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Africans' Perceptions of Chinese Business in Africa

A Survey

Sofie Geerts, Namhla Xinwa and Deon Rossouw, EthicsSA

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Ethics Institute of South Africa NPC

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EthicsSA

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Ethics Institute of South Africa NPC
1999/020697/08

About EthicsSA

The Ethics Institute of South Africa (EthicsSA) is a non-profit, public-benefit organisation that commenced operations in August 2000. It is governed by a board of directors consisting of prominent persons committed to promoting ethical responsibility.
EthicsSA's vision is: "*Building an ethically responsible society*".
We pursue our vision through thought leadership, training and ethics advisory services. We work with the public and private sectors, with professional bodies, and in partnership with organisations that share our values.

Thought leadership

EthicsSA is committed to stimulate and advance awareness of ethics in South Africa and in other countries on the African continent where we are active. We participate regularly in public debates in the media and contribute to policy formulation in respect of business ethics, corruption prevention and professional ethics.

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- EthicsSA offers a wide array of services related to the management of ethics in organisations and professions. These include:
- Training: Public and in-house training programmes on a range of ethics-related themes;
- Advisory services: Consulting to public-sector and private-sector organisations and professional associations on matters related to the management of ethics;

- Assessments: Assisting organisations with gauging their current state of ethics through a variety of assessment instruments;
- Certification: Certifying specific ethics-related services and service providers in order to provide assurance that these services and service providers meet relevant ethics standards;
- Project management: Acting as project manager for donor organisations wishing to enhance good governance, corruption prevention, or professional ethics; and
- Membership services: Offering subscription membership to individuals and organisations, with a variety of membership benefits.
- More information on EthicsSA can be found at *www.ethicssa.org*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This survey measures Africans' perceptions of the business practices of Chinese nationals (hereafter "Chinese business") in African countries. Such a survey is long overdue. While there have been several studies of the perceptions of Chinese and Europeans, Africans are the ones who are directly affected by investment of Chinese business in their countries. Also, there is a widespread perception that Chinese investment in Africa is not benefitting Africans. China stands accused of being a 'new colonial power', extracting resources for their own benefit with little return for Africa. In addition, Chinese presence in Africa is viewed with suspicion, especially from Western countries, and their human rights record, labour practices and environmental practices are often questioned. On the other side, the Chinese are very positive about their investment in Africa, contending that it contributes to the development in Africa.

However, we cannot rely on assumptions, fuelled by rumour and misinformation as the relationship between Africa and China becomes more and more important, hence the need to measure the perceptions of Africans themselves. This report presents the findings in this regard, preceded by a literature review.

Fifteen African countries were identified to participate in the survey, selected on the basis of their having a large presence of Chinese companies. In total, 1,056 Africans completed an online questionnaire. The following categories were identified to measure the perception of Africans towards Chinese business: Reputation of Chinese business in Africa; Quality of Chinese products and services; Social responsibility of Chinese business in Africa; Economic responsibility of Chinese

business in Africa; Environmental responsibility of Chinese business in Africa; and Employment practices of Chinese business in Africa.

Overall, the perceptions of Africans are rather negative as in all six categories more respondents are negative than positive. In terms of the reputation of Chinese business in Africa, 43.3% is negative and 35.4% positive. In respect of the quality of Chinese products and services, 55.9% is negative and 22.7% positive. Regarding environmental responsibility of Chinese companies in Africa, 53.9% is negative and only 11.1% positive. In terms of economic responsibility of Chinese companies in Africa, 40.1% is negative and 28.3% positive. There is somewhat more optimism when it comes to the social responsibility of Chinese companies, with 45.7% being negative and 21.0% positive. Lastly, perceptions of employment practices of Chinese companies in Africa are 46.0% negative and 19.1% positive.

Although there is recognition of the positive impact of Chinese investment in Africa, there is, in particular, considerable concern about the social, environmental, workplace and economic responsibilities of Chinese business. It is therefore important for the Chinese government and companies to take the following recommendations into account:

- The survey indicates that Africans are happy with Chinese investment in the sense that it contributes to the development of their countries. However, Africans are concerned about the economic, workplace, social and environmental impact of Chinese investment. Hence, Chinese companies need to be aware of their economic, workplace, social and environmental responsibilities when investing in Africa;
- Chinese companies and Africans should engage with a view to understanding one another and discussing the issues raised in this report in order to ensure mutually beneficial solutions. One of the follow-up activities of this report will be to organise a Lead Ethics in Africa Dialogue (LEAD) in this regard; and

- It is to a large extent up to Africa to gain from its relation with China. African leaders should be responsible and ethical when entering into business and investment deals with China (and all other countries). They should also ensure that there are strong institutions in Africa that can determine the terms of engagement and make sure that Chinese companies are held to such terms. They should ensure that African citizens reap the benefits of foreign investment, whether Chinese or not.

For any questions related to this report, please contact Sofie Geerts at *sofie@ethicssa.org*.

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BACKGROUND

In March 2013, the Ethics Institute of South Africa (EthicsSA) organised a workshop with representatives from the public and private sectors and professional associations from 14 African countries to discuss the question 'how ethics and responsibility could be enhanced in their respective countries'. The outcomes of the workshop were a number of strategies and avenues that should be pursued in each sector to enhance ethics and responsibility.

One of the discussions at this workshop was focussed on the role that Chinese companies are playing in African countries. The overall perception of the delegates at this workshop regarding Chinese companies was rather negative, with the prevailing assumption being that Chinese companies are not genuinely fulfilling their ethical, social and environmental responsibilities. Compounding this negative perception is adverse media coverage about China's presence in Africa, often in the form of a report on how China exploits Africa for its resources. Still, it was felt that Africans, in turn, generally receive a better deal than what they previously experienced with their former colonial powers. But this outlook is mired by macroeconomic data, generating suspicion about the new hegemonic power that China presently wields. It is a suspicion that questions the Chinese human rights record, labour practices, corrupt business practices and exploitation of natural resources.

In opposition to such negative perceptions and suspicions, stands the rosy rhetoric and positive spin of the government-controlled Chinese media and forums, such as Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). This alternative storyline focuses on unprecedented strides in investment and development in Africa plus the seemingly favourable and equitable partnerships in Sino- African relations.

However, we cannot rely on assumptions, fuelled by rumour and misinformation as the relationship between Africa and China becomes more and more important, and potentially beneficial to the development of Africa. Hence EthicsSA – with the support of Globethics.net and the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation – decided to launch a quantitative survey to measure the perception of Africans towards Chinese companies doing business in 15 African countries. This survey serves to give more accurate information about what Africans think about Chinese companies and the role they play in Africa. The content of this survey was discussed by Chinese and African representatives at the Global Ethics Forum in June 2013.

This report presents the findings of this survey. These findings are preceded by a literature review of the six main themes identified for the survey, namely the overall reputation of Chinese business in Africa, including equitable business practices, the quality of Chinese products and services, their social responsibility, their economic responsibility, their environmental responsibility, and their labour practices.

These findings should be viewed with the intent to form a basis for discussions that can further facilitate the relationship between Africa and China. Several rounds of dialogue between Africans and Chinese are foreseen in the near future. One dialogue already took place at the Global Ethics Forum from 2 to 4 January 2014, which took place in Bangalore, India. We believe that this report can contribute towards building a mutually beneficial relationship between Africa and China, which should be a win-win relationship for both parties.

It should also be noted that all findings of this survey are perceptions and are therefore not necessarily a reflection of the factual situation – but then we also do know that our perceptions constitute our realities that inform our words and actions.

Sofie Geerts, Namhla Xinwa and Prof Deon Rossouw
Pretoria, February 2014

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical context: Chinese presence in Africa

Although the dominant narrative on the Chinese presence in Africa focuses on the recent investment and development strides, business relations between China and Africa date back over centuries. The first known account of Sino-African relations dates back to 1550 BC (Olivier 2008). The port of Alexandria in Egypt was a strategic point on the Chinese silk routes (and, later, the Indian spice routes), and thus for accessing markets in North Africa and the Middle East (Guliwe 2009).

Modern Sino-African trade is delineated into three eras (Adisu, Sun and Sharkley 2010). The initial phase was during the Industrial Revolution. Colonial powers utilised Chinese labourers from the 1800s until the 1950s for mining, plantations and railway construction. This Chinese presence was supplemented by a small contingent of traders and exporters (Adisu et al. 2010).

The second phase is the post-Second World War era. With the commencement of the Cold War in the 1950s, Russia and China competed not only with the West but also against each other to align with post-colonial African countries (Adisu et al. 2010). The communist ideals of overthrowing capitalism and of equality resonated with emerging African nationalist ideas as well as the communal nature of African society. The first official Chinese bilateral trade agreements

were signed with Algeria, Egypt, Guinea, Morocco and Sudan (Barfour and Mubiru 2010). By 1970, China had established diplomatic ties with all independent African countries, barring Libya. The first bilateral deals with some element of the non-interference policy date back to the early 1960s. These deals were made with newly independent Zambia and Tanzania. They entailed massive infrastructural projects, interest-free loans and the use of Chinese labour, equipment and resources (Guliwe 2009).

