



The invisible hand of South-South globalisation: Chinese migrants in Africa

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October 2007

A Report for the Rockefeller Foundation prepared
by
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We are grateful to Professor Raphie Kaplinsky for his comments on an earlier draft.

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Executive Summary

That China is having a profound impact on African economies is beyond doubt (ECOWAS-SWAC/OECD 2006, Goldstein *et al* 2006, Broadman 2007, UN 2007, Kaplinsky 2007). Underlying these profound economic shifts, often negotiated through diplomatic exchanges, is an equally significant social change. Migration to Africa from China has existed for at least 500 years, but has accelerated in the past 5 years as new business opportunities become apparent. Ethnic business communities are certainly not new to Africa, but the scale and dynamism of the Chinese communities are likely to shape economic, social and political relations on the continent for decades to come. Hence, this study aims to *provide an overview of the state of knowledge on Chinese Diasporas in Africa, focusing both on “what is” and “what may become” (trajectories).*

The historical geography of the Chinese Diaspora in Africa

Summary:

- Temporal and geographical dynamics of Chinese migration are linked to global expansion and geopolitics so that motives for emigrating vary over time.
- Chinese entrepreneurialism is a product of networks not an innate cultural characteristic.
- Migrants tended to come from Southern China, but this pattern is breaking down as internal migration in China is freed up.
- Main migration has been to South Africa, Mauritius and Madagascar, but patterns follow economic opportunity and so there has been a diversification of destination countries.
- Due to patterns of chain migration, successive waves of migration often build on earlier trajectories.
- Migrants have mainly settled in urban areas, but there has been more dispersion to rural areas of late in pursuit of new opportunities.
- There is extensive and multiple knowledge gaps, particularly on ‘under the radar’ flows of informal migrants.

Table 1: Estimates for Chinese in various African countries

Country	1963 (Source: Chang 1968)	2001 (Source: Ohio U. Database, cited in Sautman 2006)	Estimate for 200X (Source: Sautman 2006)
South Africa	5105	30000	100,000-300,000 (2004-2006)
Mauritius	23266	N/A	30000 (2005)
Cameroon	N/A	50	1000-3000 (2005)
Sudan	N/A	45	5000-10,000 (2004-2005)
Lesotho	N/A	1000	5000 (2005)
Ghana	N/A	500	6000 (2004)
Liberia	27	120	600 (2006)
Nigeria	2	2000	50,000 (2005)
Mozambique	1735	700	1500 (2006)
Ethiopia	18	100	2000 (2004)
Algeria	N/A	2,000	8000 (2003)
Cote d'Ivoire	N/A	200	1000 (2002)
Zimbabwe	303	300	10,000 (2005)

(Sources: Chang 1968, Sautman 2006)

Economic activities

Summary:

- Need to differentiate between sectors, firm types, scales and motives. Broadly there is a distinction between larger Chinese SOEs (or more recently semi-private), sometimes attached to aid packages, and smaller private firms.
- There are various sorts of spin offs with people staying on after working on a state-sponsored project or existing firms diversifying into new activities. At it most significant this takes on a 'flying geese' model, as in Mauritius.
- For Chinese family businesses, diasporic networks are a way of maintaining a diverse portfolio, spreading risks and remaining flexible.
- Family labour is very important for small to medium private firms.
- In many cases Chinese workers are brought over, because they are cheap and help bargain down costs, and enhance flexibility globally while soaking up unemployment in China.
- Chinese firms enter into relatively few joint ventures and levels of integration are low, due to a variety of factors including political stability, lack of trust, and a tradition of top-down corporate governance.
- There appear to high, but unclear, levels of profit repatriation.
- Firms of all sizes use Africa as a learning curve for management experience and/or internationalisation strategies.
- African government policy is key to the types of Chinese economic activity and their success.
- Most small scale Chinese ventures are in retailing and in the intermediation of commodity sales. There is little evidence of Chinese activity in manufacturing

although there have been commitments to industrial parks in at least three countries (Ethiopia, Nigeria and Zambia) to foster investment by Chinese firms.

