

Impact of Chinese Investment on Ethiopian Infrastructure

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Background

- Ethiopia, second most populous African country with 100 million people, has emerged as one of economically fastest growing countries in Africa.
- Chinese infrastructure investments and economic engagement has played a key role in Ethiopia's economic growth: multiple newly built expressways that connect Addis Ababa to other regional cities; Addis city railway; numerous construction projects; the new African Union building; new phones and electric grids.
- China-Ethiopia economic engagement is not a unique partnership as the political and economical relations with African countries is part of China's new foreign policy plan towards Africa.



Fig 1. Picture taken from DireTube Website

Litreture Gap

1. Much of the studies on Chinese engagement in Africa has been very generalised on continental level and not specific to the experiences of individual countries and local communities.
2. Impact evaluation studies are focused on numbers and macro level economic activities: the direct benefits on local residents and their perception has not been well studied.

Research topic and question

What is the perspective of local students from Addis Ababa, Capital city of Ethiopia, on the impact of Chinese investments and activities in Ethiopia infrastructure?

Methods and Implementation

- Qualitative data is collected through interviews to get a better understanding of the nuances of candidates' perspective and snowball sampling is used to select interviewees.
- Samples from three students in Addis Ababa University and three students in American universities are compare and contrasted
- Questions include: students background, their first perception/impression of Chinese engagement, perception on positive and negative impact

Results

- Generally have positive attitude towards Chinese Investment , but some sentiments
- Visibility : " They build roads and constructions"
- Work Ethics : "We see them always working"
- No Knowledge/skill transfer - "No impact on our education"
- Racial/ cultural lack of understanding : "They are short and funny people"
- Jobs created/Lost : "My engineering friends don't have jobs"
- Conditionality on loans :
- No Interference in political affairs: "Chinese interest is purely transactional"
- Maynot be sustainable - "They have created dependency"
- Perceived as effective: "They get the Job done"

Discussion

- There is an overall lack of knowledge and information on Chinese engagement in Ethiopia
- Overall, students abroad seem to have more access to information or knowledge on the subject
- Chinese people may have other interests: Chiense built in the AU had software bugs, they had installed computer viruses.

Next Steps

- I have learned important interviewing skills and how research questions are formed and modified
- This study should be taken as pilot , based on what I have learned, the study needs to be redesigned and modified.
- More Interviews have to be done to get a more representative data.
- China -Ethiopia engagement shouldn't be examined as binary : is it positive or negative , but studied should examine the nuances.

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