

Late last year I was in Ghana on fieldwork. Through a Chinese restaurateur we had been invited to go salsa dancing. We ended up dancing with three young Chinese men, who turned out to be aeronautical engineers overseeing the training of Ghanaian Air Force pilots and mechanics for 4 new K8 fighter planes. In the early-2000s President Kufuor sought to distance himself from his predecessor Jerry Rawlings who had purchased a Gulf Stream jet for state visits. To show his humility and transparency Kufuor said he would mothball the plane and look to sell it. Around this time the Government of Ghana had entered a series of trade and aid agreements with the Chinese, and used the Gulf Stream as down payment on the fighters. So the three engineers were in Ghana for 18 months and were a little bored living in the barracks.

What insights does it suggest? Sitting around the table and sweating after a frenzy of salsa it suggested that the Chinese are becoming an everyday part of African societies. It also shows that the commerce that the Chinese bring is blurred with inter-state, elite relations, yet domestic and international political considerations around probity also shape the nature of these interactions. It struck me that I had got comfortably used to analyzing Ghanaian politics and development through a lens of neo-colonialism, the Washington Consensus, and western NGO-ization. But here I was sitting through an example of what Chris Alden refers rhetorically to as an 'Africa without Europeans'. If it proves to be an enduring trend for Africa it could transform the way we construct our knowledges about development. In today's talk I want to reflect on whether and how China has become a major player in international development and what implications this has for development research. Much of what I have to say has benefited from exchanges with my immediate colleagues on the project – Marcus Power and May Tan-Mullins of Durham University.

Postcolonialism, geopolitics and political economy

If China's entry into Africa signals an 'Africa without Europeans' we need to develop the theoretical tools to do this. Postcolonial theory is a useful starting point for its decentring of the west in explanations of social change in the global South. Although postcolonialism and development theory have operated in isolation more recent theorization has begun to tease out the productive possibilities of an engagement.

Postcolonial possibilities

There are a number of ways that postcolonialism illuminates development and *vice versa*. First, it seeks to shift the primary locus of knowledge production away from the North. This is about the decolonization of knowledge, based on an understanding of colonization as complex, contradictory and geographically varied. Said's *Orientalist* critique showed how the colonizers' gaze fixes and frames the colonised in order to dominate. Although Said and others tended to homogenize 'the west' and 'non-west' he revealed how power and knowledge about 'the other' are intimately bound.

In development theory and practice an Orientalist reading links development to hegemony and trusteeship. In some ways a theory of 'trusteeship' was built into the construction of development from the very beginning of the Enlightenment. Trusteeship in colonial administration was about the mission to civilize others, to give experience to the 'child-like' colonial peoples who required supervision. Although trusteeship was often rejected after 1945 the idea implicitly reappears many times in post-war conceptions of international development. This is not to view colonial administration as homogenous, but rather to understand the continuities to 'post-colonial' times. Today I want to explore the implications of these continuities and to examine whether and how China's different relationship with Africa frees the country from some of the guilt exhibited by European powers and the extent to which China exercises hegemony in other ways.

Secondly, although postcolonial theory has been criticized for its lack of a normative political agenda – what Goss refers to as 'armchair decolonisation' - a recent strand more thoroughly engages with the actions of subalterns. The work of Bhabha and Spivak examined how inherently unstable the colonizer/colonized relationship was due to the colonized exploiting the ambivalence of their

apparently subordinate position. Through reworking stereotypes and subtle mimicry the colonized opened up spaces of resistance to colonization, rendering it both differentiated and unstable. However, Spivak is wary about the possibility of recovering these subaltern voices and forces the scholar to face awkward questions about their own power in re-presenting these voices. However, this opens a space for analyzing the agency of the colonized.

Limitations

The major failing of post-colonialism is that through its textuality it largely lacks any engagement with issues of poverty and material politics. For all its faults at least post-development has a critique of materialism as currently understood and practiced. But like post-development theory Bhabha and some of the subaltern studies scholars have been criticized for creating a heterogeneous field of differences through micro-studies of hybridity and romanticizing 'the community'. In this way they deny any structural causality or continuity over time.

A result of this is that postcolonial criticism fails to see contemporary practices as also postcolonial in that they are about governing at a distance through cultural representation. For example, mainstream development ideas such as 'failed states' position the Third World in certain ways so as to legitimize intervention and recentre the western experience as 'normal'. 'Good governance' has to be understood in this context since it seeks to prescribe the kinds of political changes that are possible in the South. As part of this the seductive language of partnership is regularly used, but has an important colonial history where outside agency was prioritized. And we will see how it has been reworked in China's current engagement with Africa.

