THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE IN KENYA, AS REPRESENTED BY THE STANDARD GAUGE RAILWAY (SGR), ITS EFFECTS AND THE RESPONSE OF KENYANS TO IT.

Kiplangat Arap Yegon
vkyegon@dons.usfca.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.usfca.edu/thes

Part of the African Studies Commons, Asian Studies Commons, International Business Commons, International Relations Commons, Liberal Studies Commons, and the Political Theory Commons

Recommended Citation
https://repository.usfca.edu/thes/1452

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the All Theses, Dissertations, Capstones and Projects at USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center. For more information, please contact repository@usfca.edu.
THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE IN KENYA, AS REPRESENTED BY THE STANDARD GAUGE RAILWAY (SGR), ITS EFFECTS AND THE RESPONSE OF KENYANS TO IT.

A THESIS

by

Kiplangat Arap Yegon BA,

December 2022

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of International Studies in the Graduate School of University of San Francisco.

San Francisco, California.

Under the guidance and approval of committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

APPROVED:

Stephen Zunes 04/23/2023

Capstone Advisor Date

Nora Fisher Onar 04/26/2023

MAIS Director Date
THE STANDARD GAUGE RAILWAY (SGR) (China Africa Project, 2020)
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .................................................................................................................. 5

Introduction .......................................................................................................... 6

Literature Review: *Framing* ............................................................................... 7

*The Allure of China as a Better Alternative* ...................................................... 14

Methods Statement ............................................................................................. 17

History of China’s Links With Kenya ................................................................. 18

The Belt and Road Initiative: An Overview ....................................................... 21

BRI Undertakings in Kenya ................................................................................ 26

The Standard Gauge Railway ............................................................................. 28

Findings: The Effects/Impacts of the BRI(SGR) in Kenya ................................. 35

*Creation of jobs* .............................................................................................. 35

*Technology and Skills Transfer* ..................................................................... 37

*Trade* .............................................................................................................. 39

*Accelerated Growth in the Building and Construction Sector* ................. 44

*Environmental Impacts and the Tourism Sector* ......................................... 45

*Impacts on the Trucking Industry and Small Towns and Cities* .............. 47

The Response of Kenyans to the SGR Project ............................................... 48

Debt-Trap Diplomacy ......................................................................................... 51

Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 55

Recommendations ............................................................................................. 58

Limitations and Future Research ..................................................................... 60
LIST OF FIGURES

Figures Page:

1. Chinese Loans to Africa ........................................... 9
3. Map of The Belt and Road Initiative .............................. 26
4. The Belt and Road Initiative Projects in Kenya .................. 27
5. The SGR- Phase 1 and Phase 2A .................................. 31
6. Percentage rate of Kenya’s Unemployment ....................... 35
7. Kenya’s imports from China and India ........................... 41
8. Kenya’s imports from and exports to China ....................... 42
9. International Opinion on China ............................... 49
ABSTRACT

China has sought to strengthen ties with many countries in the Global South, and many African countries have signed Memorandum of Agreements (MoU) with China leading to trade treaties, foreign direct investments, loans and grants flowing into the African continent from China. This aggressive push by China into Africa has come under intense scrutiny with different actors, scholars and powers having mixed takes on the move. In my thesis, I look at the ways in which China’s Belt and Road Initiative has been undertaken in Africa. I use Kenya as a main case study in looking at the ways in which the Belt and Road Initiative has gained ground in Africa and specifically look to see whether the move by China into Africa is a predatory move or one that bears with it a mutually beneficial making.
**Introduction:**

Over the past few decades, Kenya has emerged as a major ally and recipient of China's loans and partaker of the Belt and Road Initiative. As a result of the financial and infrastructural reliance, a strong bilateral cooperation between the two nations has grown at a very fast pace. Kenya has received billions of dollars from China in terms of loans and foreign direct investment. China’s rapid economic growth and expanding middle class have fueled an unprecedented need for resources. As a result of this, economic ties between China and the African continent have deepened as China has sought to extract resources from the African continent. The move by China into the African continent goes against the previously mainstream idea of marginalization of the African continent by the world, and its renewed and ambitious involvement bears with it massive political and economic consequences. China has come to be viewed in a good light by many African countries who have had no problem with making deals between the respective governments. Many countries in the Global South see China as a better alternative when it comes to economic issues such as loans and foreign capital, as compared to those from the West and its financial institutions which always grant economic help and aid tied to policy issues eventually leading to the imposing of structural adjustment programs(SAPs).

China’s move into Africa has largely been interpreted, especially in the West, as one of a predatory nature. I seek to answer the question, “Is China’s move into Africa a predatory one in nature or a mutually beneficial partnership?” I use the instance of China in Kenya as a case study to examine whether China’s move into the continent is exploitative or if it is benign and potentially empowering for Africans. In my thesis, I look at the ways in which China has moved into Kenya, the developments that have been undertaken, in particular, the building of the Standard Gauge Railway(SGR) under the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative(BRI), the effects of
the Standard Gauge Railway and the response of Kenyans to the involvement of China in Kenya.

**Literature Review:**

**Framing**

Over the past two decades, Africa, and by extension, the greater Global South has come to experience an aggressive and continued push by China’s communist government to increase its involvement in the affairs of these periphery countries through political economic means. So much money and influence has crossed the Indian ocean and into the African subcontinent from China as Africa offers a new resource-ladden opportunity and market for China’s fast growing industries (Alvares et al., 2008). China has adopted an aggressive approach on the world stage, moving into and participating in commerce with most countries around the globe. In 2016, China affirmed its tight strategic relationship with Africa in a ceremony that was graced by most African leaders (Johns Hopkins Research Initiative, 2016). Ever since, China has moved more and more into the continent, challenging other world powers, especially the United States, who have had a kind of control over the region. The emergence of China as a force in Africa has complicated the tussle between world powers over African hegemony as the US dominance in the region begins to see a fast-approaching competition (Campbell, 2008).

China’s African involvement goes against the previously mainstream idea of marginalization of the African continent by the world, with this increased touch bearing with it massive political and economic consequences (Michal, 2006). Since the dawn of the 21st century, the world has come to witness a trade that has accelerated quite like no other between China and
most countries in Africa. During the time period between 2000 and 2006, China’s imports from Africa registered a fast and steady increase up to over forty percent while the imports acquired by African countries from China more than quadrupled to US$26.7 billion from about US$4 billion (Wang, 2007). The numbers here are quite deceptive however, because when put in the greater context of global trade, the Sino-Africa trade basically accounts only for about 18 percent of the total exports from Africa to the rest of the world.

The trade relationship between China and Africa has grown massively in the last decade, and this has resulted in China becoming Africa’s largest trading partner, displacing decades-long entrenched involvement of the USA and Europe in Africa (Okeke, 2008). Whereas the market shares of most previous colonial powers have gone down, China has grown its economic footprint on the African continent. According to Johns Hopkins University’s China Africa Research Initiative, the China-Africa bilateral trade has been steadily increasing for the past 16 years, reaching $185 billion in 2018, up from $155 billion in 2017 (Johns Hopkins University’s China Africa Research Initiative, 2018). The trade relationship between China and Africa has been so intense that a South African News posted in an editorial in 2006 that “Almost every African country today bears examples of China’s emerging presence, from oil fields in the east, to farms in the south, and mines in the center of the continent” (Kobo, 2013).
It is no secret that China’s interest in Africa stems mainly from an economic basis. It would be naive to think of the money that flows from China into Africa as charity. The crown of the world’s most populous country is proudly worn by China with a net population of about 1.4 billion people. China’s vast and rapidly growing economy has made it the biggest energy consumer and producer around the globe, with experts predicting that its consumption power will only increase further due to the sweeping economic changes that the country continues to face (Okeke, 2008).

Enter Africa. Africa presents an immense opportunity owing to it being one of the world’s richest places in terms of natural resources, something that led to her being served on the 1884 plate in the struggle and partition of the continent, as well as the latest rush by the East (Taylor, 2009). Africa has some of the world’s largest resources that are lucrative, making it
a place where large profits can be realized through the extraction of these resources. Furthermore, the strategic location of Africa in the world map is an allure to the resource-starved outside powers. Ergano and Rao have studied the composition of the imports and exports that move from and to Africa and have concluded that the majority of China’s imports from Africa comprise natural resources, while its exports to Africa mainly include machinery and electronics (Ergano & Rao, 2019). This gives us a clear understanding of why Africa is on the receiving end of aggressive economic advances; it is both a resource producer as well as having a large and mainly untapped market potential.

![Volume of Chinese loans to Kenya from 2000 to 2019](image)

**Figure 2: Volume of Chinese Loans to Kenya from 2000 to 2019 (Statista, 2022)**

African countries are on the receiving end of this push into the continent through different frontiers. It is therefore imperative to look into the ways in which these new forms
of engagements and partnerships affect the continent. Africa has a large infrastructure gap and a lot of resources and money are needed to fill this gap and bring Africa to a level of good competition on the world stage. Ultimately, the money needed to fill this gap has to come from somewhere, and herein lies the puzzle. On one hand, the money that comes in from other parts often have some stipulations and ties, which make it hard to fully exercise the use of it and in some cases, have put African countries into very difficult positions. However, there is a proverb that goes “A beggar is not a chooser”, and Africa finds herself in this position of no choice but to take money from places like China because this money is much needed to spur growth and development in Africa.