The third phase resulted from the exigencies of China's need to support a substantial population and its competition with other nations. From the 1980s, China foresaw its growth trajectory to be highly dependent on commodities and based increasingly on open economic policies. According to Adisu et al (2010), the primary motivations for Chinese investment in Africa are energy security, entrenching export markets for their low–cost products, and strengthening their international political positioning by garnering support through South-South relations. Some say that China's 'generosity' in investment in Africa is a business transaction purely driven by the need to ensure that their domestic development agenda is met without hindrance (Adisu et al. 2010). Yet, the goodwill garnered by Chinese investment in Africa has contributed to bringing Africa closer to the centre of the global economy (Mcnamee et al. 2012).

In his recent book, examining the morality of China in Africa, Stephen Chan (2012:36) argues that it is a misconception that Africa is very important for China. Currently, China is Africa's largest trade partner, but this trade only represents 4% of China's trade worldwide. The majority of this trade is limited to a few countries (Zambia, South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Angola) and a few commodities, mostly raw materials like oil, timber and minerals (Mazimhaka 2013:101-103). Chinese investment is mostly in Zambia, Angola, Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana and is marginal in comparison with its investment elsewhere.

However, China's presence on the African continent is growing and China is prepared to work in Africa, despite any setbacks, for many years to come (Chan 2012:20).

Other perception studies of Chinese business in Africa

Despite all the criticism meted out against China in the media, quantitative studies gauging general African perceptions consistently paint a far more positive picture on the ground. These studies are generally conducted by the West or China. The 2013 Pew Global Attitudes Study (an American study conducted in eight countries), found that perceptions of the US amongst Africans were favourable at a median of 73%, whilst China stood at 65% (Pew Research Center, 2013). The 2009 BBC World Service study was conducted in three African countries namely Nigeria, Egypt and Ghana (Rebol 2010). It found perceptions were positive within the range of 62-75% amongst the three countries. This was the most favourable range amongst the 20 countries surveyed worldwide (Rebol, 2010). The China Quarterly study, *African Perception on China-Africa Links* was conducted in nine countries across Africa (China Quarterly 2009). This study found favourable perceptions, with 74.2% believing that China's developmental path was synonymous with their own countries' growth. Generally, perceptions of China tend to be favourable in most countries, barring Cameroon and Zambia, due to highly publicised, adverse labour, health and safety issues. Nigerian, Egyptian and South African perceptions, albeit favourable, tend to be apprehensive in comparison with those of other nations (China Quarterly 2009).

However, Mazimhaka (2013:89) mentions that, in most perception surveys on the Chinese presence in Africa, the perceptions of Africans are not canvassed. Cao (2013:68) contends that the ultimate test for China's role in the world and their engagement with Africa is not what the West thinks about these, but what Africans think. Arguably, this

perception study, which measures the perception of Africans towards Chinese businesses in their country in 15 different countries, is not only necessary but also overdue.

The remainder of the literature review will focus on the six themes identified for this survey, namely, the reputation of Chinese business in Africa, the quality of Chinese products and services, the social responsibility of Chinese companies in Africa, their economic responsibility, their environmental responsibility, and their employment practices.

Reputation of Chinese business in Africa

Chinese business in Africa consists of formal and informal sectors. The formal sector comprises both Chinese state-owned enterprises and privately-owned multinational corporations (Jiao and Spring 2008). Sino-African relations on this level are among government leaders, diplomats and corporate managers. The business sectors involved are agriculture, commodities (especially oil), construction and telecommunications. The stimulus for private business is not necessarily global dominance but to capitalise on their technologies and skills in relevant African industries (Jiao and Spring 2008, Condon 2012).

In the formal sector, Chinese business practices in Africa are governed by the Beijing consensus. The Beijing consensus is China's international policy which favours non-interference in the sovereignty of a state and equitable business dealings (Adisu et al., 2010). The significance of this non-interference policy for trade relations is that it shuns governance mechanisms set by the West, e.g. the Equator Principles, the Extractive Industries Transparency Guidelines, the Kimberly Process etc (Condon 2012). In principle, there is nothing wrong with a non-interference policy since a state should not interfere in the domestic affairs of another sovereign state. By the same token, however, China is often criticised for keeping autocratic leaders in place

with this policy – for instance in Sudan, where the Chinese delivered weaponry to the government for fighting its own citizens. Some Chinese would argue in their own defence that there is nothing wrong with dictators as long as the people living under them can develop (Liu 2013:52-54, Askouri 2007:73). In contrast with this, Lemos and Ribeiro (2007:63-73) argue that China does indeed interfere deeply in the domestic affairs of African countries as they facilitate corruption and illegal trade (like logging). They add that the Chinese non-interference policy prevents African leaders from holding the Chinese accountable in respect of social and environmental issues ("if you stay out of our dirty business, we stay out of yours").

In African states where appropriate regulatory measures are in place, the outcome of Chinese investment is often mutually beneficial. For example, the South African government, under the watchful eye of the ruling ANC-affiliated trade unions, as well as civil society and opposition political parties, has warned the Chinese about flooding the South African textile market with cheap Chinese textile exports (China Morning Post 2013). To counter the effect of 60,000 job losses and 800 factories closing down in South Africa, China has exported equipment and provided skills training in order to shore up the South African textile industry (China Morning Post 2013, Gadzala and Hanusch 2010). In addition, other African countries are becoming more assertive in their dealings with China. One of the Sinopec affiliates recently lost a rights claim bid against the Gabonese government worth more than US$1 billion. As the dynamics of the states in Africa move from autocratic to more democratic, China needs to adjust its policies accordingly (China Morning Post 2013). African leaders are not as blind to public sentiment as reported. They are slowly addressing the needs of the public as governments become more democratic, the population more educated, and social media, civil society organisations and local media more vociferous.

Within the informal sector, equitable business practices and win-win outcomes do not necessarily apply. According to a study by the Brenthurst Foundation, more than 1 million Chinese immigrant traders are living in Africa. Illegal means are often used to import goods as the legal status of such imports tends to be questionable (Mcnamee et al. 2012). Most Chinese traders living in Africa are poor with minimal levels of education. They work long hours and return to China within a few years, once they have made enough capital to buy a house. Subsequently, they are replaced by another set of Chinese immigrants (Joris 2013:248). Chinese traders have penetrated cities, villages, townships and informal settlements and often offer products at a lower price than their African counterparts. Hence, competition is rife among African and Chinese traders, and African traders are very unhappy about price wars with the Chinese (Mcnamee et al. 2012). They complain that Chinese traders have an unfair advantage due to their 'way of living' (working hard, long hours, no family to attend to) and due to low production costs in China, which lead to the low prices of Chinese imports. Chinese traders tend to regard this as a misconception as they feel that they are willing to forgo short-term profits in order to ensure that their businesses remain operational (Mcnamee et al, 2012). The Chinese living in Africa do not really mingle with the local population and show little solidarity with other traders, Chinese as well as African (Joris 2013:143).

However, Africans are also innovative in countering Chinese competition. African traders have started to travel to Chinese provinces such as Guangzhou and Shenzhen to acquire Chinese products which they sell for profits in Africa. Due to this, Chinese traders started complaining about the excessive price wars with their African counterparts who also acquired cheap Chinese produce (Mcnamee et al. 2012).

Another recurring complaint, which could undermine the development of an African industrial sector, relates to the flooding African markets with inferior Chinese products (Mcnamee et al. 2012). Joris argues that these cheap Chinese products contribute to undermining the development of Africa as it prohibits the development of a real African manufacturing sector, which could create considerable jobs and wealth (Joris 2013:104, Karumbidza 2007:99). However, Liang (2013) counters this by pointing out that 51% of Chinese imports into Africa is machinery and transportation equipment, which is necessary to develop an industrial sector for Africa.

According to the most recent Chinese White Paper on Chinese-Africa Economic and Trade Co-operation, currently under review, China has made concerted efforts to ensure viable, mutually beneficial trade agreements, such as regulation in 2010 that served to control the quality of Chinese products being exported to Africa (Information Office of the State Council 2013). Another mechanism to ensure better trade regulation was the Special Plan on Trade with Africa which serves to facilitate African exports to China by slashing of trade tariffs. The thirty least developed countries in Africa have already had trade tariff barriers removed for 60% of their export products. China will also assist African states to improve their customs controls (Information Office of the State Council 2013).

Quality of Chinese products and services

Perceptions of the quality of Chinese brands are consistent: Chinese products are perceived as low quality (Gadzala and Hanusch 2010). This was even encapsulated in the South- African kwaito hit by Hunger Boyz – *"Fong Kong*". The song was released in 1999 and the term is still so prevalent that it has transcended to different variations in local dialects within Southern Africa (Conway-Smith 2012). However, the diversification of low-cost quality products in clothing and technology

has improved the standard of living among the low-end consumers of Africa (McNamee et al. 2012). From December 2011 to March 2012, the Chinese government implemented export measures to counter the negative perceptions of inferior Chinese brand reputations, including prior-to-shipment quality examinations for industrial products that were to be exported to Africa (Chinese Information on State Council 2013).