My final criticism is that postcolonialism is too centred on binaries emanating from long-standing colonizer/colonized relationships. For example, Sarah Radcliffe concludes "how the everyday enactments of development in the varied landscapes of the North and South rest upon (post-)colonial relations" (2005 p.297). And in one of the most theoretically sophisticated treatments of postcolonialism and development Ilan Kapoor's discussion of how aid benefits those who give it asserts "The donor country – Western, of course – is rich and enlightened" (2008: 79). It is the 'of course' that bothers me. While Slater (2004) is right to warn that all geographical binaries – North/South, West/non-West - are problematic it does seem that postcolonialism often ends up reinscribing them and is, therefore, unable to analyse the relationships that, for want of a better term, are 'South-South'. It is the analysis of power and development between China and African states and societies that this paper addresses.

Critical modernism, development and (geo)politics

But first I'd like to flag up some of the theoretical steps we need in order to do this. Like Kapoor and others (Tanya Murray Li, Gillian Hart) I am keen to take the culturally-centred approaches of postcolonialism and put them into productive engagement with the more material concerns of political economy. Here I am drawn to the idea of critical modernism, which emerged as a response to the failure of populism, postmodernism or political economy approaches to adequately capture structure and agency within contemporary development arenas. It retains a belief in the central tenets of modernism – democracy, emancipation, development and progress – but begins from a critique of existing material power relations, particularly a critique of capitalism 'as the social form taken by the modern world, rather than on a critique of modernism as an overgeneralized discursive phenomenon' (Peet & Hartwick, 1997: 200). In this way we can analyse the modernizing aspirations of development as associated with capitalism, but not always and inevitably determined by them.

To understand this non-deterministic relationship I follow Gillian Hart's (2001: 650) distinction between D and d development whereby

“big D' Development (is) defined as a post-second world war project of intervention in the 'third world' that emerged in the context of decolonisation and the cold war, and 'little d' development

or the development of capitalism as a geographically uneven, profoundly contradictory set of historical processes”

While acknowledging the parallels with Cowen and Shenton’s framework, Hart takes a more Polanyian view that the unleashing of markets generates counter-tendencies; the so-called ‘double movement’. Hence, “Far from the counter-movement representing some sort of external intervention in an inexorably unfolding teleology, these opposing tendencies are contained *within* capitalism” (Hart 2002: 650). This forces us to consider not only how global capitalism must be actively “created and constantly reworked” (ibid.) – a non-deterministic quest for hegemony - but in a similar Gramscian vein how it can be resisted and made otherwise in multiple sites and across scales.

Within this double-movement the relationship between power and knowledge is a form of governmentality. In practice, this means analysing “the rationalities of rules, the forms of knowledge and expertise they construct, and the specific and contingent assemblages of practices, materials, agents and techniques through which these rationalities operate to produce governable subjects” (Hart 2004: 92). Recent work extends the concept of governmentality to examine international NGOs and multilateral agencies, and the intersection of different spaces of governmentality (see Ferguson and Gupta 2002, Watts 2003, Elyachar 2002, Li 2007). These are about exchanges as opposed to the naked enforcement of hegemony by an ‘external’ actor. This rests on the belief that development is a ‘resolutely dialectical process..(which is)..a sort of mixing, syncretism and cross-fertilization rather than a crude mimicry or replication’ (Watts, 2003: 23). What I want to do later is see how China’s sense of development and modernity works in relation to multiple African rationalities.

Geopolitics and the state

Crucial to this move is the analysis of the state. As I alluded to a variety of patronising references are continually made to ‘strong’, ‘weak’, and ‘failed states’. A less normative approach follows Jean-Francois Bayart (1991) argument that we need to focus on the *specific historical trajectories* of post-colonial states and explore their interactions with different societies and cultures. The internationalization of capital makes the relationships between capital and the state more complex, and breaks away from a rigid territorialisation of the political and economic which assumes capital has a nationality. We then have to examine different fractions of capital and what role states play in enabling these to succeed or how capital itself exploits (unintended) differences in state policies. And this is a profoundly political process as different classes seek to transform the state in pursuit of their interests.

The developmental outcomes of China’s involvement in Africa will primarily be shaped by how Chinese capital and parts of the Chinese state intertwines with fractions of capital and political blocs within Africa. Whereas in the past Chinese firms and the state were coincidental, now there is some autonomy of Chinese firms from state agendas, but still the ties between the CCP and the large Chinese multinationals are strong. However, smaller private Chinese firms, which have proliferated in Africa, are independent of Chinese state agendas even though they are encouraged. Understanding the political institutions that actually exist is also important as Chinese policy responds to local political conditions while the Chinese doctrine of respecting sovereignty is implicitly based on an assumption that a state exists in the first place. While much recent development and IR theory treats Africa as lacking adequate state-ness I would argue that state forms exist but that they are different from the liberal ideal recognised by most political theory.

China’s changing geopolitics

Writing about the practices of institutions working in ‘the South’ Morag Bell argues we need to “highlight the uncertainties that frequently lie behind a projected global image and how this image may be deliberately harnessed and manipulated for specific purposes within the South” (2002: 508). What, then, is China’s projected global image and how has this shaped its engagements with Africa?