China’s move into Africa therefore has to be scrutinized thoroughly. This requires a lack of a preconceived notion on the role and aim of China in Africa in order to have objectivity in the study. This study looks at the ways in which China has moved into Africa, and the use of Kenya provides a very good case study, and looks at the resulting effects of that move, drawing conclusions from the resulting research data and delineating whether China in Africa carries a positive or negative note.

An important factor to look into is the amount of loans that have been taken out by African countries from China over the past five years. Jonathan Whitley, a Financial Times correspondent, gives the number of the African Chinese debt to be around 63 percent (Tull, 2006). According to the Financial Times, “China’s share of bilateral debt owed by the world’s poorest countries to members of the G20 has risen from 45 per cent in 2015 to 63 per cent in 2019” (Wheatley, 2020). China has risen to become the biggest bi-lateral money lender to countries in the African continent over the past few decades. Over the past two decades, China has transferred approximately $150bn to the various governments and state-owned companies in
Africa. The Chinese government has lent money to almost every country in the African continent, with many of these loans totalling upwards of five billion dollars since 2000. The main tool through which Chinese money has made it into Africa is through the provision of loans to fund projects in the various countries. These projects are part of the greater Belt and Road Initiative which China seeks to use to connect the world along the ancient Silk Road as well as the Maritime Silk Road.

The Johns Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative, a brainchild of its School of Advanced International Studies, provides a good source and basis to look at the way in which China’s presence in Africa has come to be shaped up over the past couple of decades (Johns Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative, 2019). This initiative provides concrete data on the loan amounts, loan strategies and FDI that has found its way into the African sub-continent. The initiative was set up in a bid to promote a wholesome evidence-based understanding of the Sino-African relationship through high quality data collection, field research, conferences, and institutional collaboration. According to the initiative, China’s lending to most African countries remained very significant in 2019 but an important aspect, the nature of this lending practice is changing. The amount of money that had been earmarked for the African public sector lending by most Chinese financiers between 2000 and 2019 was around US$ 153 billion. A vast amount of this money totalling up to at least 80 percent of these loans were used to finance both economic and social infrastructure projects in Africa. The main sectors that witnessed the infusion of this money were transport, power, telecoms, and water sectors. The amount committed by the same Chinese financiers to African countries in 2019 dipped down by 30 percent, a figure around US$7 billion, a figure that had risen to US$9.9 billion in 2019. Experts
in the field predict that this dip will extend into 2020 and 2021, a reflection of the impact of the global toll caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The effects of China’s lending have yet to be known. According to Mike Colagrosi, a financial correspondent for the Big Think, “Opponents of China’s secretive lending practices fear that Beijing is engaging in predatory debt diplomacy and using their worldwide Belt and Road Initiative to create a new kind of economic colonialism over Africa and other parts of the developing world” (Colagrosi, 2018). The move by China to up its lending activities in Africa has largely been criticized as being part of a larger neocolonialist strategy. It is an interesting fact to be considered that most of China’s lending practices as well as the amounts of money offered as loans are largely elaborately hidden even from the biggest financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF. A research by the Harvard Business Review reveals that up to 50% of loans that China gives to developing countries are not reported. This means that these debt stocks are not reflected and do not appear in the “gold standard” data sources provided by the World Bank, the IMF, or credit-rating agencies (Harvard Business Review, 2020). The amount of unreported money that was lent by the Chinese government to the African countries was estimated to be at US$200 billion as of 2016, a figure that has definitely skyrocketed afterwards. This raises major ethical as well as economic concerns, and mainly for the countries taking the loans.

China’s aggressive loaning strategies have been criticized as an end to a means, a way of gaining economic control over most of the global south. Many think-tanks and political figures from the Global North see China’s loans as a way through which China seeks to gain hegemony over countries like Kenya in the Global South. The opening up of the interiors of the Global South is not necessarily a bad thing, but it is the motive of resource extraction by China that is
 alarming, and by this light, China’s motive inches ever so close to an imperialist one. Richard Hudson did research on the ethics of Chinese investment in Africa, with the main concern being transparency. Hudson found out that transparency is not really guaranteed under the export credit lending model employed by China’s government. Export credit is a method of investing internationally. Herein, the Chinese government lends money to a recipient government, who then uses the money borrowed to finance exports from the lender, which happens to be China (Hudson, 2014). Essentially, Chinese export credit is used to finance construction projects in African states using Chinese construction companies, workers and equipment.

Kenya has become one of the major destinations of China’s loans. This has happened mainly in the form of loan money that has been used to finance the Belt and Road Initiative projects in the country as Kenya seeks to revamp its ailing infrastructure sector. The main project that has been undertaken under the Belt and Road Initiative is the building of the Standard Gauge Railway that runs from the seaport of Mombasa to the inland port in Nairobi. This is a major undertaking and one that carries with it a heavy price tag. Most of the money used to finance the project came from China. This study focuses on the role of China in Kenya, the impact of Chinese activity in the country, and the response of Kenyans to this partnership and China’s activity in Kenya.

_The Allure of China as a better alternative:_

It is important to understand the reason as to why most countries of the Global South, such as Kenya, doomed to the periphery of the Global market and capital share, would move in the direction of the Eastern giant in order to acquire capital for her industries in the form of FDI
and debt. Most countries located in the regions that have witnessed aggressive push by China have long known the influence of Western powers either through colonialism and neo-colonialism through various means such as structural adjustment policies, sanctions and aid tied to policy. Sautman and Yarong studied the reasons that might have made China a better trading and economic partner than many western powers for many African countries. They found that many countries in the Global South see China as a better alternative when it comes to economic issues such as loans and foreign capital, as compared to those from the West and its financial institutions which always grant economic help and aid tied to policy issues such as structural adjustment programs (Sautman & Yarong, 2007).

China experienced a period of massive economic growth which began in the 1970s and has mainly held strong ever since. China achieved this economic growth by opening up to the West and liberalizing its economy. Following the incredible economic growth witnessed by China, came the immense challenge of maintaining its upward trajectory. Such a growth has come to demand the outward focus of the Chinese government for its sustainability, with resources being the main focus. In order to sustain the increased levels of economic growth, China has had to increase the amount of natural resources that it could have access to. The Chinese Communist Party has focussed on providing a better living standard for its citizens, knowing that its survival as a legitimate governing machine is based on that. With the increased risk of an ever squeezing market competition, China decided to start forging new alliances with parts of the Global South in which the influence of the United States was not as strong. This meant that they could have access to the natural resources of these lands and relative control over the nature of the partnership (Pollock, 2007).
An allure that is mainly overlooked by many researchers in the China-Africa relationship is the familiarity of the Chinese development model. According to a New York Times article, African countries know that only five decades ago, China was as poor as Malawi (Zhang, 2006). Ever since, Malawi’s economy has remained the same, while the Chinese economy has more than increased nine times over. The Chinese development model challenged the known conventional development models that were in the playbook of the West. According to Zhang, the Chinese model ensured that people mattered. Zhang opines, “Since 1978, China has pursued a down-to-earth strategy for modernization, and has focused on meeting the most pressing needs of the people” (Zhang, 2006). Essentially, most of the reforms invoked were aimed at taking into account the local conditions and directed towards the delivery of tangible benefits, embracing constant experimentation, gradual reforms, selective learning and a developmental state.

China also has a non-interference policy. China’s policy of “No strings attached” has led to its government having relations with countries in the African continent that have been known to have both authoritarian and questionable governments (Cheng, 2019). This has led to a backlash by many parties who see China’s involvement with dictatorial governments as problematic. The non-interference policy that China has adopted has nonetheless proved very popular among Global South governments. Kenya has definitely enjoyed this policy, taking money from China without any explicit policies or rules attached to them.
Methods Statement:

In my research, I employed both primary as well as secondary sources of information in the collection and analysis of data. It is important to note that there is a corpus of research and study on the scale of and preliminary impact of Chinese involvement in the African continent and the Global South as a whole. On the contrary, there is barely any scholastic research into the impact of China’s involvement in the East African Coast and Kenya in particular. My research looks to fill this gap. I employ a more qualitative approach in this study, focusing on the SGR, the effects that it has had and the ways in which Kenyans on the ground feel, talk and approach the topic of increased Chinese involvement in the country through development projects and the increasing number of Chinese expats in the country.

The primary research relied on interviews that I conducted with sources from Kenya, carried out mainly through Zoom. I also used semi-structured questions through mail and phone calls as I Interviewed people on the ground and experts on the Belt and Road Initiative as well. Finding and selecting participants in the interviews proved to be hard but I found some willing participants. The interviews employed both a structured and unstructured form. I managed to interview twenty six people over the course of my research. The selection criteria was based on a number of items. To begin with, I had to make sure that the source subject was familiar with the work of China in Kenya, specifically the SGR construction. Second, I looked at the lived proximity to the SGR, and this way, I was able to find sources who were affected by the project in some way or worked there, making their take on the project very valuable. It was hard to find willing participants for my interviews because some of the people that I reached out to saw the matter as a political one and decided to rather stay away from it, a testament to how some people look at the undertaking of the BRI through a political lens.
Secondary sources of information proved to be the most useful in my research due to the nature and constraints that my research faced. I used the existing data on the workings of China in the Global South, specifically looking at the various ways in which BRI projects have been undertaken. I used the research material and papers available on the workings of China in East Africa, and used the few available on the Kenyan SGR. I combined my findings with those that I got from publications, newspapers and documentaries. I also heavily relied on the use of the The China Africa Research Initiative database by the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. This database provided the necessary quantitative data sets on the amount of loans that countries in Africa and Kenya in particular, roughly get from the Chinese government.

