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Research Article

Political Ideology and Cooperation: China - Zimbabwe Relations post Mugabe Era

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine the role that ideology has played in the cooperation of Zimbabwe and China post the Mugabe era, or the Second Republic, as the establishment in Harare likes to be identified. Historical ties between China and Zimbabwe goes back to the days of the war of independence for Zimbabwe and the Look East Foreign Policy adopted by Zimbabwe during the Mugabe era necessitated the inquiry into how ideology has influenced cooperation between the two nations. The study used secondary research data that is desktop research was carried out by going through journal articles, newspaper articles and other credible publications. The findings reveal that there is little ideological similarities between Zimbabwe and China with the cultural and ideological exchange between the two nations being from China to Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe has had no evident influence on China culturally. Whilst the two nations have been under varied USA sanctions, which has resulted in them banding together, they have also been accused of suppressing human rights and going against principles of democracy. China has generally treated Zimbabwe the same way it has treated other world countries under its soft power diplomacy and noninterventionist principles. However, the role played by China in Zimbabwe's coup that ousted the late President Mugabe and China's increased role in global peace efforts suggests a shift in its policy and ideology. Zimbabwe does not have the moral, economic nor military power to influence global events like China. The study concluded that the ideology was at the basis of the relationship between Zimbabwe and China, rather, it is the exploitation of Zimbabwe's resources that mainly characterises the relationship between the two countries.

Keywords: Cooperation; Ideology; Second Republic; Look East Foreign Policy; Diplomacy

1.0 Introduction

China and Zimbabwe's ties can be firmly traced back to the war of liberation in Zimbabwe during which China supported the ZANU PF guerrilla movement with weapons, training and other vital resources needed for the armed struggle effort.

China had bet on the wrong armed movement in several countries before supporting ZANU PF and not its sister/rival revolutionary movement ZAPU in Zimbabwe's war of liberation so it also took a gamble when it opted to back ZANU PF's war effort against a highly organized Rhodesian forces. Nkala, (2021) reported that the questionable role and morality of the once very highly thought of Chinese government and the uncertainty of the capabilities of the ZANU PF movement created a tense but high rewarding partnership between the two groups as ZANU PF would go on to win the elections and attaining independence. Thus, it was widely expected that China would benefit immensely from the ascendency of ZANU PF to power in Zimbabwe.

Soon after Zimbabwe attained independence, the Eastern Bloc had effectively lost the cold war and China was now concentrating more on its internal restructuring to make sure that it could remain relevant in international relations so it did not offer a viable partnership to the movement in Harare. Despite continued yet limited support from Beijing, it was more practical for Zimbabwe to look towards the Western countries who had negotiated for its independence and offered more in terms of socio-economic support, Simurai, (2021).

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Since the founding of modern-day People's Republic of China in 1949, the government in Beijing is the sole and legitimate government of all of China and Chinese territories. China being a one-party state party means that there is only one political establishment that is legally and lawfully recognized by the government and people with political ambitions must realise them within the confines of the ruling party. The system of the people's congress under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), with the National People's Congress (NPC) functioning as the highest organ of state power, has meant that the CCP has absolute and total control of the political and government processes**,** Takudzwa, (2022).

Whilst not exclusive to China, its one-party system is constantly under the spotlight because it is the biggest country that uses such a system and the success that China has had makes it an interesting alternative to western style democracy which now characterizes most of the world currently. Tendi, (2020) insisted that China is an authoritarian regime because it has no freely elected leaders whilst its socio-cultural activities, such as religion, are closely controlled by the government. Direct elections only occur at the local level and there is greater control at the national level by the leadership of the CCP. Despite the criticism of global institutions, China has managed to grow its economy and improve the standards of living of its people through its system of governance showing that the western style of democracy is not necessarily a pre-requisite for development and success.

China has accepted that its style of government and political ideology are not as common across the globe and has therefore adopted an internal ideology and an external or foreign relations approach that is a bit different. Whilst maintaining a firm grip at home in controlling the political landscape, China has adopted a non-interventionist policy when it comes to the affairs of other countries although playing a significant role in several key talks to end international disputes over the years, Hodzi, (2019). China seeks to further its goals by engaging in actions that benefit its economy and political aspirations although it is known to also help other countries, particularly in the third world.