Beyond exotica and binaries

Before examining China's projected global image it is useful to address its perceived global image. In the past three years there has been a series of publications on China and Africa, many of which deal at a general level, lack any theoretical framework and recycle the same (poor) data. I'd like you to spend a few seconds looking at these two images. On the face of it the imagery is similar. A towering and angry Chinese dragon eyes up Africa. In the one on the left Africa is tiny and cowering and in the image on the right, and reflected in the book's title, Africa is seen as an ostrich, wilfully ignoring the dragon at its door. In both cases the iconography is sharply Orientalist, seeing China as predatory and Africans as passive.

But what about the differences? The key difference is in who is apparently driving China's Africa strategies. The left hand image was produced by the Rhodesian Ministry of Information during ZANU's campaign of opposition to white rule. Mugabe and others were presented as Communists with China's role - represented by the uniformed official sitting belligerently with arms crossed - seen as an ideological one of supporting nationalist struggles. By contrast contemporary Chinese interests - as seen by the Senegalese journalist Adama Gaye - are represented by a well fed, smiling and open-armed businessman sweating under the weight of his suitcase full of cheap Chinese goods. So, the transition over the past 30 years is seen as one of moving from 'Maoism to Markets'. The pervasive discourse is that it is all about business without 'ideology' which gives the impression that Chinese capitalism has no ideology. For example, Zhao (2007:38) argues that China's 'pragmatist strategy is...ideologically agnostic'. The mantra that China is now 'non-ideological' conceals the obvious ideological underpinnings of China's economic strategy. I'll come back to this.

Part of the 'China as rapacious dragon' discourse is that its 'aid' is seen as buying off corrupt leaders. In some hawkish policy circles, China's rise has been greeted with concern, captured in the concept of 'rogue aid'. One of the biggest criticisms is the lack of political conditionalities, which some argue will undermine good governance. Naim (2007: 95) represents China as a 'threat to healthy, sustainable development' arguing that they 'are effectively pricing responsible and well meaning organizations out of the market in the very places they are needed most' whilst 'underwriting a world that is more corrupt, chaotic and authoritarian'.

This placing of China as cynical not only presents a myth of western aid as apolitical, but invites the supposedly well-meaning western donors to react in a more defensive and aggressive way. As a former USAID administrator noted "'Pure' development, that is, development abstracted from foreign policy concerns in the real world and the challenges they present, is not likely to be sustainable over the long term, I fear" (Natsios 2006: 131). Clearly it never was, but the entry of 'emerging donors' into international development is troubling established donors, something I return to in my conclusion.

Histories of the present

Beyond these hackneyed but powerful discourses how can we apply a postcolonial political economy to much more complex realities? First, an historical one that examines the current situation through the lens of history to evaluate what mechanisms were put in place that condition the forms of engagement we see today. Second, I want to examine how this history functions as a discursive field through which current foreign policy is legitimized.

In what follows I argue that China has always engaged strategically with Africa and used the continent to bolster its national and geopolitical interests, marking it out as similar to other superpowers. Ross (1994: 437) sees a consistency in these interests; namely "to make China stronger, more modern and more self-reliant". This drive for modernity may have been unwavering, but the means for achieving it has changed drastically even if the discourses used to justify it have remained stable. China's emphasis on South-South co-operation is a key element in its efforts to oppose unilateral global dominance or anti-hegemonism; a desire to diminish and contain the influence of hegemonic powers

and also to carve out a rightful place for China in the world, born from a sense that China has been 'muscle out' of international relations.

The history of China-Africa linkages is important for shaping contemporary development since it is used by China to legitimise its recent commercially centred activities. In 2006 Premier Wen Jiabao said during a tour of Africa that for over 110 years "China was the victim of colonial aggression. The Chinese nation knows too well the suffering caused by colonial rule and the need to fight colonialism". It is this shared sense of colonialism that is used to defend China's current interventions in Africa and to situate China as part of both the developing and developed world. Beijing has also argued that both China and Africa are cradles of civilisation, both 'belong to the developing world' and face common enemies and as a result have common interests.

The shape of current China-Africa relations can be traced back to the 1950s and the connections forged during the anti-colonial struggles for independence and the revolutionary period of Chinese foreign policy from 1950 to the early 1970s. At this time China's foreign policy was fiercely critical of the bi-polar Cold War world and attempted to counter the international recognition of Taiwan and to compete with Western and Russian influence in the continent. More broadly, the roots of this engagement were influenced by the climate of 'third worldism' and Non-Alignment that advocated a struggle against neo-colonialism and sought to protect the sovereignty of non-aligned countries. China often invoked the Bandung spirit to gain support for initiatives that it favoured.

In 1964, following a tour of ten African countries, Premier Zhou Enlai confirmed Peking's support for African struggles against imperialism. He set out principles for co-operation which reflected China's own experience as an aid recipient over the preceding sixty years and were partly calculated to "show up the North". However, Peking's failures in Africa during the late 1960s may partly be attributed to the PRC leaders' inability to grasp the regional antagonisms and cultural and historical differences between the various countries while trying to apply a general model of revolution to all African 'liberation movements'. During the Cultural Revolution foreign assistance dwindled and interest in Africa waned.