Social relations

Summary:

- Family ties are the main social glue of transnational networks as opposed to a strong Chinese identity, although most belong to multiple communities in what has been termed 'flexible citizenship'.
- Remittances, charitable donations and FDI flow from the diaspora to China as well as other parts of the diaspora.
- Integration in African societies is variable, with some migrants well integrated, others not, and varying degrees of attachment to a Chinese 'home'.
- Chinese organisations are important socially, but at times also play significant political and economic functions.
- Tensions exist between Chinese and African populations, some of which build on long-standing difference and others are more recent.

Political processes

Summary:

- The geopolitical context has shaped much of the interaction and strategy linking China and the African continent, especially a desire by China to resist superpower hegemony and for African countries to support the PRC's claims to Taiwan.
- In terms of the success of diasporas, states have been key in terms of limiting migrant movement, restricting settlement, creating borders, and offering incentives.
- China has long had a strategy of counter-hegemony against the major superpowers and recently this has been added to in terms of economic expansionism.
- Multilateral agreements have been important in shaping the opportunities for and direction of inward investment.
- African countries vary in their support of Chinese investment, ranging from very proactive (Mauritius, South Africa) to more laissez faire.
- African civil society has been quite inactive with respect to the Chinese development model, but is beginning to ask questions.
- Chinese migrants have been relatively low key in formal politics, but there have been critical moments when they have been active.

Conclusion

China's presence is not uniformly a good or bad thing, but has variable and context specific impacts depending upon the nature of the economic ties, the size of the existing diaspora community, and the institutionalisation of government policies in China and the African country concerned. Given this, the most general issue for future research is *the need for systematic case studies examining the same issues across countries and localities*, preferably conducted by African researchers. This should address the following areas.

Levels and types of migration

- What government data exists on numbers of Chinese immigrants in African countries?
- What are the source regions of Chinese emigrants?
- Where are new Chinese immigrants settling, and what determines their locational choice?

Chinese firms' strategies

- What multipliers are Chinese SOEs generating for smaller African and Chinese firms?
- How are African entrepreneurs engaging with Chinese firms and/or the opportunities generated by Chinese FDI?
- What strategies are Chinese SMEs adopting to address new market opportunities or respond to competition?
- To what extent and through what means are Chinese entrepreneurs becoming more embedded in local economies in terms of employment, supply chains, or joint ventures?
- To what extent are Chinese SMEs re-investing in African economies and what are their levels of savings and profit repatriation?

African responses

- How are ordinary Africans responding to the increasingly commonplace presence of Chinese migrants?
- How do ordinary Africans perceive the quality and price of Chinese imports?
- How are African business and labour organisations responding to Chinese competition?
- Is there any evidence of African politicians politicising the Chinese presence for personal or party political gain?
- Is there evidence of rivalry between Chinese and African workers? Conversely are there cases of labour solidarity between African and Chinese workers aimed against Chinese firms?

Policy responses

- To what extent and in what ways are individual African states encouraging and regulating Chinese businesses?
- What, if any, immigration policies are being enacted by African states to encourage Chinese immigration?
- To what extent and in what ways are Chinese individuals and/or communities becoming involved in local politics in Africa?
- What mechanisms does the Chinese state within African countries use to promote Chinese firms?
- How far has the Chinese government honoured its 2006 commitments to Africa and what impacts is this having on new and existing diasporic economic activity?

1. Introduction and aims

That China is having a profound impact on African economies is beyond doubt (ECOWAS-SWAC/OECD 2006, Goldstein *et al* 2006, Broadman 2007, UN 2007, Kaplinsky 2007). Underlying these profound economic shifts, often negotiated through diplomatic exchanges, is an equally significant social change. Migration to Africa from China has existed for at least 500 years, but has accelerated in the past 5 years as new business opportunities become apparent. Ethnic business communities are certainly not new to Africa, but the sheer scale and dynamism of the Chinese communities are likely to shape economic, social and political relations on the continent for decades to come. While much research has been conducted on Chinese diaspora communities in developed economies (e.g. Ma and Cartier 2002, Chan K. 1998, Hamilton 1999, Ong and Nonini 1997), little is known about this growing trend in Africa (Sautman 2006). Why?