China can be described as a capitalist- socialist country or a socialist-capitalist country due to its unique and intertwined systems and ideologies. Thus, China has shown the flexibility required for countries to flourish in an ever-evolving global system of relationships. To control the impact and effect of its actions abroad that are not always consistent worth its actions at home, China controls the media extensively and has banned various social media tools that it feels may make its people relate with other world systems thereby threatening the relevance of its ideology, Vines, (2020).

Zimbabwe's war of independence was informed by socialist and communist notions of equality and equity and this seemed to be the initial direction taken by the Zimbabwe government in the 1980s when the country attained independence. The government of Zimbabwe experimented with free primary school education, free health care and community-based farming funded by the government in its initial approach but soon found out that such an approach needed a lot of funding which the government did not have Vines, (2020). Therefore, Zimbabwe did try to implement socialist policies at the onset although it has been argued by many that these policies were more populist for political reasons than socialist for ideological purposes.

Zimbabwe's ideological background was further complicated by the fact that it had many influences during its liberation struggle. The Soviet Union, China, Tanzania, Cuba, Ethiopia and Ghana, amongst others, had all provided ideological, weapons training and academic training to various individuals who came together to form the government of Zimbabwe. This cocktail of varied notions and ideas of socialism and communism, coupled with some who had received Western education, set the stage for a lack of real ideological course for Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, the ideology of reconciliation between the two main parties that had forged the war of liberation, ZANU and ZAPU and the former white government led by Ian D, Smith, which dominated the early government initiatives after independence and it was also an essential foreign policy tool as it sought to draw foreign investment to the new and tolerant Zimbabwe, Moyo et al., (2020).

Zimbabwe fully embraced capitalism in the early 1990s and the regime in Harare implemented the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) which gave a new policy direction. This was the moment that the new state realised that despite its ideological background, it would not achieve much if it isolated itself from the West that had the resources and willingness to help new democracies grow their economies but it was only on the terms of the West. However, a social movement led by War Veterans resulted in a land revolution in early 2000 and the Zimbabwe government had to come up with a land reform program after failing to quell the land invasions and this led to a fallout with the West which insisted the policy was against universal property rights, Smith, (2020). In 2003 Zimbabwe implemented the Look East Foreign Policy which signaled a shift in policy and ideology now looked to the Asian countries, particularly China, for economic cooperation, strategic political solidarity and cultural exchange, Moyo, (2020). Zimbabwe did try to forge closer economic ties with Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran and Saudi Arabia, amongst other countries, but it was China that was more willing to be associated with Zimbabwe and, more importantly, had the capacity and appetite to go against the West by helping Zimbabwe.

The continued relationship with the Zimbabwean government was a big gamble for both parties from the onset because the Chinese backed African governments had been removed in Benin Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central Africa, Burkina Faso and more importantly in Ghana which was perceived by many to be the most important psychological and ideological country for armed struggles on the continent. Takudzwa, (2022). Although revolutions are often characterized by periods of instability, China's negative reputation due to its alleged role in the coup attempt against the president of Niger presented it in a bad light and this fostered mistrust of China on the continent.

2.0 Methodology

The study design used is extensive desktop research. The study looked at various publications on the relationship between Zimbabwe and China with a bias towards understanding the ideological nature of the relationship to find out of it contributed to the well documented relationship between the two countries. The internet was used to look for articles on journals in order to fully understand the relationship between China and Zimbabwe. Critical commentaries and newspaper articles were also examined as credible sources of information in the study.