The geopolitics of China's Africa policy

While China's engagement with Africa is premised upon this long-standing 'solidarity' it is only one way in which its development model is exported and embedded. Hence, I want to shift focus to the post-Cold War period and to briefly analyse China's development trajectory before returning to its engagements with Africa.

Chinese neoliberalism?

Earlier I argued that in order to avoid a determinism that robs African actors of any agency we need to look at development as exchange in multiple sites. In this regard there have been some insightful debates in economic geography about the nature of neoliberalism and the variety of forms it can take. Peck and Tickell (2002) make the case for a process-based analysis of "neoliberalization", arguing that the transformative and adaptive capacity of this far-reaching project has been underestimated. Amongst other things, they call for a close reading of the ways in which different "local neoliberalisms" are embedded within wider networks and structures of neoliberalism. Since neoliberalism operates at multiple scales more attention needs to be paid to the *different variants* of neoliberalism, to the *hybrid nature* of contemporary policies and programmes and to the *multiple and contradictory aspects* of neoliberal spaces, techniques and subjects. I hope to analyse China as a contingent variant that is neither universal nor particular.

But can we characterise China's recent development trajectory as neoliberal? David Harvey has argued that China's recent development is neoliberalism 'with Chinese characteristics', although this can be queried given the understanding of 'neoliberalism' as entailing strict market features

unimpeded by state planning which is seen to be irreconcilable with the reality of the Chinese experience. So, my characterisation of China as 'neoliberal' is tentative and provisional.

On one hand in joining the WTO, seeking to attract FDI, in its belief in marketised economies, in its dependence on cheap labour and in its disregard for the environmental consequences of growth, China would seem to be 'neoliberal'. And it was the Washington Consensus structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s that reduced the barriers to trade and investment, which the Chinese are now benefiting from. The whole period since 1989 represents the beginnings of a process that the Chinese government has called 'transitional'. Initially, Harvey argues, the Chinese did not want to develop an export-led economy, but their reforms led to the opening up of industrial capacity in many parts of China, which enabled China to market commodities on the world stage, due to very cheap labour, very good technology and a reasonably educated labour force. In doing so they gained much more in terms of foreign direct investment and so China became more interested in the neoliberalization process. Whether it was by accident or design is not clear, although the Chinese state remains officially critical of neoliberal ideology, even as it encourages the forces of neoliberalism.

On the other hand, Wang Hui (2003) argues that terms like 'free trade' and 'unregulated' are ideological constructs masking coercive government actions that favour particular groups and classes. The 'transitional' period in China may thus be more accurately described as a time of 'violent state intervention'. There can be no 'natural' transition from economic to political reform, because the process is driven by certain power-dynamics and social forces foreshadowing a new era of state-capitalism in which both the means of production and political power will be controlled by a few; what Kwong (2006) terms "high-tech feudalism with Chinese characteristics" as opposed to neo-liberalism.

Liberal Internationalism and China's foreign policy

In terms of foreign policy the current leadership are variously described as 'populist' and 'new left', because they espouse a belief in markets, but tempered by the need to reduce inequality. Within them is a liberal internationalist group that wants engagement with the norms of the international community based on the idea of 'peaceful ascendance'. Since late 2003, 'peaceful ascendance' has been used to describe an ideal growth plan for Chinese economic, political, and military expansion but the implications remain ambiguous. Like other NICs, and unlike established 'western' industrial nations, China has recent and ongoing experience of industrialization. So, China's development discourse is much more focused on growth first, that is d-development in Hart's terms, as opposed to the more liberal approaches based on getting the institutions of markets right before development can take place. That said we have seen a 'softening' in official discourse amongst some key actors.

The populist concept of 'scientific development' currently guides the socio-economic ideology of the CCP, seen as the latest version of 'socialism with Chinese characteristics'. It is dominated by egalitarian concepts such as the creation of a 'harmonious' and 'person-based' society, sustainable development, increased democracy and social welfare. Very much associated with Hu Jintao, it seeks to shift the focus of the government agenda from 'economic growth' to 'social harmony'. But what does 'pursuing development in a scientific way' mean and how does it shape foreign assistance?