Poor execution and quality of infrastructure projects in Africa completed by the Chinese are often criticised. Low quality is caused, at least in part, by the fact that large Chinese companies that are awarded contracts outsource different tasks to smaller Chinese companies, who in turn subcontract further to even smaller companies. This cyclical system, whereby each subcontractor profits from the initial amount received, eventually results in the company doing the actual work earning little and performing poorly in the execution of the contract. This means the amount paid, for example, by an African government to a large Chinese company for building a road will be a fraction of what is actually spent on the road (Joris 2013:117). Another contributing factor is political changes and the prevalence of grafts within African governments. With every new official or politician, royalty payments must be made. Hence, Chinese companies pay out more than one commission, which might affect the overall investment put into an infrastructural project (Joris 2013:119).

Overall, the quality of Chinese products and services is perceived as low. An African in the book by Lieve Joris, where the relationship between Africans and Chinese is examined, says that "when a European gives you something it is real, not second or third hand like with the Chinese" (Joris 2013:132).

Social responsibility of Chinese business in Africa

The Western approach to aid is for foreign affairs departments to funnel funds to aid institutions such as DFID, USAid, GIZ[1] etc. The Chinese approach is to channel financial aid through the Chinese Development Bank placed under the Chinese government's commercial wing (Condon 2012). The Chinese model is explicitly about enhancing commercial interests with little or no governance impositions. The FOCAC forum of 2006 recapped that China's social development agenda comprises tangible developments and cooperation as opposed to donor and aid impositions (Agboum, 2013). In addition to the Chinese government's aid in Africa, there are philanthropic investments from companies, ranging from infrastructural development, capacity building and cultural exchange to health and disaster management (Information on State Council 2013). The Chinese government and companies (both state and private ones) work well together to achieve aid goals. For example, since 2010, China has built 27 hospitals, sent 43 medical teams to 42 countries, and treated 5.57 million people in Africa (Information on State Council 2013). China offered $8 million worth of humanitarian aid to Egypt and Tunisia in 2011 to mitigate the Libyan refugee crisis (Information on State Council, 2013) and provided $64 million in emergency aid to the Horn of Africa in the period 2010-2012 when the area was hit by severe drought (Information on State Council 2013, Aljazeera 2013). China has also eradicated $10 billion worth of debt from African countries (Adisu et al. 2010).

Many sources (Adisu et al 2010, Condon 2012, Economist 2011, and Joris 2013) point out that Africans are pleased with China's efficiency. If the Chinese say they will do something, they will do it, quickly and

[1] Abbreviations of foreign aid institutions. DFID: Department for International Development (UK). USAid: United States Agency for International Development (USA). GIZ: German Society for International Cooperation (Germany).

efficiently, without severe conditions. The working relationship between the Chinese government and Chinese companies is also very efficient, in contrast with the strained relations that Western governments often have with their corporations.

The greatest concern about China on the social responsibility front is the application of the non-interference policy with dictatorial regimes such as Sudan, Zimbabwe and Angola. Africa is the continent with the most leaders who have been in power for more than two terms. For example, despite Zimbabwe being sanctioned by the West due to the farm grabs from white owners, China entered into bilateral agreements between state apparatuses for telecommunications and energy. Agricultural partnerships entailed formerly white-owned farms being given to Chinese farmers (Jiao and Spring 2008). Also, China is accused of protecting the government of Sudan from facing charges of genocide and war crimes. In spite of an UN embargo, China supplied $100 million worth of warplanes and guns to Sudan (Condon 2012). This is believed to have been vital to the ethnic cleansing and purge of black Sudanese people. In Angola, which has been China's largest oil partner in Africa since 2004, at the very time that the International Monetary Fund was entrenching transparency conditions on loans to Angola, China swooped in with the non-interference policy to acquire oil rights (Condon 2012).

Economic responsibility of Chinese business in Africa

China and Africa are often associated with poor corporate governance and a high prevalence of corruption. Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index rated China 80 out of 177 countries, with a score of 40 (Transparency International 2013). Sub-Saharan Africa had the lowest regional rankings, representing 95% of the countries with a score below 40 (Transparency International 2013). A recent American study from Alix Partners and Denton indicated that

senior American executives have very poor perceptions of governance and corruption in Africa, which is hinders investment interest in Africa (New Africa 2013).

Local Chinese traders complain of harassment by African police and government officials, although they believe that corruption in China was a good learning ground on how to cope with corruption (Mcnamee et al. 2012). This harassment goes from petty extortion and bribery by police, customs and immigration officials to more hefty fines for real or concocted criminal activities. The criminal dimension is not only perpetuated by Africans since Chinese traders are often legal immigrants who bypass customs fees for their product shipments (Mcnamee et al. 2012). Some Chinese traders also complain that they are cheated by African traders with whom they work (Joris 2013:111).

Lemos and Ribeiro (2007:63-70) point out that the presence of China in Mozambique has led to an increase in illegal activities related to logging and fishing. This did not happen on a large scale before the Chinese came to Mozambique. Given China's non-interference policy towards Africa, the Mozambican government does not do anything to address such illegal activities since it might be construed as interference with Chinese business practices.

Besides all these problems, the substantial Chinese investment in Africa is good for African development. To put it into perspective, in 1950, when modern interactions between Africa and China commenced, trade was only $12 million (Mobius 2011). During the past decade, trade between China and Africa has increased from $10 billion in 2000 to $160 billion in 2011. According to the Chinese State Commerce Ministry, investment in construction projects in Africa amounts to $50 billion annually (Economist 2011). By 2012, Sino-African trade stood at $200 billion, the majority being imports from China worth $113.1 billion, increasing exponentially at 21.4 per cent year-on-year. To a

lesser degree, African exports to China were $85.3 billion increasing at 16.7 per cent year-on-year (Mureithi 2013).

Economic development is a necessary condition for poverty alleviation on the African continent. China is supporting industrial trade zones in Zambia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Egypt and Ethiopia, creating 6,000 jobs with $600 million in foreign direct investment. China has cancelled 312 debts from 35 African countries from 2000 until 2009 (Mobius 2011, 2013). According to the Chinese Information on State Council's (2013) report on China-Africa Cooperation, China has trained 23,718 officials in 54 countries in the period 2010-2012. Capacity-building initiatives were in the agricultural, medical, economic and public sectors. In 2011, China engaged the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as well as the East African Community (ECA) and signed Framework Agreements on Economic and Trade Cooperation with each (Information Office of State Council 2013). China is a member state of the major development banks in Africa including the African Development Bank, the West African Development Bank, and the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank (Information Office of State Council 2013).

Yet, China's interests are seemingly vested in African leaders rather than African citizens. This often prevents ordinary citizens from enjoying the economic benefits of China's business presence in Africa. Africa's per capita incomes are low while income inequalities are ever increasing. China's largest oil partner, Angola, has a government budget of $69 billion, largely from Chinese oil revenues, yet 70% of the Angolan population still lives under $2 a day (Dolan 2013).

Environmental responsibility of Chinese business in Africa

China is often accused of neglecting environmental standards and laws when extracting minerals or building infrastructure (Liu 2013:53). As mentioned under economic responsibility above, Chinese companies

are implicated in instances of illegal logging, fishing and mining activities, but, in addition, environmental standards are not always taken into consideration (Lemos and Ribeiro 2007:63-70). However, with the inception of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000, the resultant action plan included an environmental agenda (Grimm 2013). This environmental agenda encompassed pollution control, biodiversity conservation, protection of forests and fisheries, and wildlife management, but it was never put into operation (Grimm 2013). By 2009, FOCAC had devoted visible environmental mechanisms, but these did not address biodiversity (Grimm 2013).

According to the Chinese Information on State Council (2013), China has made vast investments into better energy management in Africa. China has introduced over 100 clean energy projects including biogas, hydropower, solar and wind power generation as well as donating energy efficient electric products, such as lamps and air conditioners across 12 African countries. Environmental impact assessments are also a precondition for large infrastructural projects (Grimm 2013).

Unlike their Western counterparts where environmental lobby groups exert pressure on companies for environmental management, the pressure on Chinese businesses comes purely from their own state apparatus (Scott 2013). A study by Conservation International on the nature of Chinese extractive mining in Africa found that in countries where environmental regulatory measures were not in place, Chinese firms merely applied the Chinese guidelines to which they were used. This clearly illustrates that the impetus lies with the relevant African governments to set and implement adequate environmental policies (Scott 2013). However, this is where the problem often lies, as African governments might not have the capacity or the political will to do so.