3.0 Discussions and Findings

3.1 Domestic and international polices of Zimbabwe and China

Zimbabwe's Second Republic has been accused of being largely as authoritarian as the previous administration and this should not be a surprise considering that ZANU PF's current administration is made up largely of officials from the previous regime, Kabonga & Zvokuomba, (2021). There have been allegations of human rights abuses, particularly attacks on opposition members and systematic unconstitutional incarceration of opponents of the government. This is similar to China which has also been accused of lack of political tolerance and persecution of opponents of the regime. Whilst Zimbabwe is officially a democracy, the ZANU PF Party constantly has the majority rule in Parliament, allowing it to enact laws that suppress the rights of people and this is consistent with China. The use of state apparatus for voter intimidation, enactment of draconian laws and unfair use of media to make sure that ZANU PF remains in power has been perceived by many to be a sign of the party effectively making Zimbabwe a one-party state with a semblance of democracy enough to make it appear to be a normal democracy, Tsholo, (2021).

The Second Republic in Zimbabwe came into power due to what many have described as a well-coordinated military coup. Generals from Zimbabwe Military are believed to have visited China to receive the blessing of the Beijing government just before the coup took place and this cooperation is the basis for strong ties between the two countries with China having influence on the internal politics of Zimbabwe, Kabonga & Zvokuomba, (2021). This is a departure from China's non-interference policy and raises eye brows as to the unique interests between China and Zimbabwe. The government in Beijing, whilst never taking any credit for what happened in Zimbabwe, increased its support for the regime in Harare as it had widely been reported for years that the Army Generals had always been more inclined towards China than the late Mugabe, Executive was.

The cooperation between Zimbabwe and China has seen Zimbabwean military and intelligence personnel being trained in China at the invitation of the Chinese government showing a close ideological link between the two countries, Obegunrin et al., (2020). Furthermore, Oliynik, (2023) reported that China has helped Zimbabwe with military and intelligence training and equipment that have helped to shore up the regime in Harare which suggests very close ties between the two countries. Evidence suggests that China is in control of the relationship with Zimbabwe as it is the one that shares and imparts ideology to Zimbabwe. There is little to suggest that China's own regime is learning or being influenced in any way by the administration in Harare. Therefore, the relationship between Beijing and Harare should be seen as that of big brother and little brother relationship.

China and Zimbabwe have often shared a common position against the West at the United Nations (UN). Obegunrin et al., (2020) noted that Zimbabwe and China have held the same position on a number of key UN matters showing that the two countries have strong ties which make them take up a shared stand on international matters. China has also vetoed the UN Security Council resolutions on Zimbabwe several times and this has been key in making sure that there is less international pressure on the regime in Harare. Both Zimbabwe and China have had to weather different sanctions from the USA and having a common enemy in the USA has made it important for China, Zimbabwe and other countries under trade embargos to band together. Therefore, it is not necessarily ideology that brings them together but common interests in international relations with both regimes being authoritarian more of a coincidence or reflection of why they are both under USA sanctions to begin with.

China has been known to have strict laws and policies when it comes to dealing with corruption as the government's ideology does not take kindly to people lining up their pockets. As a result, it is not uncommon for public officials to be openly tried for corruption in China and every political opponents are also known to

be silenced on corruption charges as corruption is such a big ideological issue, Moyo et al., (2020). However, Zimbabwe has widely been reported to be one of the most corrupt countries in the world ranking very high on the global corruption index. The corruption in Zimbabwe is organized at the government level as systematic groups work together to illegally acquire private wealth at the expense of the poor nation's population, (Trading economics.com 2023). Thus, there is little to suggest that the partnership between Zimbabwe and China is inspired by ideology, but that it is merely in the interests of each country to align with the other.

An interesting observation is that China moved from state owning land to allowing councils and individuals to own land in China thereby allowing companies and individuals to own land they build houses and industries on. However, the land reform program of 2000 in Zimbabwe nationalised land thereby making the government owner of most farming land in an Agricultural based economy although individuals still hold rights to their homes and other land where they conduct business. These contrasting developments have made it clear that the two countries do not share the same ideology when it comes to ownership of property and land rights. For China, property rights are essential to also attracting foreign investment and foreign nationals to come to China whereas to Zimbabwe that is under Western restrictions the government seeks to consolidate its own power internally by controlling what happens on the land which is vital for farming, Zimbabwe being an agricultural based economy.