China's Africa policy

We begin to get a sense of this in the more focused policies towards Africa. China's 2006 *Africa Policy* is premised on respect for sovereignty and 'non-interference' in national political processes, which marks it out as different from western approaches that inevitably come with conditions. Hu Jintao announced at the 2006 meeting in Beijing that over the next three years China will train 15,000 African professionals; send 100 senior agricultural experts to Africa; set up 10 special agricultural technology demonstration centers in Africa; and build 30 hospitals in Africa. He also announced that China would provide \$5 billion in preferential credits, establish a \$5 billion development fund to encourage investment by Chinese companies in Africa, and cancel all interest-free government loans due at end-2005 owed by the poorest countries in Africa with diplomatic relations with China

These policy initiatives reflect a wider economic engagement. A key driver of Chinese overseas interests has been energy, which by the mid-1990s became the mainstay of its foreign policy. We see that China began importing oil in 1993. So, China started looking for new supplies and securing transport routes. This need to increase and diversify sources of oil is clearly not unique to China, and has seen a renewed interest in Africa as a source of oil and other strategic minerals such as copper, coltan and cobalt. The data on Chinese trade with Africa shows that oil dominates. Around two-thirds of African exports to China are fuel, but it is important not to single out oil but look at the totality of trade and investment. In return for oil and strategic minerals African countries tend to import Chinese machinery and consumer goods that can be found in markets across Africa. These imports are contentious because they can undercut African producers and thereby lead to unemployment, but many African consumers welcome them. So too do small manufacturers who can get hold of capital equipment more cheaply.

China's oil industry is organised around a number of major corporations, which were once state-owned. And despite the western rhetoric of a 'Beijing consensus' these multinational also compete with each other for business. The majority of their operations are in Sudan, Angola, and Nigeria, with others in Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Chad. China's strategy seems to be one of securing supplies, but with a longer term eye on becoming a major player in the global oil business. So, these companies buy up equity shares in oil fields in order to secure supply, but they also invest in infrastructure through joint ventures with Africa's national oil companies. This has seen the Chinese building refineries in Africa, which is different from most other oil producers who do the refining near to the markets. But on the back of this has come major infrastructure projects in order to get the oil and other strategic minerals out. The result of the combined oil and infrastructure investment has seen FDI grow rapidly. The graph shows a quadrupling in the first 5 years of the new millennium.

The future for African oil and minerals looks relatively rosy with the Persian Gulf ever more risky. Known reserves in the Gulf of Guinea are significant. With Angola and Nigeria the focus of most growth, but deep sea fields in the Gulf of Guinea will come on stream in the coming years. A key issue here is that the Chinese lack deep water drilling capabilities and so if they are to benefit they will have to partner with North American and European oil firms, which will further erode the notion that China's oil hunger is a zero-sum game for other oil producers.

In Ghana, after much speculation, oil was discovered last year in the west of the country, mainly offshore, but with the possibility of land-based reserves. For a country dependent on oil imports and a massively over-stretched energy generation infrastructure this was great news. No sooner had the discovery been confirmed than President Kufuor – he of the K8 fighter planes - hailed Ghana's economic problems to be greatly relieved. Domestically people were cautiously hopeful, but have witnessed the plight of Nigeria with its massive oil wealth, but dogged by corruption, environmental damage, and growing inequality and so are desperate that Ghana doesn't go down the same path. Internationally, the oil producers began arriving. Initially the discovery was through a UK-US consortium, but the Chinese were soon in negotiations to secure drilling rights.

Ghana's energy problems run deep. When I was in Accra in December we had power cuts everyday as the water levels in the Volta Dam, Ghana's main source of electricity, dropped during the dry season. Here, again, the Chinese are heavily involved in energy production through the construction of a power plant near Accra and a hydro-electric dam in the north-west of the country at Bui.

Power struggles within the state have shaped the commissioning and location of the power plant. Togbe Afede, the chief and businessman who owned the land for the power plant, used to work with Ken Ofori Atta of Databank who is widely seen as the financial backer of Nana Akufo Addo, the recently unsuccessful presidential candidate from the NPP. Afede left to establish his own company with some hostility from Ofori Atta and Afede openly accused the NPP Government of not doing

enough to support him in developing the deal with the Chinese. In particular he engaged in a bitter dispute with VALCO over the land for the project. Since the elections of the once opposition NDC the chief has been given a plum job in the cabinet, leading to wide speculation that he supported the NDC who helped smooth the Chinese deal.

As part of China's commercial interests ExIm Bank has given low interest loans to the Ghana Government for the Bui Dam. The original plans to dam this part of the Black Volta River began in the 1920s and both the Soviet Union in the 1970s and the French in the 1990s looked at the feasibility of the project. However, it was the Chinese who offered the most favourable finance package and the cheapest tender, and got agreement from the Ghana Government in 2005. The Chinese contractor, Sinohydro, is a major multinational and is well under way to finishing the project. Although Chinese firms in Africa have been criticised for importing their own labour the agreement ensures that jobs go to Ghanaians with about 700 Chinese expatriates working on the project compared with 3000 Ghanaians. Bui is also a national park and about one-third of it will be lost to the dam, but despite rumours on the web about an anti-dam lobby we made inquiries among a number of NGOs in Ghana and not one of them seemed opposed to the dam, which will add 400 MW of power to the grid.

And there are plans to build Bui City next to the dam, which one official optimistically said would be "like Dubai". The website describes an imaginary city that "...is like no other city in Africa. It has a living and sparkling water bisecting the city. The waterways offer residents and visitors lush greeneries, colourful gardens, water sports and inviting waterfront for relaxation. The city is clean and well-planned". Here the infrastructure of modernity holds great power even as the vision is increasingly a privatised one of home ownership which shades into Nkrumah's vision of national development.