**History of China’s Links With Kenya**

The history of China’s relationship with Africa is a long one. The China-Africa engagement predates the arrival of the Europeans by a good margin. By the 7th century, China and Africa had developed direct contact through sea routes. Ever since, the trade and consequential cultural exchange between Africa and the Asian continent, specifically China, have increased dramatically.

In the 15th century, Zheng He, a Chinese eunuch and stalwart navigator of his time, commanded fleets to the East African coast a couple of times, and visited present-day Kenya and Somalia—the Swahili coast. The maritime voyages of Captain Zheng He took place between 1405 to 1433. Documents suggest that in 1418, Zheng He led a vast fleet of no less than 62 ships
ferrying 37,000 soldiers across the Indian Ocean into the East African coast and subcontinent. Teobaldo Filesi, a western historian wrote thus about the nature of the contact between China and East Africa, “The archaeological record on the Kenya and Tanzania coast is in agreement with this, but emphasizes that it was not till five or six centuries later that the volume of this traffic reached its peak”(Morison, 1972). A good deal of archeological evidence has also been unearthed from the ruins of ancient kingdoms in Zimbabwe, Malindi in the East African Coast and Southern Africa that suggests the existence of trade links between China and the African continent predating the Common Era. The Silk Trade routes traversed parts of northern and eastern African coasts. The works and travels of Ibn Batuta, the Moroccan scholar and traveler, confirm this, as illustrated by his visit to China in the fourteenth century(Kobo, 2013). The contact and flow of merchandise from China and East Africa continued all through the ascendancy of the Portuguese as a major naval power, as marked by the arrival of Vasco Da Gama in the East African Coast. In the fifteenth century, China pulled back from its expeditions to the shores of the African continent for a number of reasons, one markedly so with a proclamation by then Emperor Hsuan-te which decreed "the building of ships to go to the barbarian countries shall everywhere be stopped" (Hutchison, 1975).

While the trade routes and archeological evidence points to the connection between China and Africa as one that started ages ago, the origins of the ties that have come to mark modern China and Africa can be traced back to the 1950S. The main marker of the beginning of the ties between China and the African Continent during this period is the convening of The Bandung Conference in Indonesia in 1955. This period was witnessing the intensification of the Cold War as well as the continued push for decolonisation. The Bandung Conference of 1955 was marked by the attendance of newly formed nations and countries undergoing development.
The representatives and officials from twenty-nine governments of nations from Africa and Asia gathered in Bandung, Indonesia in April 1955, with the aim of discussing peace, the role and position of the Third World in the Cold War, economic development, and decolonization. According to Seifudein Adem, a Professor of Global Studies at Doshisha University, “the countries that met shared the same intellectual baggage: nationalism, anti-colonialism, and a propensity towards non-alignment. Similar experiences of Western domination, poverty and non-whiteness serve as a bond for Third World solidarity” (Adem, 2010).

The main agenda of the conference was to come up with ways to eradicate the shackles of colonialism and to steer clear of the tensions of the Cold War. This conference also resulted in the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961. With China as the largest member of the Non-Aligned Movement, its becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council meant that it assumed a representative of the developing world. China disavowed the antics of the United States and Russia, and as Kobo writes, “China presented itself to the developing world as an alternative ideological partner that shared the experience of colonial domination and exploitation.” (Kobo, 2013). Before 1990, China’s policy towards Africa was purely political, one rooted in the anticolonial message of the PRC. The allure of an ally, one that is different from the West, has held up playing a major role in China’s push into Africa over the years and a big reason for the supposed consensual nature of the partnership.

Due to the rise in partnership with China, there have been other major results as well. Over recent years, there has been an increase in Chinese companies' involvement and investment in Kenya. There are more than 70 large Chinese companies doing business in Kenya, the largest among them being Jiangsu International Economic and Technological Cooperation Co., China Road Bridge Construction Corporation, and China Import and Export Group. It is no secret that
China has contributed significantly to addressing Kenya’s infrastructure deficit. Infrastructure projects such as roads, railways, power plants and ports have been built at a speed never seen before in Kenya. These projects not only provide Kenyans with a leading source of employment, but the construction of infrastructure at an affordable price, also boosts Kenya’s economic performance, and by doing so, renders Kenya a competitive entity both regionally and globally.

**The Belt and Road Initiative: An Overview**

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is the brainchild of the People’s Republic of China Premier, President Xi Jinping. The BRI, unveiled by President Xi Jinping in 2013, is a very ambitious and enormous project to finance and construct mainly infrastructure developments in countries across the breadth of the Global South. Xi Jinping initially launched the Belt and Road Initiative in two steps. The first one came with his call for a “Silk Road Economic Belt” in Kazakhstan in September 2013, and the second phase happened with his call for a “Maritime Silk Road” in Indonesia in October of the same year. Later in December of 2013, the Central Economic Work Conference wing of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) reified the BRI as a platform through which they could induce new modes of thinking about China's open development and outbound investments (Johnston, 2018). Ever since it was announced by President Xi Jinping, the Belt and Road Initiative has been met by both optimistic and pessimistic dialogues.

Initially dubbed the One Belt, One Road Initiative, the project sought to traverse large swaths of land, a nod to the ancient Silk Road that saw Ancient China trade across vast spaces and empires. A breakdown of the Belt and Road Initiative reveals this nostalgia for a
wide reaching network that can be tapped into for economic gain. The belt portion of the BRI refers to the economic belt running from the heart of China along the legendary silk road trade route that had once been responsible for connecting the Far East with the West. The road is a reference to a maritime route connecting Europe with Southern China running through the Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia.

The PRC itself defines the Belt and Road Initiative as “A way for a win-win cooperation that promotes common development and prosperity and a road towards peace and friendship by enhancing mutual understanding and trust, and strengthening all-round exchanges” (National Development and Reform Commission, 2015). The PRC’s definition and projection of the BRI is one that is aimed at projecting the Initiative as a positive one and as an undertaking that seeks to spur more development across vast spaces and which in turn breeds more development. From face value, this definition in and of itself seems to be a good one and one that is made with the very interest of the Global South and other lands that the projects under this Initiative seeks to traverse, in mind. The idea of having an interconnectedness, one that receives vast sums of money for undertaking, and in which the interest rates for the loans taken are pretty loan is a very enticing one, and this is where the BRI captures the attention of the nation-states across the globe that seek to spur development and economic growth at a faster rate.

The National Development and Reform Commission further clarifies the aim of the BRI, stating that it seeks to “promote the connectivity of Asian, European and African continents and their adjacent seas, establish and strengthen partnerships among the countries along the Belt and Road, set up all-dimensional, multi-tiered and composite connectivity networks, and realize diversified, independent, balanced and sustainable development in these countries” (Hielscher et al., 2020). From this aim, it can be gleaned that the BRI is both an inter-continental and transcontinental long-term directive and investment program which mainly aims at
infrastructure development and a fast tracking of the economic integration of countries that it aims to traverse. Since China’s BRI initiative incorporates large swathes of the globe, its main focus in terms of infrastructure has been on linear connective infrastructure: roads, ports, airports, underwater cables and telecommunications networks (Chatzky & McBride, 2020).

The aim of the BRI is mainly touted as a global one but a closer look reveals that it has mainly focussed on new and emerging markets, putting a major focus on countries in Asia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa, essentially developments in countries with ties to the historic Silk Road. In broad terms, the BRI emphasizes cooperation in five strategic areas: (a) coordinating development policies; (b) forging infrastructure and facilities networks; (c) strengthening investment and trade relations; (d) enhancing financial cooperation; and (e) deepening social and cultural exchanges (Johnston, 2018).

Both the political and economic opinions on the PRC’s mega development plan are passionate and seek to advance a discussion of the main possible motivators that have led to the undertaking of the BRI, especially in the Global South. A three-pronged category can therefore be created herewith in order to better advance and understand the aim and even the extent that the PRC is willing to go in order to bring the goals of the BRI into fruition. To begin with, taking an economic cue and perspective offers a deep insight. It is no secret that China’s growth has come at a cost, and the effects of that exponential growth has been the achievement of an excessive capacity of production. Hereby, one can argue that China has no other option but to come up with a global, outward focussed and inclusive economic model with the requisite built in mechanisms in place to export their excess production capacity to revive the economic growth previously witnessed following a shift in domestic and global economics (Van Mead, The Guardian 2018).

The second one can be created with more of a political consideration at hand, a domestic
one at that. In this case, China, led by its premier President Xi Jinping at the helm seeks to be politically dominant superpower, one that is ready to jostle with the major power players in the global stage (Thayer & Friend, 2018). In this case, it seeks to show that it can and is ready to deal with hegemonic responsibilities that come with the territory of being a superpower. Such responsibilities include having to deal with issues such as international terror, aid, trade, political institutions and ideology, globalization. By doing so, it can be gleaned that the PRC seeks to reap the benefits of such drive and power in the long run. Viewed this way, the long term benefit of the BRI will be the extension of the power and legitimacy of the CCP.

The third one is an issue of global balance of power- an issue that China takes ever so seriously. China is seeking to pioneer a new win-win global economic strategy that integrates with the current multilateral system. Through this strategy, China seeks to have a system through which it can revive domestic economic output by exporting its comparative advantage in a manner that is palatable to the rest of the world, in this case, a non-neoliberal manner that portrays the creation of achievable mutually beneficial political and economic relationships that work to further foster peace and prosperity around the world. Hereby, China will continue to embrace multilateralism and become more involved in international institutions like the United Nations and the World Trade Organization.