Employment practices of Chinese business in Africa

With the promise of more Chinese investment in Africa came an expectation of more employment opportunities being created for Africans. While the former has been achieved there is scant evidence of the latter. Criticism of poor Chinese labour practices in Africa is well documented in the media and these infringements tend to be directed at the Chinese formal business sector. The range of common complaints include the employment of low-skilled Chinese workers instead of training or employing Africans, health and safety infringements on work sites, and poor remuneration below minimum wage rates (Hong Kong Liaison office). The increase of Chinese labourers in Africa has led to protests in countries such as Kenya, Angola, and Cameroon in the last two years, according to the Kenyan paper Media Nation (Mureithi 2013). The most prominent story about such infringements is the shootings of African labourers by Chinese management at a mining factory in Chambishi, Zambia (Adisu et al. 2010).

Chinese companies often have a low regard for labour unions and workers' rights. The Chinese seemingly do not do this because they disrespect African workers' rights, but because they are not used to labour rights and unions in their own country (Chan 2013). This implies that Chinese companies need to acquaint themselves better with Africa and its customs (like strong unions) and respect these, rather than applying Chinese standards in Africa.

Chinese traders are, according to the Brenthurst Foundation study on Chinese traders in Africa, significant employers of Africans contrary to popular belief (Mcnamee et al. 2012). The study found that on average eight local workers are employed per store in Lesotho, with up to two workers per store in South Africa (Mcnamee et al. 2012). Chinese traders tend to isolate themselves from the communities in which they operate, which further fuels negative conceptions of

employment practices due to their lack of cultural exposure (Mcnamee et al. 2012).

This concludes the literature review as background to the findings of this survey.

What follows, then, are the findings of this survey, preceded first by a short section on the technical matters of methodology and demographics.

3

METHODOLOGY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

This section will explain the methodology used in this survey, as well as elaborate on the demographics of participants in the survey.

Methodology

The survey was conducted in 15 sub-Saharan African countries, selected on the basis of their having a large presence of Chinese companies. A second criterion was to ensure a geographical spread of the 15 countries as well as a language spread. Hence, countries were chosen from Southern Africa, East Africa, Central Africa and West Africa and from the three main language groups in these regions, namely, English, French and Portuguese.

1,056 respondents from the following 15 countries participated in the survey:

Country	Number of respondents	Percentage of sample	Geographical region	Language
Angola	8	0.76	Southern Africa	Portuguese
Benin	33	3.13	West Africa	French
Cameroon	18	1.7	Central Africa	English/French
DRC	43	4.07	Central Africa	French
Ethiopia	38	3.6	East Africa	English

Ghana	22	2.08	West Africa	English
Kenya	204	19.32	East Africa	English
Mozambique	23	2.18	Southern Africa	Portuguese
Nigeria	197	18.66	West Africa	English
South Africa	299	28.31	Southern Africa	English
South Sudan	15	1.42	East Africa	English
Sudan	17	1.61	East Africa	English
Tanzania	18	1.7	East Africa	English
Zambia	58	5.49	Southern Africa	English
Zimbabwe	21	1.99	Southern Africa	English
Other country not listed	42	3.98	n/a	n/a

Figure 1. Sample breakdown of participating countries and respondents

An online questionnaire was designed representing the following categories:

- Demographic information, consisting of six questions;
- Reputation of Chinese business in Africa, consisting of six questions;
- Quality of Chinese products and services, consisting of four questions;
- Social responsibility of Chinese business in Africa, consisting of five questions;
- Economic responsibility of Chinese business in Africa, consisting of two questions;
- Environmental responsibility of Chinese business in Africa, consisting of three questions; and
- Labour practices of Chinese business in Africa, consisting of eleven questions.

This online questionnaire could be completed by citizens of the 15 selected countries, either online or in hard copy. These invitations were extended to contacts of EthicsSA and Globethics.net in the respective

countries. Several attempts were also made to invite participation in the survey through the media. For this purpose, press releases were issued to the media in the respective countries. These media releases were in the relevant language of the participating countries, namely, in English, French or Portuguese. In Nigeria and Kenya, university students were also approached.

The initial idea was to achieve a representative sample for each of the participating countries. However, reliance on only the networks of EthicsSA and Globethics.net in the participating countries and on the media to encourage participation were insufficient to attract the required response. There were inadequate resources available to conduct face-to-face interviews, except in Kenya. Thus, the data collected was not representative of the populations of the participating countries. The only countries that produced sizable samples were South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya, and hence this report gives priority to discussions of the findings from these countries. The low response rate can also be attributed to the online format of the questionnaire. In many African countries, internet access still remains a luxury rather than the norm. The exceptions in this regard are the countries that produced the highest response rates, namely South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya.

Demographics

Regarding the demographics of respondents, 64.3% were male and 35.7% female. The majority of respondents (83.6%) were between 25 and 55 years of age, 10.2% being older than 55, and 6.7% being between 18 and 25. Of all respondents, 57.9% has a post-graduate qualification and 25.2% a first degree. Hence, the majority of respondents are educated. 49.3% of respondents work in the private sector, 23.8% in the public sector, 11.2% for an NGO and the remaining 15.7% in another sector. In terms of geographical location, 39.5% of respondents live in

Southern Africa, 28.8% in East Africa, 25% in West Africa and 6.7% in Central Africa. Only 2.6% of respondents work for a Chinese company.

4

SURVEY FINDINGS

Introduction

This section reports on the findings of the survey. These findings will be discussed according to the following categories:

- Reputation of Chinese business in Africa;
- Quality of Chinese products and services:
- Social responsibility;
- Economic responsibility;
- Environmental responsibility; and
- Employment practices.

For each category, the findings for all countries that participated in the survey are presented first, and these are then followed by a comparison of the findings for South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya because they have sizeable samples.

The following colour legend will be used in the graphs:

Response option	Colour code
Strongly agree	
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

Figure 2. Response colour codes

Reputation of Chinese business in Africa

Findings for all countries

The scores for the six items in this category indicate that the perception of the reputation of Chinese business in Africa is more negative than positive. In total, 43.3% of responses were negative. It is however significant that the perception of the reputation of Chinese companies is not overwhelmingly negative since 35.4% of respondents have a favourable perception of Chinese companies in their respective countries.

Figure 3 (below) indicates that the majority of respondents did not think that Chinese businesses in Africa have a good reputation. In total, 58% of respondents disagree with the statement that *Chinese companies have a good reputation in my country*, while 26% disagree strongly and 32% disagree. In respect of the reliability of Chinese companies, the figures are less negative, with 42% of respondents disagreeing with the statement that *Chinese companies are reliable in my country*, while 17% strongly disagree and 25% disagree. It is noteworthy that in total 32% of respondents agree with this statement, with 27% agreeing and 5% agreeing strongly.

Considering the question whether China has a positive impact on the development of their respective countries, 36% agree and 11% strongly agree. But when asked if *Africans have personally benefited from Chinese business*, most disagree (24%) or strongly disagree (31%). However, they do see the positive effects of Chinese investment in their countries, which could explain the overall positive perception. In respect of *knowledge of Chinese brands*, 20% strongly agree and 50% agree that they do know at least three Chinese brands, which is substantial and indicates that Chinese products and services are well-known in Africa.

The majority of respondents either strongly disagree (33%) or disagree (29%) with the statement that *China and their country are equal business partners*, which is in direct contrast with what China

says. There is an unequal relationship in terms of negotiating capacity: the Chinese have more expertise about Africa, understand English and French, and have a large investment capacity. Africans have little knowledge of the Chinese but are more than willing to have them invest given Chinese non-interference and efficiency. Also, the Chinese require input from Africans when contracts are agreed upon, in contrast with their Western counterparts (Joris 2013:91, 117, 151 and Chan 2012:33).

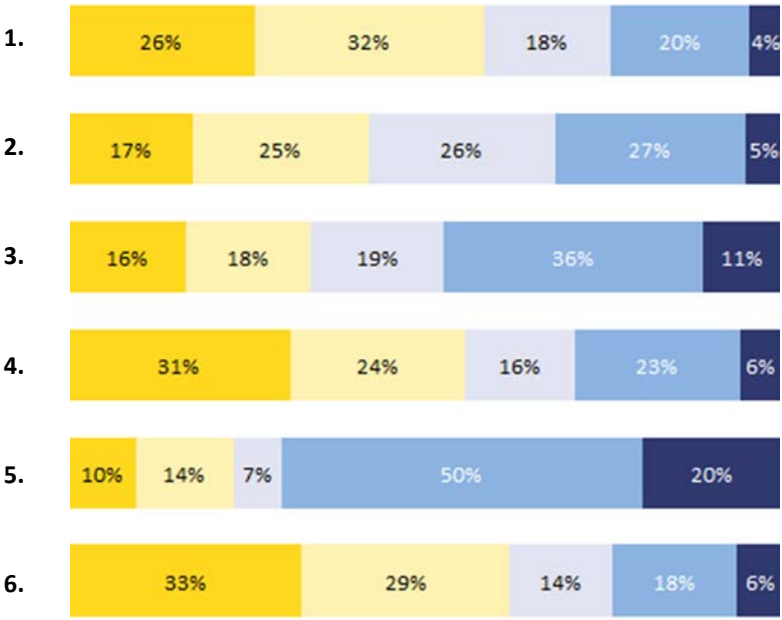


Figure 3. Reputation of Chinese business in Africa: Overall results

1: Chinese companies have a good reputation in my country
2: Chinese companies in my country are reliable
3: Chinese businesses have a positive impact on development
4: I have personally benefited from Chinese investment in my country
5: I know at least three Chinese brands
6: China and my country are equal business partners

Left to right: Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree

Findings for South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya

The perception of the reputation of Chinese business in South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya for all six items of this category is as follows: 56% of Kenyans are positive about China's reputation, compared to 33.1% of Nigerians and 22.4% of South Africans. This means that South Africans are the most negative. The percentage for all countries is 35.4%, as indicated above. It is striking that Kenyans do have a much more positive perception of Chinese business in Africa, in terms of both the overall score for this category and individual statements (see *Figure 4* below). In response to the statement that *China has a good reputation in my country*, 49% of Kenyans agree compared to only 15% of Nigerians and 11% of South Africans. No data is available that could explain why this is the case. However, it could be because the Chinese investment in Kenya is more recent and the negative effects of their presence are not yet widely known, while the Chinese presence in South Africa and Nigeria goes back much longer.