The politics of Chinese aid

As we saw China's aid is premised on non-interference, which is claimed to be a long-standing principle of China's engagement with Africa but has this ever been more than just rhetoric used to camouflage deeper interests? The current policy talks in terms of a new partnership with Africa, and again is this genuine partnership?

The first issue in understanding the motivations and mechanisms of Chinese aid is the complexity of disassociating Chinese aid and investment and the lack of transparency in China's aid allocation. There is no official definition of 'aid' and the volume of aid is regarded as a state secret. China is not a member of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD. Aid is also often tied up with other forms of assistance and economic co-operation and neither is it given by a single Ministry (the Ministry of Commerce provides most bilateral aid through its Department of Foreign Aid but it also comes from the Ministries of Health and Education whilst the Ministry of Finance provides multilateral aid). Additionally, aid and development assistance do not just come from central government sources but also from provincial governments (e.g. twinning arrangements).

In concrete terms the blurring of aid, investment and development is realised through the mechanisms for funding projects. In contrast to western aid, which increasingly goes directly to national budgets as 'sectoral support', Chinese aid is usually assigned to designated projects (usually infrastructure related like those in Ghana) and the Chinese also usually part pay for their oil and other resources in infrastructure. One argument for projects is that they are bounded and one can more easily see if they are not completed, whereas the other approaches potentially put money into a rather opaque pot where it can be siphoned off at every stage of implementation. Budget support may increase 'ownership' by recipient governments but it might also introduce donors more deeply into the heart of government. There has thus been a blurring of 'outside' and 'inside' as the institutions and mechanisms of national governance become increasingly inseparable from the international mechanisms of governance with which they are engaged. In some ways it could be argued that China (with its emphasis on non-interference) has not sought to blur inside and outside in quite the same way as western donors and by its insistence on bilateral relations has done something rather different.

The routes for aid and investment are the privileged Chinese banks and corporations selected as part of the Chinese Government's 'Go Out' Policy of 2002. These 'national champions' form the brunt of China's internationalisation strategy, but as more companies internationalise it becomes harder for the Chinese state to maintain a coherent strategic and regulatory hold over them. The 'China Inc. model' is far less efficient and monolithic than is often assumed, either at the Beijing end or in Africa. We spoke to Chinese officials in Accra recently and they had very little contact or knowledge of the large projects being funded by the Chinese banks. There is also the increasing presence of smaller, privately owned businesses, which are arguably changing the economic and social landscape of Africa in more profound ways, though that's another paper!

Respect for sovereignty and non-interference have been repeated in China's rhetoric surrounding its aid disbursements to Africa. According to Liu Guijin "We [China] have never, and will never in the future, attach any kind of political conditions to these aid and development projects, because we think that providing assistance is just for the benefit of the people, it is not for political purposes, not for showing off to the outside world' (February 2008). This version of the 'pure aid' discourse feeds the perception that China is now 'non-ideological'. At the same time there is a discourse of mutual interdependence, which fits with China's foreign policy doctrine of peaceful ascendance. At the core is an acknowledgement that "Although Africa might need China, China definitely needs Africa more for her development process" (Li Anshan 2006). This is less about a managed process of 'catching up' with developed nations, and more an even-handed recognition that Africa's resources are vital for China's growth.

I would argue that non-interference has always been a flexible practice, depending on the circumstances. Where deals are signed with unpopular dictatorial regimes that could later be revised by a new government, it becomes necessary for the Chinese to protect such regimes. Karumbidza (2005) is correct when he says that "the Chinese are themselves well aware" that their non-interference stance is untenable in Africa. Given that Chinese government has a vested interest in long-term stability, its current rhetoric suggests an understanding that this is best procured by "harmony" and the careful balancing of interests, not by force.

It is this paradoxical defence of sovereignty that characterized China's Sudanese engagement. In 2006 China was by far the most important external economic actor in northern Sudan, whose oil-fuelled economic boom saw real GDP growing by 12%. In late 1995 China's 'energy cooperation' with Sudan gathered momentum when President Bashir visited Beijing and secured a reduced rate loan with an agreement between China's Exim Bank and the Bank of Sudan to finance oil development. The National Islamic Front's (NIF), later re-named the National Congress Party, turn to China was borne of necessity. Its renewed war against the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) continued, prosecuted as part of a project of Islamist transformation in Sudan. Sudan also became the object of sanctions by the UN and the US so that turning to China was pragmatic given Beijing's political dependability and willingness to invest. China viewed Sudan as a friendly state with a more open oil market not, as elsewhere in Africa, dominated by established Western corporations.

From early 1997 CNPC has operated a 40% share in the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC), the main oil consortium in Sudan. However, oil production had been constrained by the lack of infrastructure so a CNPC subsidiary was involved in constructing a 1,600-km pipeline for GNPOC to connect with the international market. The Khartoum oil refinery was built as a CNPC-Ministry of Energy joint venture with an investment of \$638 million and became operational in February 2000.