It is no secret that the potential for growth and development in the countries that the BRI targets to be involved in is immense and the payout in multiple ways is tantalizing. According to the Belt and Road Portal, the number of countries that are a part of the Initiative undertaking is 71, which when combined together represents more than a third of the world's GDP and about two thirds of the world's entire population. More inroads are expected to be made into other countries and continents as the PRC has promised to fund more development projects around the world. Through broad estimates, it is supposed that the initiative seeks to make available up to
US$1 trillion in infrastructure investments mainly to Asia, Europe, and Africa. As such, it is not a stretch to point out that the BRI has the potential to significantly effect change and accelerate the rate of economic integration and development of a large number of countries.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) enshrined the BRI in its constitution in 2017, making the initiative a component of significant import to the party’s political strategy (Dezenski, 2020). The enshrining of the initiative into the party’s constitution proved that in more ways than not, the execution of the initiative is tied to President Xi’s legacy, something that only serves to raise the stakes for the success of the initiative. China is using the BRI to prove to the world that it can step up and provide economic growth for developing and emerging economies (Center for Global Development, 2019). China’s investments through the BRI seeks to address and fix the infrastructure gap that continues to plague most parts of the world. Even though it is far from being seen as coming to actual fruition, it should be noted that if successfully implemented and with good oversight, the initiative can bring much needed investments and jobs to many parts of the world that badly need it. According to The World Bank, a successful implementation of the BRI projects could increase trade between 1.7 and 6.2 percent for the world, increasing global real income by 0.7 to 2.9 percent (World Bank, 2019).
BRI Undertakings in Kenya

Kenya enjoys an immense advantage in terms of strategic placement. Kenya is located in the East African region and boasts an unfettered access to the Indian Ocean, an important sea route that provides it with a large chunk of the Indian Ocean trade. Due to this strategic positioning, Kenya has come into contact with lots of sea-faring nations, with the history of the East African Coast and the Indian Ocean providing a corpus of evidence of earlier contacts. In the contemporary world where globalization is at an all-time high, access to sea gives Kenya a strategic importance that most of its landlocked neighbors lack. Kenya is an essential trade corridor for several landlocked neighbors: Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan and parts of Eastern Congo. It also has the highest per capita income in East Africa. That, combined with the entrepreneurial spirit of its citizens and a steady rising economy has made Kenya one of the
nations in Africa that has been targeted by foreign powers and companies looking to expand. With China making its push to the rest of the world in a bid to establish herself as a global superpower, Kenya provides an immense opportunity to make way into the African hinterland from the East.

![Figure 4: The Belt and Road Initiative Projects in Kenya (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021)](image)

China has taken this opportunity and made what can be termed as an aggressive push into Kenya. In the past couple of years, especially under the presidency of Uhuru Kenyatta, China has become one of Kenya’s biggest lenders, with a total of about nine billion dollars lent. One is left to wonder how a country such as Kenya, even with its modest and rising economy, is going to be able to meet the financing of such a huge amount of money.

The Belt and Road Initiative has made quite the entrance into the nation of Kenya. Several projects have been undertaken by the government, mainly under the aegis of the BRI and
its trustees within the Kenyan space. The most notable of these initiatives is the construction of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) from Mombasa to Nairobi, with plans to kick off a second phase of the project which aims to connect Nairobi to Kisumu and other parts of the country. The building of the Standard Gauge railway line has been the biggest undertaking done by a Kenyan government and the size of the money put into it is one of a staggering proportion, even for a country the size of Kenya and its modest economy.

Other projects that have been undertaken as part of Initiative in Kenya include the Lamu Port South Sudan Ethiopia Transport Corridor Project (LAPSET), Garissa Solar Power Project, Karimenu Dam, The Port of Mombasa and the upgrading of the Nairobi Power Transmission lines (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021).

**The Standard Gauge Railway**

Kenya and China have forged deeper ties over the past decade more than ever. With ties that go back into the past couple of decades, centuries even, the move by the PRC into a more established partnership, one that is defined by the provision of loans for infrastructure development, aid for various sectors and trade deals between the two countries, spells the dawn of a new era. Indeed, The Age of Globalization has only materialized into an ever-increasing level of connectivity on all frontiers, with the two countries, China and Kenya, proving just how far the boundaries of this so-called age will be stretched. In no other way has the move by the People’s Republic of China into Africa been more pronounced than by the networks of roads and railways that have been built to traverse the breadth of the mother continent. In Kenya, the marker of this move and partnership is the Standard Gauge Railway, the flagship project of President Uhuru Kenyatta’s government.
In May 2014, during his visit to Kenya, the then Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta signed a US$3.8 billion contract to build the SGR with the China Roads and Bridges Corporation (CRBC). The CRBC, a company that had an already established presence in Kenya, saw its contract bid for the SGR successful. It is important to note that the CRBC was awarded the contract bid despite the debarment of its parent company, the China Communications Construction Company (CCCC), by the World Bank in 2013 for fraudulent practices at a project in the Philippines(The Public Investments Committee, National Assembly [PIC 2014]).

On May 31, 2017, Kenya inaugurated its Standard Gauge Railway (SGR). The railway line was built by China Road and Bridge Corporation(CRBC) and was largely financed by Chinese credit lines(SAIS-CARI, 2017). The inauguration of the SGR project marked the end of Kenya’s reliance on a 110–year old railway line that was built under the colonial administration and had only seen minor renovations along its stretch. The SGR is part of China’s new “Belt and Road Initiative”, its biggest project so far in Kenya, and aims to open East and Central Africa up to international trade and investment. At its inauguration, Kenya’s President Kenyatta said thus about the SGR, “We now celebrate not the Lunatic Express but the Madaraka Express, that will begin to reshape the story of Kenya for the next 100 years. I am proud to be associated with this day”(Redd, 2019). According to the Kenyan government, the SGR is a flagship project for Kenya’s Vision 2030 development agenda which aims to streamline the transport within and across the borders of kenya. The SGR Project seeks to simplify transport operations across the borders and reduce travel costs, in addition to benefiting the economies of Kenya and the neighboring countries.
It is important to note that Kenya is not rich in natural resources, therefore, it has historically not been a significant trading partner of Beijing. However, Kenya's strategic location on the East African coast can be seen and understood to be the main reason behind its inclusion in BRI. It makes sense that China would like to invest heavily in the transport sector in Kenya given that due to its enormous appetite for resources from the African hinterland, a land route, one that is safe and reliable would make it easier to gain access and extract them. To the North-Western part of Kenya lies the newly-minted nation of South Sudan. South Sudan is an oil-rich nation, and is a main exporter to China. However, due to the continued instability in South Sudan, and its landlocked nature, a route to the sea through Kenya, a more stable state both economically and politically, makes more sense (Githaiga & Bing, 2019). With a relatively powerful economic standing in the East African region, it is a no-brainer for an outside power seeking to stamp its foot in the region to be in bed with the Kenyan government. The large coastal share, one that has good harbors and significant resources, and with the port of Mombasa, which is literally Kenya’s bloodline, already established, it makes sense why Kenya is important for reasons of economic geography (Johnston, Morgan and Wang, 2014). It is through the Port of Mombasa that the BRI Maritime Silk Road reaches Kenya and then seeks to connect to other regions of import in the African subcontinent.

At its inception, the building of the SGR was met by mixed views and opinions, but for the most part, the positives of those are the ones that took centerstage. The project itself was seen as a much needed undertaking that would revolutionize the transportation sector not only in Kenya, but for the entirety of the East African region. Jobs would be created and the speed of trade and commerce would be one that had yet to be witnessed, leading to a new and improved level of living standard. The fact that the money used to build this huge undertaking would come
from the PRC did little to dissuade the masses that had been fed all kinds of promises as the election cycles in Kenya go. It is important to note that the inauguration of the SGR came right before the general election as President Kenyatta and his government sought to make their case for re-election. The enormous price tag that the building of the SGR carried unnerved some, but the project was touted as one that would eventually pay for itself.

Construction of the Mombasa–Nairobi SGR project began in 2013 and was completed in 2017. The Kenyan SGR was designed in 2012, but the actual preparatory work began in 2009 as part of a regional Northern Corridor Initiative involving Uganda first and then Rwanda, aptly dubbed the “Coalition of the willing (CoW)”(SAIS-CARI, 2017). Burundi, South Sudan, and the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) were part of the broader plan.

Figure 5: The SGR- Phase 1 and Phase 2A (Zhu, Kheren, et al. 2022)
The modern railway line is the largest infrastructure project in Kenya for cargo and passenger transportation. The Kenyan Standard Gauge Railway runs from Mombasa to Nairobi, connecting the two largest cities in Kenya. The Mombasa-Nairobi SGR is one of the flagship projects of the BRI in Kenya. The building cost of this SGR line is about 3.8 billion dollars which represents 5 percent of Kenya’s gross domestic product [GDP]. The standard gauge railway is 472 kilometers long with operating speeds of 120 km/hr. (75 mph) for passengers and 80 km/hr. (50mph) for freight, connecting the Nairobi South terminal, the inland port, to the main port of Mombasa. The main funds that were used to cover the cost of the Mombasa-Nairobi SGR came from the Export–Import Bank of China(Exim Bank) which financed 90 percent, while the other 10 percent was funded by the Government of Kenya. A subsidiary of China Communications Construction Company Ltd, China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), was awarded the contract for the project construction in accordance with Chinese railway design standards.