Also in respect of *reliability of Chinese companies*, Kenyans are much more positive than Nigerians and South Africans. In terms of *China having a positive impact on the development of the country*, likewise Kenyans are the most positive (77%). Nigerians also have a fairly positive perception (46%), which is almost identical with the overall perception of China having a positive impact on the development of the country (47.0%). Interestingly, South Africans are much less positive, with only 29% agreeing.

Considering knowledge of Chinese brands, the figures for Kenya (76%), Nigeria (81%) and South Africa (60%) correspond to a large extent with the overall percentage of 70%, which means that Chinese brands are well-known in Africa.

Most respondents disagree with the statement that *China and their country are equal business partners*. Kenyans are most optimistic (25% agree), followed by Nigerians (18%) and South Africans (14%).

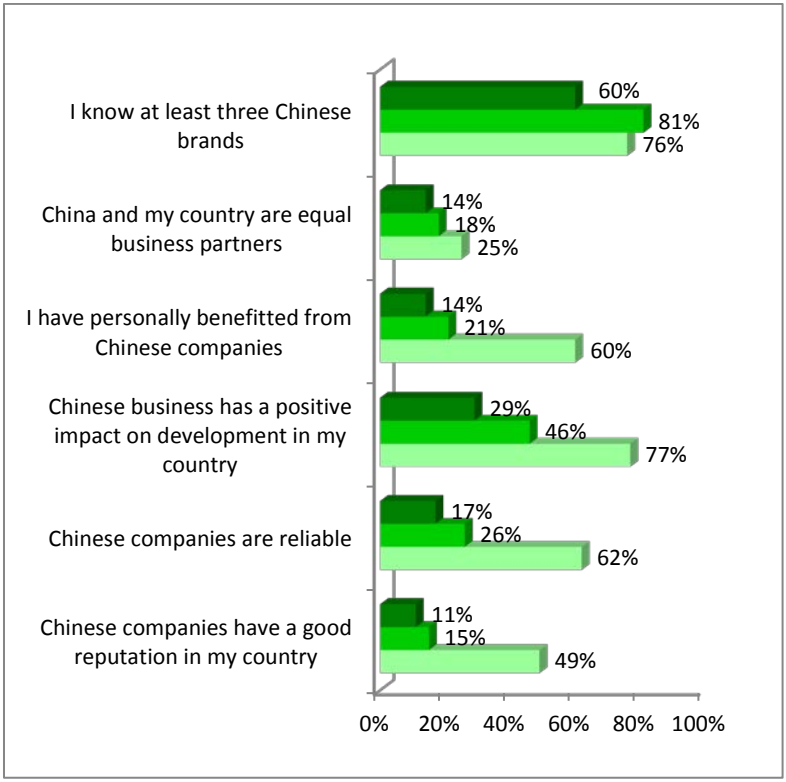


Figure 4. Reputation of Chinese business: South Africa (top), Nigeria (middle) and Kenya (bottom)

Quality of Chinese products and services

Findings for all countries

Looking at all the four items in this category, it is clear that there is overall disagreement with the statement that Chinese products and services are of good quality (55.9% disagree and 22.7% agree).

Figure 5 (below) indicates that 68% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that *Chinese products and services are of high quality*. Fifty-two percent disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that *Chinese products and services are good value for money*. This correlates with the literature review which indicates that

Chinese products are often perceived to be of low quality. More respondents (18% strongly agree and 29% agree) are happy with *the infrastructural projects that the Chinese have completed in their country*. 32% are unhappy with these infrastructural projects. The remainder (21%) is undecided on this issue.



Figure 5. Quality of Chinese products and services: Overall results

1: Chinese products push domestic products out of the market
2: I am happy with the infrastructural projects that the Chinese have completed in my country
3: Chinese companies offer products and services of high quality
4: Chinese products and services are good value for money

However, *Figure 5* (above) also indicates that the majority of respondents strongly disagree (47%) or disagree (32%) with the statement that *Chinese products push domestic products out of the market*. This finding correlates with the findings of the literature review.

This could be explained by the fact that since there is little manufacturing of products in Africa there is no serious competition from Chinese products with domestic products. However, the import of cheap Chinese manufactured products might inhibit the development of an African manufacturing sector.

Findings for South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya

Considering all the four items in this category together, South Africans and Nigerians are more negative about the quality of Chinese products and services than the findings for all countries – only 17.1% of Nigerians and 13.7% of South Africans are positive about the quality of Chinese products and services, while 22.7% of all respondents are. Kenyans are once again more positive (37.6%).

Responses to the statement that *Chinese products are of high quality*, *Figure 6* (below) indicates that only 9% of South Africans and 11% of Nigerians agree. The majority consider Chinese products and services to be of a rather low quality. Kenyans are more optimistic, with 22% agreeing that Chinese products and services are of high quality.

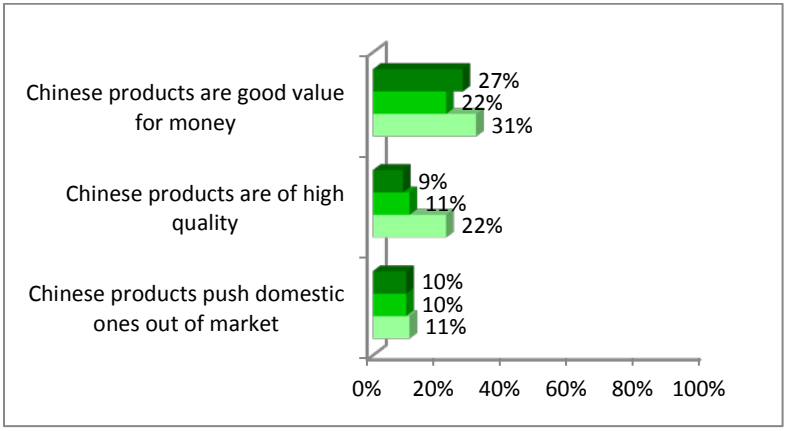


Figure 6. Quality of Chinese products and services: South Africa (top), Nigeria (middle) and Kenya (bottom)

However, more respondents from these three countries agree that *Chinese products and services are good value for money*. 31% of Kenyans, 27% of South Africans and 22% of Nigerians agree. The quality might be low, but the products are also cheap.

There does not seem to be a fear that *Chinese products push domestic products out of the market*. Only 10% of South Africans, 10% of Nigerians and 11% of Kenyans fear that Chinese products push domestic ones out of the market. This once again correlates with the literature review, which can be explained by the low level of manufacturing on the African continent.

In terms of the infrastructural projects that the Chinese built in South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya, there is a noticeable and significant difference, indicated by *Figure 7* (below). In South Africa, only 13% are happy with these infrastructural projects, compared to 29% of Nigerians. Kenyans however, are very happy with Chinese infrastructural projects, with 89% agreeing. This is a huge difference and there are no data available explaining why this would be the case. It could be because South Africa has a large and very good construction sector which might make South Africans believe that companies in the construction sector of the economy deliver good quality products that are better than those of the Chinese. By comparison, the domestic construction sector in Nigeria and Kenya is much smaller.

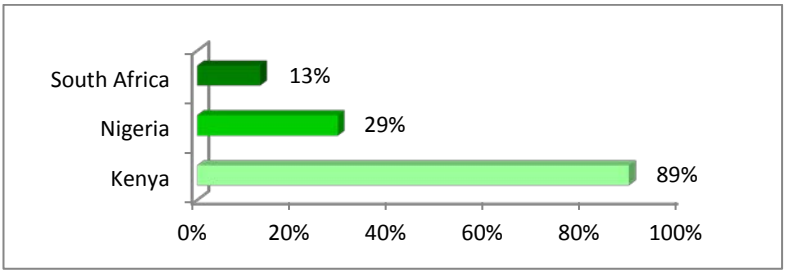


Figure 7. Satisfaction with Chinese infrastructural projects in South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya

Social responsibility of Chinese business in Africa

Findings for all countries

A review of all the five items in this category indicates that there is an overall disagreement with the statement that Chinese companies are socially responsible (45.7% disagree and 21% agree).

