionalities when dealing with China, such as clauses that when the Chinese are commissioned to do work in Zimbabwe, they should not contract their home companies. There are able companies in Zimbabwe which could be given preferential treatment to do contracts. This would in turn create employment opportunities for ordinary Zimbabweans. Chinese companies should not be given sole responsibility to contract home contractors and buy and purchase equipment from China, while some of these goods are available in Zimbabwe. This is continued usurping of Zimbabwe’s money to outside countries. Ordinary Zimbabweans and the Zimbabwean market should boycott...
Chinese zhīng zhōngs and desist from hoarding these from China for resale. Government should put a ban on cheap inferior Chinese goods. Once this is done it should act as a measure to promote local producers.

5.3.6 Government should work towards the change of curriculum to include aspects of production and skills (Psychomotor ministry welcome) from kindergarten to university. China has skilled their students to the extent that cars are being assembled and repaired in the same institutions.

5.3.7 Government should promote innovation through institutions like the Research Council of Zimbabwe and Scientific and Industrial Research and Development Centre.

5.4 Areas of Research

The study was mainly a qualitative interpretive study of Zimbabwe and Chinese economic relations. It mainly relied on interviews, material gathered from desktop research and what other scholars have published. The researcher strongly suggests that in light of qualitative approaches being weak and compromising in their judgments and evaluations, it would be worthwhile to actually have perhaps a purely quantitative study that looks into the actual figures of Zimbabwe and Chinese economic engagement. Other researchers could also focus on political, cultural and social relations between Zimbabwe and China and how they have contributed to Zimbabwe’s economy as a whole. The field of tourism can be a good study area.
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APPENDICES

Interview Guide

- What in your views are the factors that led Zimbabwe to engage the East Especially China?
- Do you think engagement with China is the solution to Zimbabwe’s economic challenges?
- What are the prospects of Zimbabwe-China economic relations?
- What policies are in place to govern economic engagement with China?
- What are your views on the Look East Policy?
- What is your comment to the assertion that Chinese investment in Zimbabwe is another form of economic exploitation?
- What is your comment to the assertion that Zimbabwe’s relations with China are not mutually beneficial?
- How has Zimbabwe benefitted from relations with China?
- China has been criticized for exporting cheap low quality products to Zimbabwe. What is your assessment of this accusation?
- Do you think Zimbabwe’s engagement with China is a direct result of sour relations with the West and that it is more of a scapegoat policy than a policy of intent?
- Do you think it would be better for Zimbabwe to trade with China or the Western countries? If so, why?