First, the phenomenon is relatively new despite a long history of movement between China and Africa. Recent studies of China's new-found interest in Africa focus on what can be termed 'globalisation from above' (Portes 1997), namely state projects, bilateral aid, and macro-economic statistics (Broadman 2007, Taylor 2006b, UN 2007). In doing this few have focused on the 'everyday' linkages and 'globalization from below' that characterizes the Chinese diaspora. Second, studies of diaspora tend to look more at South-to-North migration and not South-South movements. However, South-South migration, especially the Chinese to Africa and elsewhere in the developing world, is set to increase, although we can learn from existing studies about migrant organization (for example, see Wang 2000). Third, recent studies of diaspora and development usually concentrate on intra-family remittances or organizations like hometown associations (Orozco 2003, Mohan 2006b), which equate development with social welfare (e.g. funding schools, healthcare, etc). While China's experience echoes this it goes way beyond because of the sheer size, estimated at over 35 million in well over a 136 countries (Poston *et al* 1994, Zhou 2006) and economic dynamism of its diaspora, which is much more about development as economic growth. In Africa, with generally small economies for the population size, a small number of entrepreneurs can have disproportionate impact.

Hence, this study aims to *provide an overview of the state of knowledge on Chinese Diasporas in Africa, focusing both on "what is" and "what may become" (trajectories)*. To do this we addressed the following questions:

1. Economic activity

- In which African countries does the Chinese Diaspora primarily operate?
- In what sectors does the Chinese Diaspora primarily operate?

2. Social organisation

- How are Chinese Diasporas in Africa organised socially?
- What are their migration trajectories in coming to Africa?

3. Political and cultural relationships

- What role does the Chinese state play in enabling Diasporic activity?
- What role do African states play in enabling Diasporic activity?
- How are Chinese people and businesses received by African citizens and consumers?

2. Methodology

To address these questions we undertook the following activities:

- Located and reviewed academic publications: these were historical studies of Chinese migration and more recent works, which tend to be in unpublished format but available on the World Wide Web or sent with the e-questionnaire.
- Located and reviewed web-based news stories and reports: this was done through search engines and through websites known to us.
- Administered a short questionnaire to key academic and policy informants: A short questionnaire was sent out to policy makers and researchers.

3. A note on diasporas and transnational communities

Diasporas are complex social groupings, which are often produced by the actions of nation-states, but at the same time transcend the state system by being located in many places at the same time (Mohan 2002). Diasporas are traditionally associated with forced 'victim' migrations and a moral purpose of restoration to that homeland (e.g. the Jewish experience). Since this original understanding, diaspora has taken on a looser meaning to denote social groups that subvert the territorial logic of the nation-state system and it has lost its 'victimhood' mantle, but still implies some sense of compulsion (especially to escape poverty) and, crucially, a cultural-political sense of identity. Given that recent Chinese migration is primarily an economic issue, linking it to trade, labour and investment then it is not particularly compelled and may also be quite temporary, so it is not truly diasporic.

As diasporas mature and spread their cultural geography changes so that they are much less oriented to an original and singular 'home', but constructed through complex networks, many of which never directly relate back to the homeland. Uniting these flows are various cultural signifiers such as language, food, names and language (Mohan 2006a). However, diasporas, like any social group, are not homogenous (Brah 1996) so while they may share certain cultural origins, they are overlain by gender, age and class differences which render any notion of a clearly defined diaspora 'community' problematic.

Political and economic conditions of the locality where one is (re)settled are also important for shaping identity and affecting life choices. Politically, one's citizenship status in the country of settlement is crucial in determining how confident migrants are in engaging in local society and their ability to relate back to their homes (Al Ali *et al* 2001). Socially, diasporic identities are relational in that they are shaped by contact and tension with other group identities, many of which are hostile toward them (Gilroy 1993). The result is rather than identifying clear-cut and exclusive cultural traits, we see a multitude of 'hybrid' experiences. Crucial to these networked flows and identity are organisations (Arthur 2000), some of which mirror ones from the homeland (e.g. burial societies). These serve social functions, but often mutate into political organisations, which range from low-key cultural politics to quite radical, formal politics.