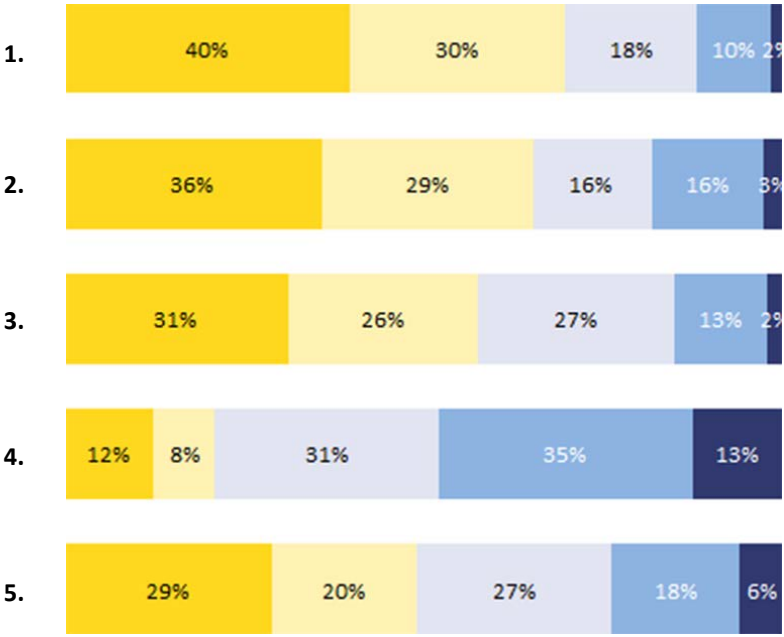


Figure 8. Social responsibility of Chinese companies in Africa: Overall results

1: Chinese companies take care of the society/community when taking business decisions
2: Chinese companies engage with the surrounding communities when they establish operations in my country
3: Chinese companies make donations to communities and charities in my country
4: I would like to have Chinese people as my friends
5: Chinese companies have respect for African culture and values

Figure 8 (above) indicates that the majority of respondents do not agree with the statements that *Chinese companies take care of the*

societycommunity when making decisions (40% strongly disagree and 30% disagree) or that *Chinese engage with communities when establishing operations* (36% strongly disagree and 29% disagree). Responses to the statement that *Chinese companies make donations to communities and charities* suggest somewhat more optimism; however, a sizable 31% strongly disagree and 26% disagree with this statement.

In terms of the statement that *Chinese companies have respect for African culture and values*, a large percentage of respondents disagree (29% strongly disagree and 20% disagree). However, 24% indicate that they do believe Chinese firms respect African culture and values.

Overall, respondents would *be happy to have Chinese people as their friends*, with 13% strongly agreeing and 35% agreeing. 31% are undecided. Only 20% (12% strongly disagree and 8% disagree) do not want friendships with Chinese. This is an indication that Africans are relatively open towards cultivating relationships of friendship with people from other countries and cultures, and having Chinese as their friends.

Findings for South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya

The findings for South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya largely correspond with those for all countries, as indicated above (*Figure 7*). In all three countries, respondents disagree that Chinese companies are socially responsible (32.6% of Kenyans, 45.6% of Nigerians and 49.3% of South Africans).

Figure 9 (below) indicates that in response to the statement that *Chinese companies take care of the society/community when making decisions*, only 6% of South Africans, 7% of Nigerians and 23% of Kenyans agree. The same trend can be seen in responses to the statement that *Chinese companies engage with involved or surrounding communities*, where only 8% of South Africans, 15% of Nigerians and 35% of Kenyans agree. This means that the majority of respondents react in the negative to these two statements. In terms of *Chinese*

companies making donations to local communities, respondents are somewhat more positive (11% of South Africans, 10% of Nigerians and 23% of Kenyans agree), but most are nevertheless negative. Once again, respondents from Kenya are slightly more positive than those from Nigeria and South Africa.

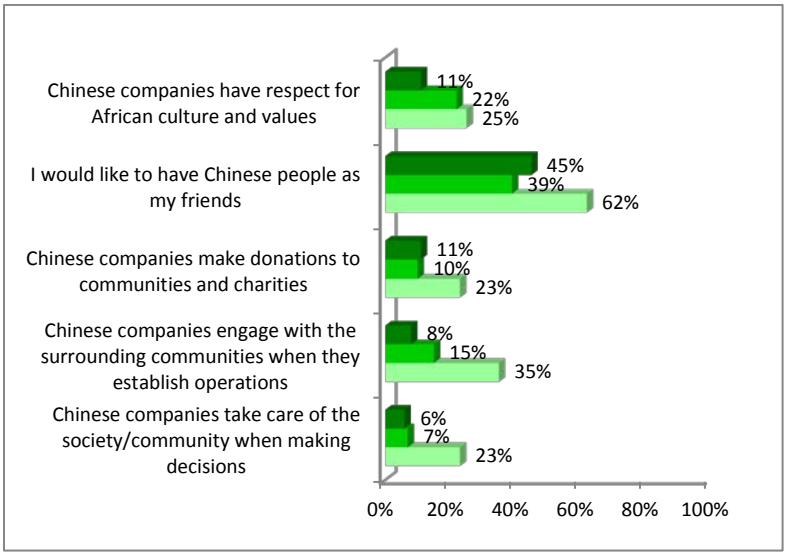


Figure 9. Social responsibility of Chinese companies: South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya

Considering responses to the statement that *Chinese companies respect African culture and values*, 25% of Kenyans agree, compared to 22% of Nigerians and 11% of South Africans. Once again, South Africans are much more negative than Kenyans and Nigerians. There is no clear reason why South Africans are more negative than the others. A possible explanation could be that Chinese companies have been operating in South Africa for a long time and have penetrated deep into rural areas. Many shops in rural areas in South Africa are run by Chinese who tend not to engage with the locals.

Corresponding with the overall findings in this category, Kenyans, Nigerians and South Africans are open to having Chinese individuals as

friends. 62% of Kenyans agree, compared to 39% of Nigerians and 45% of South Africans.

Economic responsibility of Chinese business in Africa

Findings for all countries

Overall, the perception is that Chinese companies do not take responsibility for their economic impact, with 40.1% of respondents being negative and 28.3% positive. However, when looking at responses to the statement that *the investment of Chinese companies is contributing to the development of my country*, 8% strongly agree and 40% agree. 21% are unsure, 16% disagrees and 15% strongly disagree, as indicated in *Figure 10* (below). Most respondents view Chinese investment in Africa as something positive; however, there are reservations in respect of corruption, facilitating illegal activities and undermining the potential domestic market of manufacturing, which could explain the overall negative perception. However, if Chinese companies are not involved in these, which is a possibility as these numbers only reflect a perception, Chinese companies should share information with Africans and be transparent so as to gain trust and respect.

In respect of corruption, most respondents believe that *Chinese companies are involved in corruption when doing business in their country* (61%). Only 13% of respondents believe that Chinese companies are not involved in corruption while 26% are unsure. These findings correspond with information in the literature review, which indicates that the Chinese sometimes facilitate illegal business activities (like logging and fishing), bribe of African officials, and practise anti-competitive business practices. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, even though China has a low corruption perception score (40 out of 100), its ranking is better than most African countries, indicating that corruption in China is still rife.

Chinese companies in Africa bring potentially corrupt practices with them when they invest in Africa.

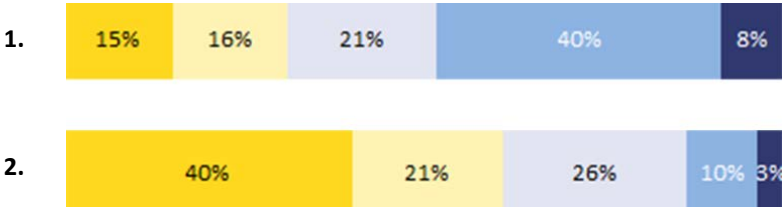


Figure 10. Economic responsibility of Chinese companies: Overall results

1: The investment of Chinese companies is contributing to the development of my country
2: Chinese companies are not involved in corruption when doing business in my country

Findings for South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya

In respect of items in this category about Chinese companies taking responsibility for their economic impact, Nigerians and South Africans are more negative than the overall result: 46.8% of Nigerians and 47.3% of South Africans disagree that Chinese companies take responsibility for their economic impact, while 40.1% of all respondents disagree. Once again, Kenyans are much more positive, with only 23.5% saying that Chinese companies do not take responsibility for their economic impact.