3.2 China's African Foreign Policy and Zimbabwe's Foreign Policy

China adopted a non-interference policy after the cold war opting not to get involved directly in global conflicts but only seeks to grow its trade and economic relationships instead. Thus, China is known to take a neutral stance when it comes to taking decisive action against other countries although Beijing is known to condemn wrong doing from time to time on matters of global importance, Hodzi, (2019). Zimbabwe, on the other hand, has historically landed a hand to countries aligned to it and its involvement in the DRC's civil war is an example of the way in which Zimbabwe is prepared to actively step in to help those countries aligned with it. China is accused on turning a blind eye on the actions of countries that suppress the rights of citizens by insisting that internal matters are solely the responsibility of the governments in power and no other country has the right to determine how other countries are run and this is a distinct position from a country that has a lot of political and economic leverage within international relations. Zimbabwe, on the other hand, is willing to help other countries more directly despite its limited resources and political and economic force.

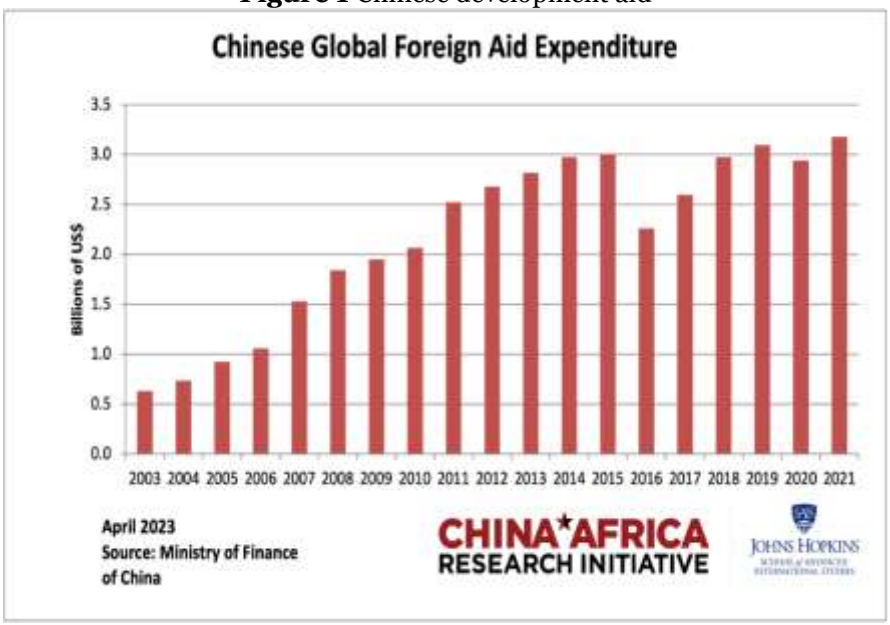
Although China not wanting to be directly involved in global conflicts, it has emerged as one of the most important countries when it comes conflict resolution over the years. China has been known to play important roles in trying to end the feud between North Korea and its neighbours and their allies and has also been instrumental in trying to resolve the nuclear impasse between the West and Iran, Lee, (2022). Therefore, China's unwillingness to get involved directly in the affairs of other countries means that even countries considered to be an outlier in international relations can be open to disusing matters of international importance like China. Whilst Zimbabwe has also generally not involved itself in internal matters of other countries, mainly due to lack of political and economic leverage in international relations, they have also been known to cooperate with countries like Iran and North Korea which also suggest that they too have ideology that helps to foster international relations and promote state sovereignty, Helliker & Murisa, (2020).

China's foreign policy objectives are clear in that they place the needs of China first. Whilst it can be argued that if the concept of national interest is applicable to China given that its ruling party exclusively carries out its own wishes as it controls the electoral and government processes entirely, China always makes sure that it protects and promotes its own interests at all times. In Africa, China has generally used soft power international relations approach whereby it is not concerned with matters of governance but only seeks to have influence over the natural resources of the region and uses its money to do so, Mano, (2021). The soft power ideology manifests in the form of loans and goods with gestures such as donating money or the building of crucial infrastructure and provision of social amenities such as hospitals and schools.