3.1 *The Chinese: An entrepreneurial diaspora?*

Whereas the Jewish and African diasporas have come to symbolise victimisation and the search for an authentic homeland, the Chinese experience has come to signify the entrepreneurial spirit that can exist within diasporas (Vithayathil 2003). One key debate suggests that the Chinese diaspora has been successful due to some deep-seated cultural

attributes. The basic argument is that a Confucian work ethic contributes to economic success amongst Chinese people (Kahn, 1979: 128 cited in Dirlik, 1997: 306). This implies that there is a coherent and stable 'Chinese' identity which underpins the desire to succeed and accumulate wealth. It also, apparently, explains the high levels of intra-diasporic trust.

Diasporas are rarely so coherent and unified. In particular, such a theory suppresses class and gender differences (Ong 1993). More generally, it ignores the structural context within which this economic activity occurs (Dirlik, 1997: 315). The shift in global capitalism towards 'flexible accumulation' has produced complex business networks which exploit increasingly fluid 'comparative advantages' of multiple sites. Diasporic populations may be well-placed to deal with some of the demands of this transnational production and other transactions that are transnational in scope. So, previous Chinese diasporas are suited to exploit the more flexible and networked opportunities of contemporary globalisation as opposed to reflecting some innate cultural predisposition.

4. The historical geography of the Chinese Diaspora in Africa

Given that diasporas are not homogenous and migratory waves are triggered by different factors it is important to understand the drivers of Chinese migration, the source regions for migrants and the patterns of settlement in Africa, both geographically and over time.

4.1 Drivers and phases of emigration

By and large Chinese emigration has been related to shifts in the world economy, geopolitical rivalries, and to changing policies in China and the receiving nation-states (Brautigam 2003). This has led to 3 phases (interview with Professor Chan, 28/6/07) of Chinese migration to Africa.

1850s-1950s

There has been contact between China and Africa across the Indian Ocean as far back as the early 15th Century (Snow 1988) but systematic migration only began in the mid-19th Century (Chang 1968). Much of this movement was related to colonial labour demand, the so-called 'coolie trade', especially in the aftermath of the abolition of slavery (McKeown 1999). Demand was primarily for plantation, mining and railway construction, although push factors in China included land pressure and conflict. The gold rushes in California was matched by South Africa around 1860 and from the 1870s Mauritius and South Africa established themselves as the main foci for immigration. Most of this 'coolie trade' was highly regulated and most workers were sent back after their contracts expired.

Alongside the 'coolie trade' were small, but enterprising groups of independent traders that serviced Chinese labour migrants and undertook small-scale export. From the late 19th Century in South Africa independent artisans and family trading firms constituted the oldest communities known today as 'local' Chinese in distinction from more recent ones (Wilhelm 2006). This original South African Chinese community was mainly male and from two ethnic groups - Cantonese and the Hakka. The figures available indicate that in 1946 there were just over 4000. In the 1930s in Mauritius numbers reached 20000.

In 1949, when the PRC was formed, emigration was officially ended, restricting movement to illegal emigration or people joining existing family overseas. It was during the nationalist struggles of the 1930s-40s that Taiwan came into being, which is important for the Africa migration story for two reasons. First, it is one of the most significant parts of the Chinese

diaspora, numbering around 22 million, and many Taiwanese firms operate in Africa (Pickles and Woods 1999). Second, the Peoples Republic of China has pursued its 'One China' Policy and gives favourable aid terms to countries which support its territorial claims to Taiwan.

1960-1980s

With the formation of the PRC and the cold war, relations between China and Africa entered a 'political' phase. Here geopolitical strategy was played out in Africa with China challenging the major superpowers through its conspicuous targeting of aid (Snow 1988, 1995). Chinese aid was used to cement 'South-South' solidarity through grant aid, prestige construction projects, and teams of technical advisors, especially in the areas of agriculture (Brautigam 1998) and health (Hsu 2002). Although the numbers of health and construction workers was not huge a significant number stayed on. Realising the economic opportunities some set up private medical practices using traditional Chinese medicines (Hsu 2007).

During the apartheid period in South Africa, as a fellow 'pariah' Taiwan maintained economic and political relations and South Africa actively encouraged Taiwanese firms to invest (Pickles and Woods 1999). These set up in labour intensive sectors and were give a fillip in the early 2000s by the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). As competition from the PRC has increased in the wake of the dismantling of quotas under the Multi-Fibre Agreement many of these firms and their workers have returned or moved on (Wilhelm 2006).