Figure 11 (below) indicates that the responses of South Africans to the statement that *Chinese companies' investment is contributing to the development of their country* are rather negative, with only 32% of South Africans agreeing with this statement. Nigerians (45%), and especially Kenyans (75%), are much more positive. The reason why South Africans are more negative than respondents from the other countries is not clear. It could be that South Africans see the Chinese as a threat to their domestic manufacturing sector (in the textile industry many South African companies had to close their doors since they could

no longer compete with the Chinese), or that they tend, generally speaking, to be more xenophobic than other Africans.

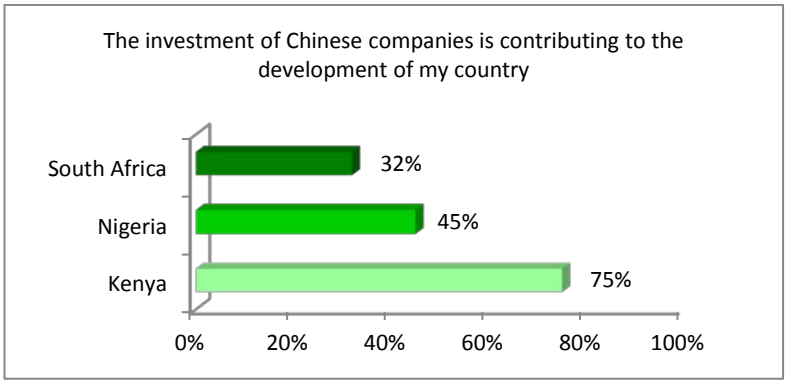


Figure 11. Economic responsibility: Investment of Chinese companies contributing to development: South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya

Figure 12 (below) indicates that only 8% of South Africans and 8% of Nigerians agree that *Chinese companies are not involved in corruption*. However, 23% of Kenyans agree with the statement that Chinese companies are not involved in corruption. Kenyans therefore believe that Chinese companies are less corrupt than do South Africans and Nigerians.

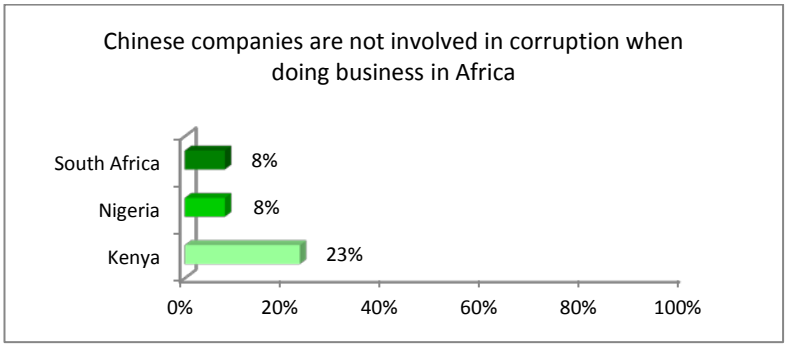


Figure 12: Chinese companies not involved in corruption: South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya

Environmental responsibility of Chinese business in Africa

Findings for all countries

Considering the three items in this category, there is an overall disagreement with the statement that Chinese companies are environmentally responsible (53.9% disagree and 11.1% agree). This is in line with the literature review, and it is therefore necessary that Chinese companies respect environmental standards and rectify damages done to the environment in Africa.

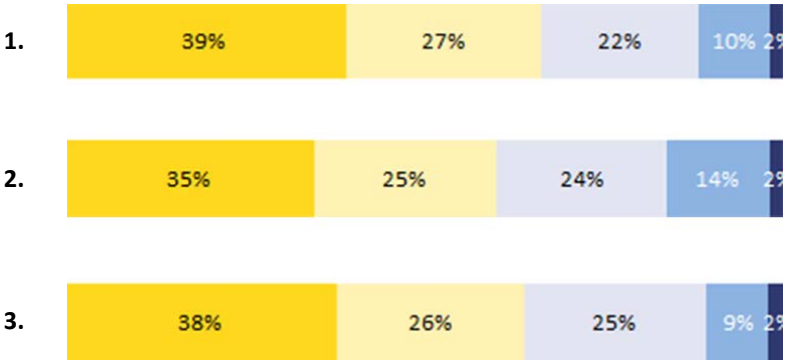


Figure 13. Environmental responsibility of Chinese companies in Africa: Overall results

1: Chinese companies take care of the environment when taking business decisions in my country
2: Chinese companies doing business in my country follow the applicable environmental laws
3: When Chinese companies damage the natural environment in my country, they take responsibility to rectify the damage that they have caused

Findings for South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya

South Africans (56.6%) and Nigerians (56.3%) are more negative than the overall result for this category (53.9%), disbelieving that Chinese companies are environmentally responsible. *Figure 14* (below) further indicates that only 3% % of South Africans and 7% of Nigerians

agree that *Chinese companies take care of the environment* compared to 26.1% of Kenyans.

In response to the statement that *Chinese companies follow applicable environmental laws,* only 6% of South Africans and 11% of Nigerians agree, while 40% of Kenyans do. Moreover, only 3% of South Africans and 7% of Nigerians agree that *Chinese companies rectify damages they have caused* compared to 27% of Kenyans.

Again, Kenyans are more positive than South Africans and Nigerians about Chinese business practices since fewer of them disagree, which means that a substantially greater percentage of Kenyans believe that Chinese companies are environmentally responsibility.

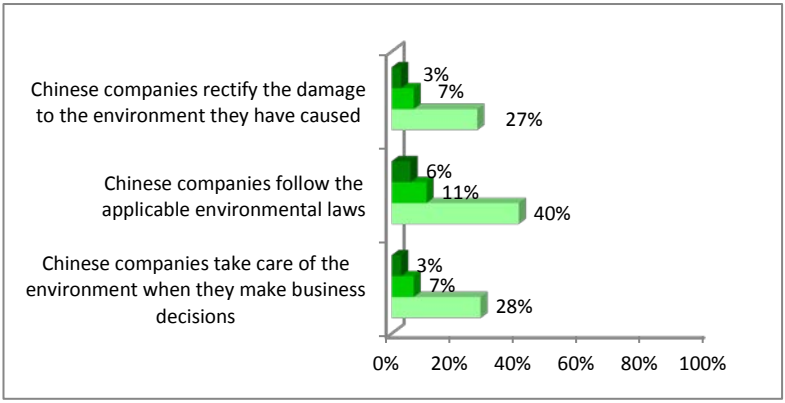


Figure 14. Environmental responsibility of Chinese companies: South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya

Employment practices of Chinese business in Africa

Findings for all countries

Considering the eleven items in this category, there is an overall disagreement with the statement that Chinese companies adhere to good employment practices (46% disagree and 19.1% agree). This is in line with the literature review, and it is therefore necessary that Chinese companies address the way they treat their employees.

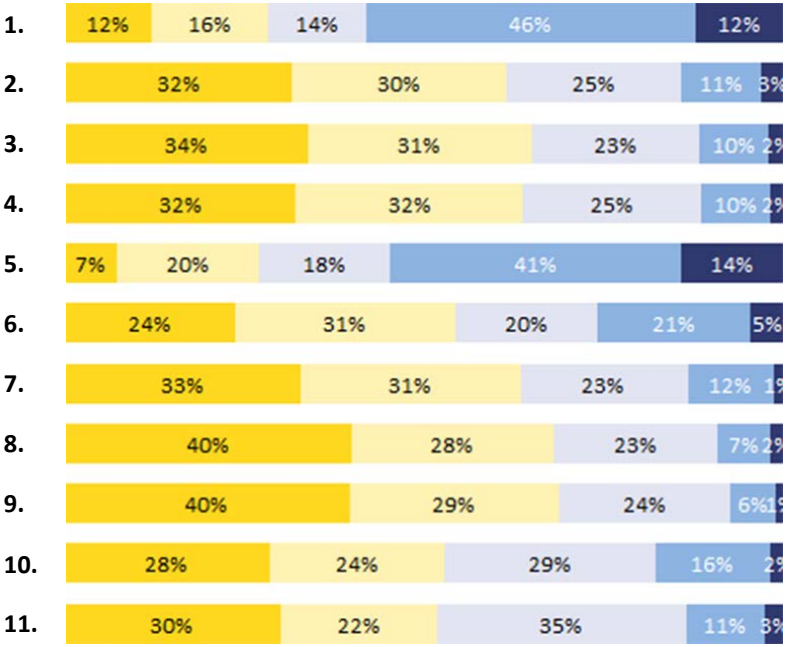


Figure 15. Employment practices of Chinese companies in Africa: Overall results

1: Chinese companies create employment opportunities for my country's people
2: Chinese companies treat their African staff with respect
3: Chinese companies provide decent working conditions for their employees
4: Chinese companies are concerned about the health and safety of their employees
5: Chinese companies operating in my country only use Chinese citizens as employees
6: Chinese citizens come to my country to work for non-Chinese companies.
7: Chinese companies respect the basic rights of workers
8: People working for Chinese companies in my country get better paid
9: People working for Chinese companies in my country get extra benefits
10: Chinese companies in my country give their employees good training
11: There is no glass ceiling for promotion in Chinese companies in my country

Figure 15 (above) indicates that the majority of respondents agree with the statement that *Chinese companies create employment*

opportunities for Africans (12% strongly agree and 46% agree). However, when asked if *Chinese companies respect their African staff* there is much less agreement – only 5% strongly agree and 11% agree.