China's dealings with Zimbabwe also show the extension of the trend whereby it uses its economic and political clout to get a country with resources it needs to align with China to China's advantage. The construction of the National Defence College and New Parliament in Harare are mega and expensive projects that are presented as gestures of good will from China which make Zimbabwe feel appreciated by China thereby making negotiations for what China needs from Zimbabwe easier, Mano, (2021). On the other hand, Zimbabwe is "stuck" with China as they are the major country that can actually help them grow their economy due to the various pressures of not being in good books with the Western nations. This means that both countries see the mutual benefit of actually working together for each other's benefit and friendship or good will has nothing to do with their arrangements showing that ideology is not one of the main goals of foreign policy in international relations. For instance, Zimbabwe is not one of the top 5 countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa when it comes to Chinese investments and that shows where it ranks on their African agenda as other countries provide for more strategic partnerships for China, while on the other hand Zimbabwe has been trying to get back on good terms

with the West as the post-Mugabe government has been trying to distance itself from the Mugabe regime and all that happened during its tenure in office, Nakaripa, (2020).
Nakaripa, (2020) observed that China sees Africa as part of its immediate future and this is why it is investing heavily in Africa, so infrastructure development in Africa also benefits Chinese operations meaning even when China is showing benevolence it also stands to benefit directly from its own investments. China needs skilled and semi-skilled labourers in places like Zimbabwe so it makes sense to invest in education at various levels and China needs a healthy workforce, making decent health care important to their short term and long term ambitions, so China is consistent in its ideology towards Africa and other countries in the third world in general. On the one hand, poor countries like Zimbabwe welcome any form of assistance they can get because it benefits their people and they would not have had the funds to implement such projects themselves anyway to begin with.

Figure 1 Chinese development aid



(Visual capitalist.com 2023)

The above diagram shows the steady growth of Chinese foreign aid to developing countries which topped 3 billion in 2021 and shows the commitment of China to helping the development of countries around the world and Zimbabwe is n exception.

3.3 Economic Relations between Zimbabwe and China

China has played an important role in the economy of Zimbabwe since 2000 after the land reform program and human rights abuses that culminated in the EU and USA sanctions on the administration in Harare and the subsequent shying away of Bretton wood Institutions due to loans not being serviced, Nyemba et al.,(2023). Whilst the official and unofficial estimated of the direct and indirect investments of the Chinese government, Chinese firms and Chinese financial institutions into Zimbabwe vary, China has played a significant role in helping the regime in Harare stay afloat and thereby buying their allegiance. China has long been accused of debt trap of countries it has assisted in the past and Zimbabwe is no exception. The Chinese lend money they know countries cannot repay and end up getting mineral concessions instead and this is what has happened in Zimbabwe, Abegunrin, (2020). This shows that China's policy towards Zimbabwe, despite the two countries seemingly being very close and sharing similar ideology on international matters, is the same as its policy towards all other third world countries. This shows that there is no special relationship between the two countries despite the ideological similarities.
Despite China having a zero tolerance within China itself for corruption, it has been willing to look the other way when it comes to corruption in Zimbabwe. The Chinese government has turned a blind eye on the corrupt regime in Harare which it continues to support through its policy of non-intervention. However, what is interesting is that the Chinese firms have been accused of corrupt activities within the Zimbabwean mining sector and China has turned a blind eye on the corruption of its citizens and companies, Nyemba et al., (2023). This shows that for China, there are practices it will not allow in its country to protect the integrity of its regime and help its people remain disciplined, yet when they leave China they can engage in such activities as long as it benefits the Chinese economy. Thus, when it comes to international relations, national interests come first despite the values and ideology that are held by countries and China is no exception.
China's official African policy, the Forum of China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) which was launched in 2000 has been described by Chinese scholars as representing a new cooperation model between China and Africa by

fostering South -South coalition building in order to end poverty by creating partnerships between the biggest economy and the largest developing collective of countries in the world, Muzavazi, (2024). However, those critical of China have raised the unethical practices and asymmetrical benefits Chinese companies are getting in Africa. In Zimbabwe, other international and local businesses have accused the Chinese of getting preferential treatment from the government and this seems to be the norm throughout Africa and the development world, An, (2023). Chinese companies are said to bring experienced employees from China in their thousands to work on projects in Zimbabwe yet Zimbabwe has record unemployment, meaning the Chinese loans are benefiting the Chinese nationals more than locals who are forced to perform semi-skilled and unskilled Labour in conditions that are illegal and unsafe, Kaino, (2023).