The Kenya Standard Gauge Railway project is divided into two phases: Mombasa-Nairobi SGR (phase one), and Nairobi-Malaba SGR (phase two). The Mombasa-Nairobi SGR line runs through the counties of Mombasa, Kilifi, Kwale, Taita-Taveta, Makueni, Kajiado, Machakos and Nairobi. Terminal passenger stations on the Mombasa-Nairobi line are located at Mombasa and Nairobi, while intermediate stations are located at Mariakani, Voi, Mtito Andei, Sultan Hamud, Athi River, Emali, Miasenyi and Kibwezi. The Nairobi-Malaba railway project is subdivided into three segments: Nairobi-Naivasha SGR, Naivasha-Kisumu SGR, and Kisumu-Malaba SGR. The SGR line has shortened the passenger travel time from Mombasa to Nairobi from more than ten hours to about five hours. The first fare-paying
commuters boarded the “Madaraka Express” on June 1, 2017, the 54th Madaraka Day. Commercial freight services began on January 1, 2018.

The phase 2A of the project, which runs from Nairobi to the tourist hub of Naivasha, was launched in late 2016. The project was completed in 36 months in October 2019, and is fully operational, funded by a loan from the government of China at a cost of US$1.5 billion and constructed by CRBC.

A number of researchers have argued that the choice to extend phase 2A of the railway construction was based on local political considerations. According to Wissenbach and Wang the political machinations that were in play during the consideration of the line to be run, the Kikuyu and Kalenjin ethnic groups were at the center of the considerations on which route the line should adopt (Wissenbach and Wang, 2017). Several lines that were seen as potential routes through which the SGR would pass through were proposed but the government eventually settled for the Nairobi-Naivasha route. The two regions consist of a predominant majority of the Kikuyu and Kalenjin ethnic groups- a very interesting ‘coincidence’ given that the two premier principals of the ruling Jubilee Party were from those ethnic groups.

The terms of the loans taken by the Kenyan government have not been necessarily made public in the clearest of manners, something that has been a marker of the Chinese aid, Foreign direct investment and debt given to countries in the Global South. However, in the case of Kenya, the loan given by the Exim Bank and the PRC is set to mature in August 2023, and with it is attached a grace period of ten years (Omondi, 2017). The repayment of the loan is stated to be around forty years.

Following the completion of the Phase 1 and Phase 2A of the BRI SGR project in Kenya, it is important to highlight some of the things with it. There is no denying the fact that the
Mombasa-Nairobi SGR line has had some very significant successes. To begin with, the commissioned trains run faster than the former railway in place or the usual road traffic that took about twice the time to complete a route run. The passenger services of the SGR are quite popular and most Kenyans commuting to and from Mombasa to Nairobi prefer it as compared to the road network. The safety of the SGR is also more assured as compared to that with the road means that has always seen a number of accidents and disasters over the years. The amount of freight that is ferried by the SGR has risen steadily since the commercial operations of the line began. This development has helped to decongest the formerly constipated port operations, led to the speed up of freight transportation, and enhanced cargo security(Gorecki, 2020). There is no doubt that in the eyes of the current Kenyatta administration, the SGR is considered to be a major success- one that strengthens the economy of Kenya keeping the country on pace to achieve its development Vision 2030 as well as cementing the ties with the Chinese government.
Findings: The Effects/Impacts of the BRI(SGR) in Kenya.

1. Creation of Jobs

Kenya is a country that continues to struggle with its developmental sector. Indeed, it is a developing country with not enough infrastructure in place to help speed up the rate of its economic growth. As a result of its relatively slow economic growth, and an economy that has come to witness immense problems over the years, Kenya continues to struggle with unemployment. With not many jobs to accommodate its ever-growing citizenry, Kenya’s unemployment levels are pretty high. Within the Kenyan demographic, unemployment is highest among the youth.

![Percentage rate of Kenya’s Unemployment](image)

Figure 6: Percentage rate of Kenya’s Unemployment (Trading Economics, 2022).

It is therefore easy to see how the undertaking of a project as huge as the SGR can have positive effects in the way it can produce and increase jobs for the Kenyan people. The government of Kenya under President Kenyatta has insisted that the building of the railway has provided some employment to the local people. According to Vera Shawiza, a correspondent for Soko Directory, a Financial and Markets digital portal, at least 60 new jobs were created for
every kilometer constructed (Shawiza 2016). She also writes that individuals and both small and medium business enterprises were contracted to supply building materials such as steel, cement and cables.

The number of jobs created by the project is an issue of contention, with people from different sectors and political motives citing different numbers of the jobs created. It is however pertinent to point out that the government under President Kenyatta had stipulated that 40 percent of the labor and commodities used in the SGR construction would come from Kenya. The implementation of that stipulation, and whether the jobs were actually created to the numbers touted by the government has been shrouded in mystery and a politics of disparagement especially with the upcoming general election of 2022. Other than the creation of direct jobs by the SGR, especially in the construction sector, the flagship BRI project has also contributed heavily to a steady increase in the economic activities in the service sector, including markets, hotels, entertainment, etc., along the region around it.

According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the number of jobs that resulted from the SGR undertaking grew from 132,000 in 2014 to 148,000 in 2015- a marked increase of about 11.4 percent(Kenya National Bureau of Statistics(KNBS, 2016). The construction industry carries a lot of weight in the Kenyan job market and a rise in the number of jobs provided by the sector was a pleasant welcome for lots of Kenyans. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics further points out that in 2016 alone, the construction industry recorded a growth of 10.6 percent this is because it led to a total gain of about 163,000 jobs (KNBS, 2017). This significant growth of jobs in the Kenyan market has been attributed by the Kenyan government to the adoption, implementation and undertaking of the SGR project in Kenya. The Kenya Bureau of Statistics also noted that the wage of labor employees, especially in the construction sector more than
doubled from 2014 to 2016. Eight of the people that I interviewed worked in various roles in the construction of the SGR. They were all from Voi, one of the towns through which the SGR runs. They praised the undertaking of the project as a good thing and as one that was changing their lives for the better by providing much needed jobs and income in the area.

I also managed to interview three SGR workers in the Nairobi station. According to them, the whole enterprise of the SGR was a good one but one that needed a lot more reform. They were all of the opinion that the station was run by Chinese officials and they complained of the fact that the signs and lots of the instruction manuals in the stations and locomotives were in Chinese. Most of the Kenyan workers employed to work in the SGR project do not understand, speak or write in Chinese and this has proven to be a bone of contention between Chinese and Kenyan workers.

The touting by the government of Kenya of the large number of jobs created as a result of the building of the SGR has not been without criticism and controversy. A large number of critics and Kenyan citizens have pointed out the influx of Chinese workers contracted to work in the various roles within the infrastructure of the SGR. Critics have pointed out that some of the Chinese workers who have been employed within the SGR building structure have been semi-skilled or unskilled, leading to what some people can deem to be a taking away of much-needed jobs from Kenyans(The Standard, 2018).

2. Technology and Skills Transfer

Many Kenyans as well as business, entrepreneurs and the Kenyan government expected that one of the benefits of the realization of the SGR in Kenya would result in both a transfer of important technology and skills to the Kenyan populace. In the case of Kenya’s SGR, much of
technology and skills transfer occurred for unskilled laborers through learning by doing. The majority of the unskilled labor employed to work within the various roles in the building of the SGR got to have hands-on learning during their employment period and this allowed them to gain new skills. In addition, in order to cement the transfer of skills to Kenyan citizens and workers, a Technology Transfer Competence Training (TTT) facility in Voi was financed by the CRBC’s Corporate Social Responsibility budget (The Daily Nation, 2015). The facility was opened as a part of The Belt and Road International Vocational Education Collaboration Alliance, a platform for technical and vocational education and training institutions to deepen cooperation toward harmonization and internationalization of the tertiary training sector (Morangi, 2018). I tried to reach out to some of the people who were a part of the TTT in Voi but was not able to secure any interviews.

According to Uwe Wissenbach and Yuan Wang of the China-Africa Research Institute, the TTT facility was officially opened and training commenced in August 2015, and was welcomed by the governor of Taita Taveta, John Mruttu, who claimed it as one of his initiatives (Wissenbach & Wang, 2016). The private technical training school is owned by the CRBC, which runs the school jointly with a local private training institute, the Descartes Training Institute. The tutors and teachers involved in helping out with the TTT are provided by CRBC staff. The successful students and workers who enroll and graduate from the school obtain a certificate recognized by the Kenya Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (The Standard, 2015). The two major sources of students are the local workers employed by CRBC in Voi. The tuition of the students from the Voi area is paid by CRBC, while the students from the rest of the country who go through the training provided by the institute are required to cover their own tuition. As of 2018, there were 150 students training in the school.
It is important to note that despite the much touted technology and skills transfer, there have been lots of accusations towards the SGR staffing policies alleging that even though the premise of transfer of technology and skills was incorporated into the SGR project, the transfer has not really taken place. These allegations posit that the local people hired and trained to do the jobs within the project are not actively involved as workers from China perform most of the work.

According to Paul Wafula, a correspondent for The Standard, one of Kenya’s leading newspapers, as of July 2018, while 38 Kenyans were trained in China to be locomotive drivers for the project, 50 Chinese workers had since been hired to perform that task(Wafula, 2018). The government of Kenya has refuted these claims and gone on to claim that Kenya will take complete control of the SGR after 10 years as per the contract. Although the government of Kenya has maintained that there is going to be a demand for the skills gained by Kenyans within the SGR project in other infrastructure sectors, there have been no guarantees whatsoever and there exist no other structured opportunities for continued training other than the Voi facility(SAIS-CARI, 2017). It should be noted however, that even though the future of the Voi TTT facility is not clear, it is by far the better positioned model to meet industry demand for skilled and semi-skilled workers than the Kenyan vocational training system currently in place.