Sudan's oil development during the 1990s was inextricably connected with armed conflict. The Sudan Armed Forces combined aerial bombing raids and use of proxy forces in attacks aimed at depopulating Nuer and Dinka settlements located in oil-rich. The successful running of Sudan's oil industry by CNPC and other foreign oil companies amidst the civil wars demonstrated a willingness to

side with Khartoum, despite the principle of 'non-interference'. China's 'blind-eye' support for the NIF has been the wellspring of grievances. Forced civilian displacement in Southern Sudan has continued, though largely overshadowed by Darfur, and the oil sector was targeted by the SPLA and other groups. Oil rich regions generate considerable revenue, but there have been negligible improvements in service delivery for affected civilian populations. Moreover China has supplied arms to Sudan and helped develop northern Sudan's arms manufacturing industry.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 inaugurated a formal peace between Northern and Southern Sudan but the Chinese retained the ties they had built up over the years. Even before the CPA, the Chinese had identified its post-war reconstruction market as an area of expansion, especially given that sanctions restrict Western investment. Oil activity has expanded after the CPA and CNPC signed new concessions in 2007. Besides oil, key areas for expansion include construction, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and importantly an assortment of transport infrastructure and energy projects. Most controversially the Meroe dam on the River Nile led by a Chinese consortium has generated conflict and displacement.

China's diplomacy on Darfur became more publicly engaged from 2006 to the point where its efforts to 'influence' the Sudanese government on Darfur blurred the boundaries of non-interference. Beijing underestimated the political risk posed by Darfur to its interests within Sudan, as well as its standing in Africa and on the international stage. More proactive engagement on Darfur was evident before China's role in Sudan was connected to a 'genocide Olympics' campaign. The appointment of a new special ambassador, Liu Guijin, in 2007 was part of China's efforts to bolster its image and contribute to solutions. For example, more aid has been given to Darfur. But China's more proactive diplomacy was accompanied by continuity in defending the sovereignty of Sudan and arguing against further sanctions, as well as deepening economic links.

The Sudan case demonstrated growing antagonism towards China among 'ordinary' Sudanese. We are seeing similar responses in other parts of Africa. According to one scholar "Among ordinary people, a very strong resentment, bordering on racism, is emerging against the Chinese...It's because the Chinese are seen as backing the [African] governments in oppressing their own people" (Melber 2007). At one level the Chinese have been welcomed by ordinary Africans for the cheap goods they bring and their appropriateness to relatively low-technology economies. However, what we could call low level grievances are coming to light. In some countries low cost imports are driving domestic traders and manufacturers out of business, especially in textiles and garments. The frustration is compounded by the ability of these Chinese business networks to source goods cheaper. In the mineral producing countries we have seen the elevation of tensions and even the militarisation of grievances. There are also tensions over labour practices in factories and mines, especially in Zambia and Nigeria.

On top of this some political figures are playing a 'China card', most notably in elections in Zambia in 2006 where an opposition politician whipped up resentment against the Chinese, arguing "We've had bad people before. The Whites were bad, the Indians were worse but the Chinese are worst of all" (Zambian MP, 2006). While this cynical nationalist sentiment was used to present the party as the true custodians of Zambia's development, it reflects emerging tensions depending upon perceived levels of exploitation, although worryingly this is couched in cultural rather than class terms. If such hostility persists, questions will be raised about the willingness of the Chinese to further invest in Africa.

Conclusion

To summarise we can say that Chinese aid is blurred with trade and investment, but is benefiting some countries, sectors and groups. For 'pariah states', notably Sudan and Zimbabwe, China's presence may prolong authoritarian rule through aid and investment. 'Illiberal regimes and weak democracies', such as Angola and Zambia are likely to become more centralised as mineral rents accrue to state elites and Chinese aid allows them to renegotiate with the multilaterals. Finally, for

'democratic countries with diversified economies' like South Africa and Ghana, there is likely to be direct competition between Chinese businesses and African ones so that the impacts will come down to how effective the state and individual enterprises are at working with or against the Chinese.

So I would argue that the notion of 'rogue aid' is overblown, but that said China's revitalized entry into Africa, and other developing regions, does signal a change in development and aid policy. A key impact is that China has reinvigorated an interest in infrastructure. In 2007 Jeff Sachs noted that whilst the World Bank was mired in the Wolfowitz scandal China was busy offering "much more practical advice" (Sachs, 2007: 1). As China set about stressing the crucial role of public investments in infrastructure and agriculture as the basis for private sector growth the World Bank is portrayed here as forcing African countries to privatise.