The research found that the behavior of the Chinese citizens who have relocated to Zimbabwe has caused widespread Sino-phobia in Zimbabwe which is also evident across Africa. This is because the Chinese are notorious for bad labor practices which resulted in them paying unfair wages and also physically abusing and humiliating their workers. The abuse has, in recent time, led to well documented clashes with locals who have become bold enough to fight back insisting that the Chinese get preferential treatment from law enforcement (Moyo 2023). Both the Chinese and Zimbabwean governments have remained quiet on the matter despite there being widespread local and international reports suggesting the former does not mind how businesses conduct themselves and the latter is afraid of losing investments thereby turning a blind eye. China has been accused of unfair labor practices and forced labor in its own borders so this is not unique to Zimbabwean operations thereby suggesting both countries share a capital focused business model which is against nationalistic and socialistic principles both purport to follow, Muzavazi, (2024).

To show the extent of Chinese favoritism in Zimbabwe, Kambudzi et al., (2023) noted that the Chinese firms were said to be excluded from the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Bill of 2008 which sought to give Zimbabweans 51% ownership stake in various key industries in a bid to stop the flight of capital from Zimbabwe. However, the Chinese backed politicians assumed control of the key businesses to the benefit of the China and this further highlights the nature of the relationship between the two countries. The research discovered that the continued favoritism, exemption from laws and corruption to which both countries have turned a blind eye suggest shared lack of concern for the masses and their suffering as evidenced by failure to speak out or address the concerns, Kaino, (2023).

Figure 2 Zimbabwe Global Corruption Index Rating

Related	Last	Previous	Reference
Corruption Index	24	23	Dec 2023
Corruption Rank	149	157	Dec 2023

Trading economics.com 2023

The above diagram shows that Zimbabwe ranked 149 out of 180 countries that are monitored each year for corruption, according to Transparency International (Transparency International 2023). Furthermore, the corruption ranking of Zimbabwe, despite it having improved in 2023, averages 129,65 since its corruption began to be measured in 1998 and this shows that Zimbabwe has a strong culture of corruption.

A USA report on Zimbabwe mentioned the importance of China in corrupt activities in Zimbabwe as it is one of Asian countries allowing the corrupt officials to find ways of hiding their wealth, Muzavazi, (2024). This is significant because China seems to be playing a significant role directly or indirectly by turning a blind eye in the illegal activities of the state which impacts Zimbabweans negatively.

An, (2023) noted that this is part of the reason why there is a strong dislike for the Chinese amongst Zimbabwean citizens. Thus, the strong ties between Zimbabwe and China exist at a state level and economic level but not at a cultural or social level due to the seemingly negative impact of the Chinese on the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans.

Despite the controversial relationship between Zimbabwe and China, China continues to play a major role in Zimbabwe's economy by investing in Zimbabwe thereby creating jobs and given the Zimbabwe's unemployment rate, this has been welcome for many Zimbabweans. China has also helped small scale farmers to increase production through contract farming and this has helped to earn Zimbabwe a lot of foreign currency and reduce poverty particularly in the rural areas, Fang et al., (2020).

Small scale farmers and miners have been empowered by these Chinese schemes to give them the necessary inputs as long they sell what they produce to the same companies and despite the outcry for underpricing, practical projects to empower impoverished populations in Zimbabwe have paid off and this shows China and Zimbabwe's friendship having some major positives.

