

Description for the general public

The increased flow of Chinese FDI into Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is often presented as a version of Beijing-driven neocolonialism (sinocolonialism), promotion of alternative - non-Western development models or a new dimension of multilateralism in the Global South. Theoretical and practical dimensions of China's expansion in Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the most topical issues in the contemporary African Studies. The vast majority of Chinese FDI is located in the mining sector and multiple infrastructural projects, although more recently the pattern has been shifting, with more Chinese investments pouring into manufacturing, agriculture and other non-extractive industries. It is intriguing that in the academic discourse issues of indirect effects of the Chinese FDI in Sub-Saharan Africa are rarely investigated. The very ambition of the research team is to plug this gap in the literature. Therefore, our major research goal is to identify and analyse spillover effects and inter-sectoral crowding-in effects of Chinese FDI in selected African countries.

In the project Zambia and Angola will be employed as case studies – two countries where the Chinese presence in the economy, politics and in the social dimension is by far the most heavily felt. The research project is multidisciplinary and will be carried out jointly by representatives of economics, sociology and political science/international relations. Additionally, the feasibility of the project will be enhanced by co-operation with the University of St Andrews and professor Ian Taylor, who was described by the prestigious Cambridge Review of International Affairs as “one of the most authoritative academics on Sub-Saharan Africa international relations”, and his major fields of study cover Sub-Saharan Africa's political economy and African-Asian ties, but also with academics from University of Zambia.

The main purpose of the research is to verify a hypothesis that spillover effects of Chinese FDI in African economies are marginal. Additional view that the team intends to put to a test is that the inflow of Chinese FDI brings about inter-sectoral crowding-in effects.

The research will be supported by qualitative and quantitative research methods and techniques typical for economics, but due to an interdisciplinary nature of the project, also for political science and sociology. The major methods used in the project will be as follow: macroeconomic analysis, statistical analysis, data mining, historical analysis, political analysis and discourse analysis. The most important research technique used during the field study will be semistructured in-depth interviews with Chinese and African firms and other (non-business) actors and direct observation. Due to a widely contested quality of statistical data from Africa, the gathered empirical material will be cross-verified through triangulation. Also, the authors intend to rely on firm-level surveys conducted among African companies.