1990s-present

The recent acceleration of migration has come in the aftermath of China's economic reforms beginning in the late 1970s, but has been most marked in the past 5 years. The economic reforms created massive demands for raw materials and a glut of cheap Chinese manufactures which required new markets. This has seen a wave of economic migration to Africa by state-influenced construction teams, mining and oil workers, and private traders (Broadman 2007). Table 1 provides an overview of some of the key published estimates of Chinese migrants in Africa. The problem with addressing numbers is that data are lacking or hard to decipher.

The main problem as identified by Ma (2002: 12) is that any calculation of diasporic numbers is "almost impossible". First, African population data are very inaccurate. Second, the ways in which the ethnicity of a person is recorded may conceal their nationality (Poston *et al* 1994), which would tend to produce under-estimates. Third, many of the recent 'opportunistic' sojourners may have entered semi-legally, so that they never enter official statistics. While this would lead to an under-estimation we might expect some of the more speculative estimates to over-inflate numbers so as to make the Chinese 'threat' appear greater than it is (Prof Davies, 29/8/07, Pers.comm.; Hale 2006). So, while we cannot be certain of overall figures the Chinese authorities put the total number of workers in Africa at 78,000, although the Xinhua press agency recently estimated there were at least 750,000 Chinese working or living for extended periods on the continent (French and Polgreen 2007), which would mean that official workers constituted a little over 10%. Hence, we can surmise that the total for the whole diaspora in Africa and its descendants is likely to be at least 500,000, with around 150,000 holding a Chinese passport (ECOWAS-SWAC/OECD 2006).

Table 1: Estimates for Chinese in various African countries

Country	1963 (Source: Chang 1968)	2001 (Source: Ohio U. Database, cited in Sautman 2006)	Estimate for 200X (Source: Sautman 2006)
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(Sources: Chang 1968, Sautman 2006)

4.2 Source regions, destination countries, and patterns of settlement

The source regions in China are generally in the South, particularly Guangdong and Fujian (Chang 1968, McKeown 1999). The role of Hong Kong and the other treaty ports have been key as it was through these that most migrants passed and where emigration restrictions were lightest. In terms of destination countries Table 1 shows that South Africa and Mauritius predominate as a result of their plantation and mining history. Although very unreliable, the figures show that between 2000 and 2005 numbers have started to climb in other African countries with sizeable populations in the oil states. In Angola Chinese immigrants are estimated at between 20,000 and 30,000 (CCS 2007). Whereas Sautman (2006) gives the number of Chinese in Nigeria as 50,000 the Chinese Embassy in Abuja estimates the number at 20,000 (Chinese Embassy 2007, <http://ng.china-embassy.org/eng/zngx/t142490.htm>) and in Sudan Abdalla Ali (2007) estimates that Chinese workers (only those formally registered) numbered 24,000 in 2004. In those other countries without oil and strategic minerals, numbers have also risen with anything between a two- and thirty- fold increase between 2001 and 2006.

The patterns of settlement are linked to urbanisation and transport hubs, but also a result of government policy. Initially settlement was an urban phenomenon with Chinese settling in capital cities or coastal ports (Chang 1968, Hsu 2007, Haugen and Carling 2005). Other key sites, especially of the latest phase, are resource frontiers, such as the Copperbelt in Zambia (Trofimav 2007), or trade routes (Dobler 2005). Some settlement has been as a result of policy such as in the EPZs in Mauritius (Lincoln 2006) and Taiwanese firms setting up in selected South African homelands in the 1980s (Pickles and Woods 1989, Hart

1996). As commodity trading has become more competitive some Chinese retailers and intermediaries in the commodity chain have relocated to remoter rural areas (Haugen and Carling 2005, Blob's bog 2006). A growing phenomenon are trading estates such as China City in Johannesburg (Mail & Guardian 2003).

5. Economic activities

Given that the motivations for Chinese migration are primarily economic it is necessary, first and foremost, to analyse the industrial sectors in which migrants operate, and the organisation and operation of firms.