3. Trade

One of the main points that the government of Kenya used in its bid to drum up support for the building of the SGR was the idea that it would lead to an exponential growth in trade. This increase in trade was seen in terms of both a domestic as well as international point of view. For the Kenya–China partnership, trade is one of the most important aspects. Trade between
Kenya and China has increased in recent years, with a significant increase in imports from China. A steady increase in terms of trade has been witnessed between the two countries since the SGR project construction started. In November 2018 Kenya’s president Uhuru Kenyatta noted that trade with China had grown “more than eighty-fold” between 2007 and 2017 (Kimutai, 2018).

Over the past decade, China has cemented its status as Kenya’s top primary trading partner. This occurrence has been mainly due to the improved bilateral relations between the two nations over the past fifteen years as China has sought to push outwards (Omolo, Jairo, & Wanja, 2016). In 2015, China became the first country to export goods and merchandise worth over 300 billion shillings to Kenya, marking its great significance and growing economic importance to the country (Githaiga, 2021). In 2014, China overtook India in 2014 to become Kenya’s leading source of imports (World Bank, 2015). Imports from China have increased enormously over the years, from Ksh 167.2 billion in 2012 to Ksh 390 billion in 2017, accounting for 22.6% of Kenya’s imports in 2017, while Kenya’s exports to China increased to Ksh 10 billion in 2016 from Ksh 5.3 billion in 2012 but decreased slightly to Ksh 9.9 billion in 2017 (Odhiambo & Malot, 2018).
According to the data from the World Bank, China was the leading source of Kenya’s imports, with a value of US$3.37 billion against Kenya’s exports worth US$ 100 million as of 2017 (World Bank, 2018). China’s low costs of production and better positioning in global production and value chains have helped it become the top source of imports for Kenya.
Figure 8: Kenya’s imports from and exports to China (The Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), 2022).

(The numbers 0 to 9 represent the different trade commodities: 1—food and live animals; 2—beverages and tobacco; 3—crude materials, inedible except fuels; 4—mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials; 5—animal and vegetable oils and fats; 6—chemicals; 7—manufactured goods classified chiefly by material; 8—machinery and transport equipment; 9—miscellaneous manufactured articles).

In 2019, Kenya exported goods and merchandise worth an estimated 150 million dollars to China. The main products that Kenya exported to China are Titanium Ore (55.4 million dollars), Niobium, Tantalum, Vanadium and Zirconium Ore (34.5 million dollars), and Refined Petroleum (8.8 million dollars)(The Observatory of Economic Complexity(OEC), 2019). During the last 24 years the exports of Kenya to China have increased at an annualized rate of 22.3 percent, from 1.21 million dollars in 1995 to 150 million dollars in 2019(OEC, 2019).

Crude materials such as raw hides and skins are the major exports to China. Kenya exports mainly goods such as hides, skins, coffee, tea, titanium ores and plastics. Between 2010 and
2014, exports of crude materials were 55 percent, manufactured goods were 21 percent, food and live animals made up 15 percent, and chemicals and related products were 9 percent of exports to China (World Bank, 2015). From China, Kenya mainly imports leather, rubber, machinery and transport equipment and chemicals. Kenya mainly imports manufactured products from China. From 2010 to 2015, the top four import categories from China were mainly manufactured material which made up 35 percent, machinery and transport equipment which made up 31 percent, miscellaneous manufactured articles totalled 24 percent, and chemical and related products added up to 8 percent of total imports from China (Sanghi & Johnson, 2016).

The net benefit of the trade with China as a result of the building of the SGR can be seen as a positive one. According to Apurva Sanghi and Dylan Johnson, two economists working with the World Bank Group, the cheaper finished and intermediate goods coming into Kenya from China have an overall net positive impact on the Kenyan economy. They write, “Chinese competition forces uncompetitive firms out of the market and eliminates the deadweight loss in the domestic economy. Firms that remain are able to improve efficiency and upgrade standards to supply inputs to Chinese companies” (Sanghi & Johnson, 2016). Furthermore, the manufacturing sector of Kenya’s economy has witnessed the export of many products into the country from China at a significantly lower price than the same products produced by European or American companies. These imports of Chinese products as compared to more expensive products from other places have enabled the Kenyan consumer market to have access to and purchase quality products which were never accessible to them in the past. A good example of this phenomena can be seen in how a good part of the Kenyan consumer market, such as the more rural and poor population can now afford cheap cell phones and other electronics coming in from China. Such access to cheap cell phones and electronics has led to an improvement of small businesses, and
the quality of life in general by making communication easier. The cheap Chinese imports work well for retailers and help small kiosks and shops earn greater profits. The small retailers and small shops make up to 70 percent of shopping in Kenya and therefore an infusion of the Chinese goods that make their way to Kenya looks to have greatly benefitted retailers on a large scale (Mutethya, 2021).

It is no secret that this increased trade that has been witnessed between Kenya and China has also had its negative side. The fact that the undertaking of the SGR project by both governments has come with strings attached in terms of trade relations and the markets of Kenya have witnessed a flooding of cheap finished imports from China (Rice, 2012). Although cheap goods from China can be beneficial to the local buyer as they are easily accessible, the stark reality of it is that the local Kenyan production base and business sector has very daunting challenges keeping up with such stiff competition from the Chinese companies that produce cheaply. This has had a very bad impact on the production sector of Kenya as Kenyan producers cannot compete with the finished goods from China.

4. Accelerated Growth in the Building and Construction Sector

The building of the SGR within a span of three years is testament to the efficiency and time bound the projects conducted under the aegis of Chinese enterprises can be. The ongoing infrastructure projects which include the SGR have led to a significant growth in the building and construction sector in Kenya. A lot of Kenyans have been impressed by how efficiently and quickly the Chinese can complete tasks such as the construction of roads, bridges, ports and buildings in Kenya. Effectively, when a comparison is made between the Kenyan government projects and those carried out by the Chinese workers, the result shows how the Chinese
projects can be completed in record time and in a very cost-efficient manner. The response of many a Kenyan to the timely manner of projects has been one of approval and this has had the effect of also challenging Kenyan companies to improve on their service quality and compete in an ever growing market. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the construction sector continued to grow steadily, boasting a growth rate of 13.6 per cent in 2015 (KNBS,2016). In 2016, the percentage of growth within the construction and building sector saw a significant fall to 9.2 percent, something which could be attributed to the reduced construction activity as the first phase of the SGR approached completion. The growth in the building and construction sector was mainly due to the increase in cement consumption during the construction of the SGR. For the most part, local cement producers and suppliers were given the contracts to supply cement and some building materials (Perilli, 2017). KNBS estimates that cement production went up by 8 percent from 5.88 million tonnes in 2014 to 6.35 million tonnes in 2015 (KNBS,2017).

5. Environmental Impacts and the Tourism Sector

The building of the SGR has been marred by accusations of large-scale violation of environmental laws and legislations which have been in place in order to protect Kenya’s biodiversity. According to Save the Elephants, a non-governmental group, ten elephants died when they crashed into trains, during the first phase of SGR construction((Freytas-Tamura 2017)). The same period of the construction also saw an upsurge in the poaching of elephants and other prized game. The Kenya Wildlife Service attributed this uptick in elephant poaching and ivory smuggling to the influx of Chinese workers working as a part of the SGR project(Elephant Action League 2016). China is the largest market for ivory as well as other endangered game species such as rhinos and lions(Huang & Weng, 2014). The SGR cuts
through the Tsavo National Park which supports over 40 percent of the elephants in Kenya (Nyumba, 2021). It also cuts through large swaths of land that are occupied by pastoral groups and their livestock, making it hard for these communities to cope. Lions have also been casualties under the project as several have been killed either by the train locomotives or by the workers during construction. One report claims that lions were reportedly driven out from Nairobi National Park as bridge construction across the park was going on (Elle, 2017). Such occurrences are worrying because the presence of such game and national parks contribute heavily to the tourism industry in Kenya. Every year, millions of people around the world flock to the East African nation to tour its game parks and reserves. In 2019, the value added by the tourism sector to the economy reached an all-time high of 8.1 billion U.S. dollars. In 2020 due to the Covid pandemic that grounded worldwide travel, tourism contributed 4.2 billion U.S. dollars to Kenya's Gross Domestic Product, almost a 50 percent decline from the previous year (Statista, 2021). As a result of the importance of the tourism industry to the Kenyan economy, the construction of the second phase of the SGR from Nairobi to Naivasha was halted by Kenya's National Environment Tribunal pending a proper environmental impact assessment on the project and approval by the Kenya Wildlife Services (Ochieng, 2016).

On the other hand, the building of the SGR has made it easier for passenger and tourist access to the Kenyan Coast of Mombasa which is one of Africa’s largest tourist destinations. The completion of the SGR allowed for the entry of a low cost, comfortable, fast and safe mode of transport to Mombasa. The perks of such a means of transport, coupled with the breathtaking scenery along its route - as exemplified by the stretch that traverses the Tsavo National Park, has boosted the number of domestic and international tourists visiting the region (Kenya Tribune, 2019). In 2017 between June and December, 699,055 passengers used the train. The following year, that number more than doubled to 1,700,000 passengers. 2019 saw 1.59 Million passengers
travel by SGR (Agade, 2021). The number of passengers using the SGR fell heavily in 2020 to 720,000 as the coronavirus pandemic razed through the country. The first five months of 2021 reportedly saw an estimated 400,000 passengers using the SGR.