There is even less agreement with the statement that *Chinese companies provide decent work conditions to their staff* (2% strongly agree and 10% agree), or the statement that they are *concerned about the health and safety of their employees*, with only 2% strongly agreeing and 10% agreeing. Responding to the statement that *Chinese companies respect basic workers' rights*, only 1% strongly agree while 12% agree.

In response to the statement *that Chinese companies only use Chinese citizens as employees,* 14% strongly agree and 41% agree. In response to the statement that *People working for Chinese companies get better paid*, only 7% agree and 2% strongly agree, while 23% are undecided, 28% disagree and 40% strongly disagree. This probably means that people working for Chinese companies do not necessarily get better paid than people working for non-Chinese companies. In regard to the statement that *people working for Chinese companies get extra benefits*, only 1% strongly agree and 6% agree. In terms of the statement that *people working for Chinese companies receive good training*, 2% strongly agree and 16% agree, while 29% are undecided, 24% disagree and 28% strongly disagree. This means that 50% of respondents believe that people working for Chinese companies do not receive good training. With the statement that *there is no glass-ceiling for promotion for African employees working for Chinese companies in my country* only 3% strongly agree and 11% agree. 35% of respondents is undecided, while 22% disagree and 30% strongly disagree. This means that the majority of respondents do not believe there is no glass-ceiling for promotion for African employees working for Chinese companies.

Findings for South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya

Findings from South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria are based on specific statements that relate to employment practices of Chinese companies, as

presented in *Figure 16* (below). The figures indicate that Kenyans (28.2%) are more positive than the South Africans (11.6%) and Nigerians (18.1%) with regard to employment practices of Chinese companies in Africa.

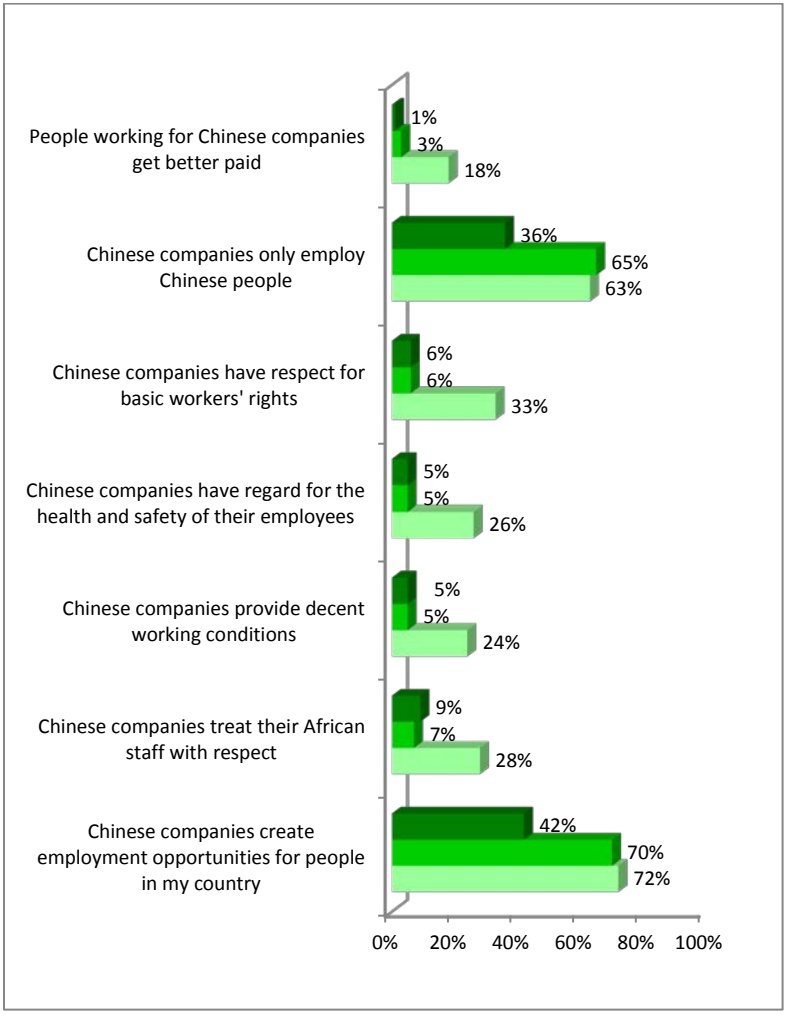


Figure 16: Employment practices of Chinese companies in Africa: South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya

This trend of more positive perceptions of Chinese business practices in Africa among Kenyans in comparison with South Africans and Nigerians is prevalent throughout the survey. Once again, there are no clear data as to why this is the case, but, as indicated earlier, the Kenyan optimism could be because Chinese investment in Kenya is more recent than in South Africa and Nigeria. It could also be that South Africans and Nigerians are more influenced by Western media, which tend to create a more negative picture about Chinese investment in Africa.

Kenyans and Nigerians agree that *Chinese companies create employment opportunities for people in their country* (72% and 70%, respectively). South Africans agree much less with this statement (42%). Kenyans (28%) agree more than South Africans (9%) and Nigerians (7%) that *Chinese companies treat their African staff with respect*. Kenyans (24%) also agree more than South Africans (5%) and Nigerians (5%) that *Chinese companies provide decent working conditions*. And Kenyans (26%) agree more than South Africans (5%) and Nigerians (5%) that *Chinese companies have regard for health and safety conditions of their employees*. Moreover, Kenyans (33%) agree more than South Africans (6%) and Nigerians (6%) that *Chinese companies have respect for basic workers' rights*.

Both Kenyans (63%) and Nigerians (65%) agree much more than South Africans (36%) that *China employs Chinese people rather than Africans in their companies in Africa*. Lastly, Kenyans (18%) agree more than South Africans (1%) and Nigerians (3%) that *people working for Chinese companies get better paid*.

The overall percentages for all countries thus indicate that most respondents disagree with positive statements about Chinese employment practices. There is a perception that Chinese companies do not treat their African staff with respect, do not provide decent working conditions, have little regard for health and safety conditions of their employees, and have little regard for basic workers' rights.

5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is no mystery why Chinese companies are investing in Africa: there are economic opportunities for China in Africa. This is also the case for American and European companies and the Chinese have as much right as companies from other countries to invest in Africa.

However, the manner in which Chinese and any other companies invest in Africa is of importance. Besides contributing to the economic development of African countries, companies should take responsibility for their environmental, social and workplace impact, even if legislation is absent or inadequate, compliance poor, or law enforcement weak in African countries.

This survey indicates that there is an overall negative African perception about Chinese investment in Africa. Africans do see the benefit of Chinese investment, but they are concerned about the environmental and social responsibility of China, the quality of their products, their possible involvement in corruption and illegal activities, and their employment practices. Often these perceptions are based on realities, but they may also result from rumours, or be fuelled by the media.

We would like to make the following recommendations:

- The survey indicates that Africans are happy with Chinese investment in the sense that it contributes to the development of their country. However, Africans are concerned about the economic,

workplace, social and environmental impact of Chinese investment. Hence, *Chinese companies need to be aware of their economic, workplace, social and environmental responsibilities when investing in Africa*;

- *Chinese companies and Africans should engage* to understand one another and discuss the issues raised in this report in order to ensure *mutually beneficial solutions*. One of the follow-up activities of this report will be to organise *a Lead Ethics in Africa Dialogue (LEAD)* in this regard; and
- *It is to a large extent up to Africa to gain from its relations with China.* African leaders should be responsible and ethical when entering into business and investment deals with China (and, of course, all other countries). They should also ensure that there are strong institutions in Africa that can determine the terms of engagement and make sure that Chinese companies are held to such terms. They should ensure that African citizens reap the benefits of foreign investment, whether Chinese or not.

In conclusion, responsible business conduct by Chinese in Africa depends on both Chinese and Africans. Chinese businesses in Africa need to practice economic, workplace, social and environmental responsibility. But Africans need to be clear about their expectations regarding the economic, workplace, social and environmental responsibility of investors and business partners. In the end, Africans need to decide about their own future and with whom they engage. They need to ensure that these engagements are beneficial for Africa. China has every right to be in Africa, and if they do not take the many opportunities present in Africa, others will.

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A Survey

This survey measures Africans' perceptions of Chinese business in their countries. Such a survey is long overdue.

Fifteen African countries with a large presence of Chinese companies were identified to participate in the survey. In total, 1,056 Africans completed an online questionnaire.

The results indicate that Africans are happy with Chinese investment in that it contributes to development. They are, however, concerned about its economic, workplace, social and environmental impacts.

Chinese companies investing in Africa need to be aware of their responsibilities in these regards. Equally, African leaders need to be ethical and responsible to ensure that their citizens reap the benefits of foreign investment, whether Chinese or not.

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