5.1 Patterns of economic activity

The two broad types of firms – large state-influenced and semi-private firms, and privately-owned SMEs – constitute the majority of current investment. The Chinese state used its aid in the 1960s-1980s for high profile infrastructure projects and used Chinese SOEs to undertake the bulk of the work (Brautigam 1998). Today, much Chinese aid is 'tied' or in the form of export credits so that Chinese firms benefit (Sautman 2006). This has seen a rapid inflow of Chinese former SOEs entering African countries in key sectors such as oil and mineral exploration, transport infrastructure, construction, telecommunications, and agro-processing (UN 2007).

At present it is estimated that 674 Chinese state companies are involved in African countries (Grion 2007) though other estimates are 820 (Niquet 2007) and 870 (CCS 2007) although Professor Martyn Davies (29/8/07, Pers. Comm.) questions the accuracy of the last figure suggesting that the Chinese authorities may well be uncertain themselves. The recent rush to oil production often overshadows the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC) efforts to encourage Chinese investment in production of farm machinery, agricultural processing and small product trading. Construction and transport infrastructure is another key sector (CCS 2007) with aid and low-interest loans through China's ExIm Bank (Bosshard 2007) facilitating this. Smaller private firms generally lack any government backing, are recent arrivals, and are not well integrated with the domestic economy compared to Indian or European firms (Broadman 2007). Although figures are lacking this implies that profits are repatriated and may go to investment and savings back in China (Zhu 2006).

5.2 Import/export, wholesale and retail trade

Chinese traders in Africa date back to the 19th century and were considered to be sojourners, who would only stay temporarily (Park 2006). From the start Chinese traders have been involved in cheap consumer goods, what are called in Kenya 'down street' merchandise rather than 'up market' products (Sautman 2006). Traders generally live quite frugal lifestyles, often a couple of rooms above or behind the shop (Dobler 2005, Blob's bog 2006). Studies show that these firms rely on family labour (Dobler 2005, Haugen and Carling 2005). A typical pattern is of chain migration whereby an initial family member, usually male, emigrates and then close family and extended family join as required. These firms do use local African labour, but for menial tasks. A lack of trust is often cited as the reason for employing Chinese labour over Africans.

The Chinese traders buy from China, either from large wholesalers or directly from the factories. The ability of Chinese traders to utilise networks rapidly and communicate as a co-national helps explain these traders' ability to keep costs very low and out-compete their

African competitors. Studies suggest that African traders have been put out of business as a result of Chinese traders (Sylvanus 2007). The frustration this competition unleashes has led to accusations of unfair practices (Lee 2007) although there is no evidence of this. However, as with any small business, success requires good relations with local officials (Dobler 2005).

In general, the traders appear to pay for goods in advance, and deal in cash only with their African customers. The profits margins are unclear, but Dobler (2005) calculates they can be 90% or more. Most Chinese traders in places like South Africa are still newcomers, and not necessarily well connected to the old Chinese communities. Part of this flexibility has been various strategies of geographical movement, expansion or diversification (Haugen and Carling 2005). In some cases traders move to new territories within the same country when local markets get tight, whereas others have relocated to another country to service the rapidly growing Chinese workforces (Large 2008). Some have diversified into other services such as restaurants or small-scale manufacturing and even export of African crafts. Others have become immigration 'brokers' helping other Chinese to migrate, although some of this shades into illegal trafficking through snake head operations (Questionnaire 1).

5.3 Services and aid

Arising out of diversification strategies and partly as a legacy of the cold war aid programmes Chinese migrants are also involved in a range of services. This is mainly in restaurants and medicine (Hsu 2007). Catering has partly grown out of retailing, but also to service the growing Chinese populations in Africa's capital cities and resource frontiers. In terms of medical practitioners Hsu (2007) shows how in Tanzania/Zanzibar some Chinese doctors, who had worked for aid teams in the 1970s, stayed on to set up private practices using both Chinese and 'western' medical technologies.

Since the 1960s more than 10,000 agro-technicians and up to 20,000 medical personnel have been sent by the PRC (Sautman 2006). What is notable about the Chinese aid teams is that they were urged to be less ostentatious than their 'decadent' western counterparts and to get out to the rural areas. However, during the construction of the TaZara (TanZam) railway by 25,000 Chinese technicians and 100,000 African labourers (Snow 1988), the Chinese did not integrate very much with local communities, tended to eat their own food imported from China, and in terms of longer-term development did not undertake much capacity building (Brautigam 1998). However, recent aid appears to have learnt from this in explicitly aiming to enhance human capital (King 2007).