6. Impacts on the Trucking Industry and Small Towns and Cities

The trucking industry in Kenya has seen the development of small towns along its snaking from to and from the Port of Mombasa to the inland port of Nairobi. Over the years, these towns have come to rely on the trucking industry as well as the tourist sector for revenue generation and for much needed growth and sustenance. Towns such as Voi, Mariakani, and Makindu. It should be noted that the SGR still passes through some of the roadside towns but the benefits that were provided by the trucking industry and the passenger transport are not the same as the SGR reduces the travel time and the much-needed stops that these towns have thrived on (Okoth, 2017).

In August 2016, the government of Kenya issued a directive that sought to force freight importers to use rail transport instead of the well-established road transport using trucks which deliver the last stop and destination services (Warah, 2019). This led to a backlash that saw the government rescind the directive a week later, leaving the sector to regulate itself in a way (Wanambisi, 2019). However, the effects of the directive had already been felt, especially in the city of Mombasa. A study by the University of Nairobi’s School of Business showed that the county of Mombasa had suffered economically due to the government’s decision to force importers to use the SGR instead of road transport from the port of Mombasa to the inland port and other destinations). The study found out that the implementation of the government directive made the county of Mombasa lose Sh17.4 billion – an equivalent to 8.4 per cent of its annual earnings – and 2,987 jobs (Ogolla, Rucha, Aroni & Ndua, 2019).
The Response of Kenyans to the SGR Project

The response of the Kenyan populace to the building of the SGR as well as the closer ties that have been forged by the government of Kenya with the PRC is one of mixed nature. Some Kenyans view the infrastructure building by loans from China and intensification of ties as a good thing and a welcome one to challenge the overreliance on Western actors who often impose stipulations on aid or loans rendered. Here, China provides an alternative that goes against the grain and the age-old narrative of Western domination in a continent and nascent nations that seek to write their own narratives and drive their own development in the African continent.

A good deal of the Kenyan populace see China in a positive light and perspective for a number of reasons. The Kenyan infrastructure scene had always been mired with delays, corruption allegations and very substandard delivery of services by the government(Sanghi & Johnson, 2019). It is not hard to see why China benefits Kenya and how this is a good look and something that some Kenyans use to justify their approval of Kenya's ties with Beijing. According to a Pew Research survey, by 2018, 67 percent of Kenyans were favorable to China and saw the work of China in the country as important, with the potential of developing the country and leading to an overall growth of the economy(Wike, Stokes, Poushter, Silver).
The negative side and grim views on the workings of China in Kenya, and particularly the loans used to fund the SGR as well as the project itself have also played out strongly not only in Kenya but also around the world. The critiques of the SGR project have been quite many, with 50 the critics launching lots of missives towards the government with the aim of getting to the truth about the dealings of the Kenyan and Chinese governments.
To begin with, the huge price tag of the SGR has been the main talking point of the critiques that have been voiced concerning the project. The government of Kenya took an enormous loan totalling upwards of five billion dollars to finance the Phase 1 and Phase 2A of the SGR. At the beginning, Kenya’s government had sold the claim that the project would eventually end up paying for itself from the revenue that it would generate but the economics of it, as shown by Kenya’s leading economist Dr. David Ndii shows otherwise. According to Dr. Ndii, the Madaraka Express is a ‘lunatic express’, one doomed to fail because of the miscalculations of the economics behind it. Ndii writes thus of the SGR project:

In the beginning was a fiction – that the Chinese railway would freight 22 million tonnes a year, and in so doing, replace the trucking business. Turns out – and this from the government’s own internal assessments – that the maximum amount of annual freight on the SGR is 8.76 million tonnes, almost a third of what was promised. Interest alone on the $3 billion debt is US$200 million (KSh 20 billion) per year, which works out to KSh 45,000 – KSh 60,000 per container. Contrary to official assurances, the railway will require both State coercion and a massive public subsidy to stay in business (Ndii, 2018).

Ndii’s argument is that since the funding of the SGR was mainly done with loans from China, and not using bonds which typically carry low interest rates, Kenya now bears a huge burden as a result of the higher interests accruing from the loans.

Many Kenyans are worried that this debt will finally come to haunt them in the long run (Mureithi, 2020). There have also been cases of corruption that have been reported to have plagued the SGR project. In 2015, two officials of the CRBC were arrested by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission detectives and charged with corruption (The Daily Nation, 2015). Furthermore, the secretive nature of the loan contracts between Kenya and
China have only helped to further fuel the negative views of the bilateral relationship between the two countries. Episodes of alleged racism in the working sector of the SGR have also been reported and this has had negative consequences on the view of Kenyans towards China and the purpose of the project (The Daily Nation, 2018).

Nevertheless, the main sentiment of many Kenyans towards China and the Chinese people is a majorly positive one. In 2014, a large majority of Kenyans, 77%, thought that Chinese firms were having a positive impact on the development of the country. This sentiment has held up well although it has fallen ever so slightly to 73% (Afrobarometer, 2017). There is no indication that the sentiment of Kenyans towards China will fall in the near future. Of the twenty six people that I managed to interview, twenty two of them were favorable to the presence of China and Chinese-backed projects in the country. The other four saw it as spelling a negative and bleak future for a country with a fledgling economy.

Overall, the projects built using the loans from China have been met with approval by a majority of Kenyans. The only thing that will sour this positive view is if the loan situation goes south, something that we are yet to find out in the near future.

**Debt-Trap Diplomacy**

It is no secret that China is engaging in an aggressive outward push with the Global South, and its main tactic has been the use of financial loans and aid. The loans that China has made available to many periphery nations, and especially those in Africa and the Asian subcontinent have come under heavy criticism. Over the past two years, China’s financial loans have come to be seen by some as a way in which China saddles countries with debt with the aim of entrapping them in so much debt and by doing so being able to control those countries and their resources. Under this model, China has been accused of engaging in the funding of
dual-use infrastructure projects around the world fueling debt traps that will supposedly give Beijing a strategic economic and military position (Madhukalya, 2022). The BRI has come to be seen as the vehicle through which Beijing seeks to advance its debt-trap diplomacy agenda.

Many think tanks, especially in the West, have characterized China’s foreign diplomacy model as an elaborate plot to advance the increasing global dominance of China. In the West, especially in the United States, China is increasingly seen as a threat to the global supremacy that the US has enjoyed for decades. The theory of the Chinese debt-trap diplomacy originated from a New Delhi think-tank in 2017. It originated with respect to the occurrences at Sri Lanka’s Hambantota Port and has been widely reported and spread in the media and within policy circles around the world (Bräutigam & Rithmire, 2020). The idea of the Chinese debt-trap diplomacy was pushed and peddled very widely especially under the Trump presidency which was consistent with the view and take of the then US administration.

Under this theory of the debt-trap diplomacy, many countries in the Global South, including Kenya, have been seen as taking on unreasonable amounts of loans from China that push them into debt-traps that they will have to give up the resources and assets given as collateral. In the case of Kenya, there have been numerous claims that the government of Kenya used the port of Mombasa, arguably Kenya’s bloodline, as the collateral for the loan used for the BRI projects in Kenya. According to a report by The East African Standard paper, the Kenyan government used the port of Mombasa to secure the multi billion-shilling loan it took from the China Exim Bank to fund the building of the standard gauge railway (Omondi, 2018). The report stated that the government of Kenya had listed the Port of Mombasa as collateral in order to broker a deal that saw the loaning of the money used to build the SGR. Following this logic, many saw that the port of Mombasa would be up for grabs by China in case Kenya failed to meet its loan repayment system. Following the
allegations that the port of Mombasa was put up as collateral, the Kenyan populace was angry and demanded answers from the government. The president, Uhuru Kenyatta, moved to reassure the masses that the port was not used as collateral and in fact was not in danger of being seized by the Chinese government. Furthermore, the then Chinese Foreign ministry representative, Hua Chunying, said in a statement that the allegations that the port risked being taken over by China should Kenya default on the SGR loan were nor true(Chege, 2018).

The topic of the debt-trap diplomacy has since raised questions, fears and debates about the legitimacy of the theory and whether China is deliberately plunging countries into debt in order to gain economic and military might over them. In the West, the narrative of the debt-trap diplomacy has taken hold with many convinced that China’s rise comes at a cost to the rest of the world, and that the partnership of China and the Global South is a zero-sum game. However, according to a research paper by Chatham House, an independent policy institute headquartered in London, the view that China is engaging in debt-trap diplomacy is mistaken and wrong(Jones & Hameiri, 2020). The view of a debt-trap policy is mistaken for a number of reasons. To begin with, the BRI projects that are being undertaken around Africa are mainly economic ones that are very much needed. There has been no significant enterprise or partnership that has seen anything other than amicable economic deals undertaken by China and the Global South. The Chatham researchers also argue that China’s development financing system is too fragmented and poorly coordinated to pursue detailed strategic objectives. Furthermore, financing under the Chinese development model is heavily recipient-driven. Herein, China does not dictate what parts of the infrastructure systems will be financed as that important role lies in the hands of the loan recipients, who in some ways still have to comply with Beijing(Jones & Hameiri, 2020).