Figure 3 Tobacco Production in Zimbabwe

Year	Growers	Area	Production Volume	Average yield	Gross Revenue value	Export Volume	Export Revenue
		ha	Kg	kg/ha	US$	MT	US$
2022	103,572	110,770	212,718,938	1,920	650,321,805	199,847	990,520,361
2021	120,467	125,000	211,120,929	1,689	589,748,355	183,685	819,751,923
2020	122,367	117,537	184,042,292	1,566	459,667,154	187,994	763,055,187

The Sunday Mail 2019

The graph presented above shows the gradual increase in terms of the production of tobacco in Zimbabwe despite the hectarage actually going down. This can be attributed to farmers becoming increasingly knowledgeable in production and the continued support of institutions such as the Chinese, the tobacco concerns that continue to offer farmers inputs and other forms of support to encourage more production. Furthermore, for the period under which Zimbabwe has been under some form of sanctions and relations strained relations with the West, most of the Zimbabwean tobacco has been sold to China thereby making it a constant market due to its appetite for the Zimbabwean tobacco and cigarettes.

In 2023, in one of The Sunday Mail papers it was reported that Zimbabwe had produced an estimated 294 million kilograms of tobacco which earned the country over a billion United States Dollars for the for time in history. Tobacco production was carried out by an estimated 160 000 families with 700 000 people directly benefiting from tobacco farming in Zimbabwe making it a significant economy and poverty alleviation strategy in which the Chinese have played a significant part.

Zimbabwe has also benefitted immensely from Chinese investment in Lithium mining. The table bellow shows the progress Zimbabwe has made.

Figure 4 Global Lithium Production 2022

Rank	Country	Mine production 2022E (tonnes)	Share (%)
1	Australia	61,000	46.9%
2	Chile	39,000	30.0%
3	China	19,000	14.6%
4	Argentina	6,200	4.8%
5	Brazil	2,200	1.7%
6	Zimbabwe	800	0.6%
7	Portugal	600	0.5%
8	Canada	500	0.4%
	Other countries*	700	0.5%
	World Total	**130,000**	**100.0%**

(Visual capitalist.com 2023)

The above diagram shows that in 2022 Zimbabwe produced 800 tonnes of Lithium and was the fifth highest lithium producer in the world. However, in 2023 Zimbabwe produced 2300 tonnes to become the fifth highest lithium producer in the world largely due to Chinese investments. However, many have disputed these figures because of corrupt activities which have led to a lot of the lithium being shipped out without being recorded thereby short-changing Zimbabwe (Visual Capitalist 2023). The Base Minerals Act of 2023 bans the export of raw lithium from Zimbabwe and this has been hailed as a way of making sure Zimbabwe realises value for its minerals. However, China, which has invested over a billion dollars purchasing and starting lithium mines in Zimbabwe, has also spent 422million USD on putting in place the only lithium processing plant in Zimbabwe thereby positioning it to dominate lithium mining industry in Zimbabwe, An, (2023). There have also been

widespread rumours of Chinese companies pushing out Western lithium rights holders with the help of the government of Zimbabwe, Muzavazi, (2024). Therefore, China, despite growing Zimbabwe's economy, continues to position itself to dominate and exploit Zimbabwe rather than be its partner.

4.0 Conclusion

The study did not find much evidence of Zimbabwe and China sharing ideology that can be described as similar to the core despite their shared antagonism with the West. The historic ties between the two nations going back to Zimbabwe's war of liberation have created a unique relationship which has seen China invest in ideological training for Zimbabweans prior and post-independence whilst there is no evidence of China also adopting ideological concepts from Zimbabwe. Although the relationship between China and Zimbabwe has been widely reported on due to Zimbabwe's fallout with the West and its own government's public relations antics. China has treated Zimbabwe the same way as many of its African allies and Zimbabwe is not China's top trading partner or development invest destination in Africa. Zimbabwe has gone through a lot of ideological transformation over the years yet China has had consistent ideology as reflected by its policies. China and its businesses have exploited and continue to exploit the Zimbabwe's resources through corrupt activity and debt trap. China has also helped Zimbabwe's economy through provision of loans, donations and contract farming particularly in the tobacco production.

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