Linked to this focus on supply side aspects is the ineffectiveness of aid delivery by established donors. Despite promises at Gleneagles new finance has not been forthcoming, and with the current crisis it may well dwindle even more. Although no one is certain what China's slowed growth means for its aid and overseas investment, over the past 5 years China's aid has been growing. Beyond the comparative scale of aid is the way it is delivered. Here there is a topsy-turvy world. Many western donors have a centralized aid system (e.g. DFID) but because they operate both bilaterally and multilaterally and keep experimenting with different aid modalities they have created a very confusing model in the countries they work with. By comparison the Chinese aid system is very fragmented within China, but on the ground in African countries works through the commercial department of MOFCOM and is able to deliver projects much quicker. As such the Chinese are very welcome sources of concessional finance with Ngaire Woods (2008) concluding that they introduce 'competitive pressures' among established donors and are bringing about a 'silent revolution' in aid.

Although we saw that the 'China hawks' responded with a hard line against the Chinese we are seeing more considered policy responses from established donors. Underpinning these responses is a discourse of comparative advantage, which builds on each other's strengths. For example, in DRC the Chinese are building lots of roads as part of the big mineral agreement signed in 2007, and DFID will provide HIV awareness training. So, rather than outright criticism of China they prefer a 'dialogic' approach. The result is a merry dance of cajoling China, but never pushing too hard for fear of stepping on China's sizeable feet. Our fieldwork in Ghana showed that invitations to become more involved in the Ghana Joint Assistance Strategy were rejected by the Chinese suggesting they are wary of throwing themselves in with the 17 'established' donors. For the US, Africa is still marginal to its focus on the Middle East. However, Obama seems to suggest he will prioritize the continent, although his proposal to double foreign assistance to \$50 billion by the end of his first term seems unfeasible in a time of economic crisis. More broadly what all this activity shows is that contrary to my initial salsa moment, it will be a long time before we see an Africa without Europeans.

However, all donors are worried about China's lack of transparency. China is not a member of the Development Assistance Committee. This criticism of Chinese aid implicitly sets up western aid as 'better' for African development, despite the fact that 25 years of structural adjustment has done little. However, Beijing has no incentive to fall in line with Western views on transparency and accountability given that, as the Sudan case showed, it benefits from overlooking such matters although in public statements at least the Chinese banks we spoke to are nodding towards corporate social responsibility.

From China's perspective its geopolitics of 'partnership' also relates to its role in multilateral organizations. As part of its liberal internationalism, China recognises it needs to court votes in various multilateral bodies to protect and promote its interests. However, when it comes to Africa China has tended to pay lip service to the various multilateral initiatives it has signed up to. The Paris Declaration on Aid concerns donor coordination, which the Chinese signed up to, but China's Africa Policy is resolutely focused on bilateral aid.

But what does China mean for African states? As we have shown, throughout history China has used Africa strategically and for its own geopolitical ends. Therefore, perhaps this is not a new form of South-South development co-operation, but rather something quite similar to what other countries have done (and do) with respect to Africa. Clearly China's growing economic strength means that it is unlikely to have a partnership of equals with its new African friends but we need to know much more about how China understands 'co-operation'. This appears much less centred upon notions of China as trustee and there is perhaps less of a historical sense of paternalism to escape from. Crucially, China's involvement in Africa does permit the 'revival of triangulation', which means African states can pursue relations with more than one external state (epitomised by Angola's turn to China as its negotiations with the IMF faltered in 2003) and play donors and investors off against one another.

What might it mean for knowledge production about development? Does my neo-colonial, Washington consensus, ngo-ization lens have to be discarded? I do think that the growing emphasis on South-South interaction, of which China/Africa is a primary example, forces us to rethink 'development' more broadly though how far is open to question. Hubert Schmitz has argued that China's rise means that the idea that 'west is best' is long overdue a burial. However, as I have tried to show China's liberalization is not something uniquely 'eastern' and so we should avoid simply inverting our theoretical lens and replacing the Washington consensus with the Beijing consensus. Schmitz argues that China and the NICs show that following a relatively experimental and untrodden path to economic development has worked for them and that development studies should move away from studying the poor and how we target them better towards explaining the drivers of growth.

Rather than seeing China as an exception we need to attend to the ways in which China's economic vision has affinities with the neoliberal orthodoxies that dominate international development. In this sense I would suggest that for all the triangulation and co-operation that China's African engagement has enabled, the ideological space of development theory and practice has not necessarily been enlarged. That said there is an interesting disjuncture between the Chinese policy of non-interference and their growing influence within African states. An important emerging research agenda is whether respect for sovereignty is possible and whether the Chinese will, as previous superpowers before them, be forced to become more embroiled in Africa's governance.

In order to do this, as I have attempted all too briefly here, we need a much closer reading of Chinese literatures on development theory and International Relations. Despite my call for a postcolonial analysis which decentres the west and looks to 'South-South' and 'Eastern' connections I am something of an interloper and am just learning the intricacies of analyzing China's development. But if we are to understand these dynamics better we will have to create new Sino-African knowledges. Yet critical development analysis needs to question what may become an alternative orthodoxy by addressing essentially empirical questions of who benefits? If China's development model simply serves as a smokescreen for business-as-usual exploitation by African elites then whatever its normative and political appeal it is not a model that impoverished Africans need.