The question of whether or not China is engaging in a policy and diplomacy set that is
based on debt will continue for a while. There is no denying that part of the work and loan system that China carries out in the Global South is shady and leaves many questions in mind. However, one has to consider the source of the criticisms and also the fact that the West has engaged in similar practices, as seen in the structural adjustment programs that saw many economies plunge into debt. Most important of all, it is important to note that Kenya and many countries in Africa have a big infrastructure and financing gap that needs to be filled and in more ways than not, the money that flows in from Beijing goes into making a debt on this massive gap.
Conclusion

Many governments in the Global South have turned to China as a valuable ally and resourceful partner over the past two decades. The Kenyan government has turned towards and engaged with China enthusiastically, strengthening the ties between Nairobi and Beijing in order to have access to loans and developmental assistance. Kenya has been granted a multi-billion dollar loan deal by China’s Exim Bank, something that the government of Kenya has been vocal about how this loan has been used to develop Kenya’s infrastructure system that is in dire need of a boost. The Belt and Road Initiative has stamped its mark in Kenya through the designing and the construction of the Standard Gauge Railway.

This thesis has examined the involvement of China in Kenya and looked at the effects that its undertakings, as exemplified by the main BRI project the SGR, has had on Kenya and Kenyans and the response of Kenyans to it. The relationship between Kenya and China has continued to grow steadily, an indicator of the growing influence of China in Africa and the Global South in general.

However, after analyzing the findings of the impacts that China has had on Africa and Kenya in particular, most indications point to the indication that both parties, Kenya and China have gained from the partnership. To begin with, the first aspect of the relationship has mainly been pegged on the capacity of China to finance and cover part of the infrastructure deficit that has plagued and continues to plague Kenya. Through this lens, Kenya has benefited in that it has gained access to funding that was previously unavailable. The funding that has been secured has seen the construction of the Standard Gauge Railway, a major upgrade from the previous meter gauge railway that was built by the colonial government at the turn of the twentieth century. For
Kenya to fully realize its potential in trade and otherwise on the global stage, its infrastructure has to match and compete against those of other countries. The construction of the SGR has meant that the time it takes to move both goods and passengers to or from Mombasa has been cut in half, saving both time and money. Kenya has also seen a boost in the number of jobs that have been created as a result of the undertaking of the SGR project. Many Kenyans were able to secure jobs as well as businesses gaining access to contracts supplying materials used in the building of the SGR.

On the other hand, China gained too through the partnership with Nairobi. The building of the SGR now indicates that the relationship between Kenya and China is a solid one, something that helps China in its bid for global supremacy. China finds an important ally in Kenya as Kenya is a major rising economy in East Africa and Africa in general. The port of Mombasa is also important to China because it provides a way in which it can link its world-wide reach and get resources from the African hinterland to her industries. Both the economic and geopolitical strategies of Beijing are well satisfied through the partnership forged between the two countries, a very momentous point for Beijing.

It should also be noted that there is a validity to the skepticism of the viability of the SGR and how the loan that was used to finance it will be paid. The construction of the SGR was riddled with all sorts of scandals and malpractices, something that points to the existing weakness in the Kenyan system as well. The SGR is not breaking even at the moment, and has to rely on major government subsidies in order to keep operating. However, it is also imperative to point out that the completion of the SGR through to Uganda would see more cargo go through it, and with the slow ebbing of the COVID pandemic, the business attracted by the railway line will pick up leading to more revenue realization.

The response of Kenyans to the undertaking of the SGR project has been mainly affected
by the effects that the SGR building has had relative to the masses. Many have benefited from its building in terms of employment and businesses through contracts and purchases of equipment. As such, these groups of Kenyans have characterized the whole undertaking as a positive and important one that will lead to the growth of the economy as a whole. On the other hand, other Kenyans have had a different experience or seen that the price tag of the project was rather too high. Nevertheless, as shown by the Pew Research, the dominant view of BRI and China in Kenya, as represented by the SGR, is a positive one-one that sees the relationship between Beijing and Nairobi as a mutually beneficial one.

The availability of Chinese development aid has also spurred the traditional Western donors to re-examine the relationship with Kenya. The rhetoric that has come from the West has mainly been seen through the ways in which the Chinese loan, aid and development assistance model has been characterized as a form of debt-trap diplomacy. This points to the rivalry between the West and Beijing, especially over influence in the Global South. If anything, this rivalry puts Kenya and the Global South by extension in a position of relative significance that can be leveraged for national interest over time.
Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, it is safe to state that the SGR, and in turn the relationship between Kenya and China, is a beneficial one. However, certain more measures can be put in place in order to ensure that Kenya is strategically positioned to make the most out of the SGR and its relationship with China, and to also have the input of the Kenyan populace taken into consideration. To begin with, Kenya should carry out an extensive investigation into the way the SGR was built and address the corruption claims that have surfaced. For the SGR to make sense, it has to start making profits in order to pay for itself as the government had promised. An in-depth and open look into the SGR would help stamp out the corruption that has been reported to plague the railway undertaking, and this would ensure that money is being saved instead of being stolen, something that will help with the payment of the loan taken to finance the project. Such an investigation would also allay the fears of Kenyans pertaining to the SGR and this would be beneficial to both the government and the public. The Kenyan government should ultimately institute sweeping policies and legislations that will ensure that all agreements signed with the government of China are available to the general public.

Second, the government of Kenya should show its commitment to ensuring maximum benefits from the infrastructure projects undertaken with the SGR being the main one. There is no denying that the deals that led to the granting of the loans used to finance the SGR are shady and obscure. The idea of infrastructure building is a great one and something that the government should seek to actualize in order to accelerate its development. Herein, the Kenyan government needs to negotiate better with the Chinese government to ensure that Kenya can gain more from the investment in infrastructure. More quotas should be allocated to Kenyan people in terms of jobs and the sourcing of building materials should favor Kenyan companies.
and people.

Third, Kenya should protect its natural resources and environment. Kenya should not sign away its natural resources to China. It is common knowledge that China seeks to exploit natural resources from other parts of the world, and Kenya should avoid falling into anything that would put it in a tough spot. Kenya should do so by making sure that it remains in sole custody of its natural resources and assets and that the exploitation and use of such resources should be done in a manner that benefits Kenya. The building of the SGR saw the traversing of The Tsavo National Park as well as the Nairobi National Park. The government should make sure that the parks which are major tourist attractions and foreign revenue earners are taken care of with policies put in place to protect them.
Limitations and Future Research

Due to the limited time and resources allocated to this thesis, coupled with the travel constraints arising from the global pandemic, COVID, that saw the world come to a standstill, this study might have missed crucial information and further research. This thesis did not include valuable interviews from representatives and leaders who have been elected to positions of power and who might have had a hand in the way in which the SGR functions and who could implement further policy changes surrounding the project as well as the China-Kenya relationship. Also, the thesis mainly employs a secondary approach, a point where, barring all the travel constraints, primary research conducted on the ground in Kenya would have revealed more details which would have been useful.

Nevertheless, this thesis provides a basis and lays the groundwork for future research that seeks to further look into the impacts of the SGR and how the Kenya-China relationship shapes out as well as the response of Kenyans to future infrastructure undertakings and on the role of China in Kenya. More research is needed in this area as the Belt and Road Initiatives continue to take hold in the African continent.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Chen, Guangzhe; Geiger, Michael; Fu, Minghui. Manufacturing FDI in Sub-Saharan Africa: Trends, Determinants, and Impacts. World Bank Group, Washington, DC.
China (CHN) and Kenya (KEN) Trade. OEC, oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/chn/partner/ken.


Council on Foreign Relations. Belt and Road in Kenya: Covid-19 Sparks a Reckoning with Debt and Dissatisfaction


Dezensky, Elaine. “Below the Belt and Road: Corruption and Illicit Dealings in China’s Global Infrastructure.” May 6, 2020

Elle, Bee. “Kenya’s Major Railway Construction Steams Ahead, Jeopardizing the Integrity of More Habitats.” Medium, 19 Apr. 2018,

medium.com/environment/standard-gauge-railway-construction-steams-ahead-jeopardising-the-integrity-of-more-habitats-b16e43ce6aed


Hielscher, Lisa, et al. “Belt and Road Initiative -.” Belt and Road Initiative, 17 June 2019,


Kenya Tribune, “Mombasa Hotels Record a Surge in Domestic Tourism Courtesy of SGR – Kenya Tribune.”


Mureithi, Carlos. “Kenya’s Chinese-Built SGR Railway Racks up Losses as Loans Due.”
Quartz, 3 May 2021,

Mutethya, Edith. “Imports from Afar Make Good Life a Reality.” World -

Mwakio, Philip. “SGR Contractor Launches Training Facility to Equip Local Workers.”
The Standard, 5 July 2015,


Nyumba, Tobias. “Kenya’s Huge Railway Project Is Causing Environmental Damage. Here’s How.” The Conversation, 28 June 2021,

Ninara, K. “Kenya (KEN) and China (CHN) Trade | OEC.” OEC - The Observatory of Economic Complexity,

africasustainableconservation.com/2016/09/19.

Okoth, Edwin. “Truckers Face Tough Road as New Pipeline, SGR Set to Take Off.” Business Daily, 19 Dec. 2020,


Omondi, George. “Mombasa Port at Risk as Audit Finds It Was Used to Secure SGR


chinaglobalsouth.com/analysis/the-nested-tragedies-of-kenyas-standard-gauge-railway/.


mall-towns-and-cities.

Wheatley, J. African debt to China: 'A major drain on the poorest countries' (2020, October 26).