5.4 Manufacturing

The Chinese presence in manufacturing has mainly been in labour intensive sectors and although increasingly dispersed across Africa the key countries for Chinese manufacturers are South Africa and her neighbouring states (Pickles and Wood 1989, Hart 1996), and Mauritius (Lincoln 2006, Brautigam 2003). Taiwanese firms in South Africa were amongst the first to enter Africa and were concentrated in textiles, clothing and furniture and some agro-processing. In addition to South African incentives Taiwanese industry was expanding regionally, moving up the technology curve, and facing wage inflation and so needed to find cheap locations for labour intensive industries. During the 1980s 300 to 400 Taiwanese industrialists set up in peripheral regions of South Africa and there were between 30000 and 40000 Taiwanese in residence (Wilhelm 2006). Most Taiwanese who

came to South Africa were granted permanent residence and later took out South African citizenship. In the early 1990s AGOA had a big impact in East and Southern Africa (Kaplinsky and Morris 2006) and was used by firms to re-import into USA. This saw some Taiwanese firms relocating to Lesotho, Swaziland, Mauritius, and Namibia. When the MFA quotas were lifted, many Taiwanese firms shifted investment to other countries as well as back to Taiwan. As many as 60% of Taiwanese who emigrated to South Africa have now re-emigrated or returned home, although there are still approximately 250 firms (Wilhelm 2006: 358).

Like South Africa, Mauritius first attracted Chinese migrants as indentured labour. However, trading opportunities and proactive government policy has meant that more Chinese set up in manufacturing. These started as classic ISI based policies in the 1960s, but in the 1970s, as markets became flooded, and backed by lobbying from Chinese and Indian firms, the Mauritian government moved to a more aggressive export-based strategy and encouraged foreign firms by designating the whole island as an EPZ. In contrast to other African countries, Chinese investors entered joint ventures with local firms and used their combined skills to manufacture for export in what Brautigam (2003) characterizes as an example of the East Asian 'flying geese' model of industrialisation. Most recently, with the deregulation of labour migration in China and the problem of unemployment, Chinese firms in Mauritius and elsewhere have been importing labour as a way of raising productivity, lowering wages, and ensuring unionization does not take hold (Wong 2006).

5.5 Resource exploitation, construction and engineering

The recent focus on China in Africa has largely been stimulated by China's assertive acquisition of natural resources. It is undoubtedly true that China is actively trying to diversify its supply line away from Middle Eastern crude and so has entered a phase of 'oil diplomacy' in Africa (Taylor 2006b). In the key producing countries we see major Chinese oil firms investing in production facilities and bringing technicians and managers from China. Other natural resources in demand are certain minerals, such as bauxite and copper, and timber (UN 2007). In some of the mines labour relations and work conditions have been criticised (Fraser and Lungu 2007, Trofimav 2007).

Another major growth sector for Chinese SOEs and private firms is in engineering and construction, which are generally labour-intensive activities. In 2005 there were \$6.3 billion in construction contracts across Africa given to Chinese firms (Sautman 2006). While some are directly linked to resource extraction others are around transport facilities (CCS 2007) and construction of prestige projects such as sports stadia, which echo the aid projects of the past. But like mining companies these firms often bring low cost labour from China aided by the relaxation of Chinese labour and emigration laws.

6. Social relations

The social and political identities which shape diasporas are dynamic and multiple, and forged in relation to the societies which the migrants encounter.

6.1 Family ties and homeland connections

As Ong (1993) notes, family ties are the basis of transnational private Chinese business organisation. The migration trajectories often meant a single male was the pioneer followed by his family and, once established in business, further recruitment was preferred from among the family or clan (Haugen and Carling 2005). However, these family ties

sometimes extend to the lineage and clan level, which sees whole villages caught up in migratory circles (Haugen and Carling 2005).

At one level migration is highly individualistic and many migrants left China precisely because they wanted to escape some of the restrictive social obligations (Hsu 2007). For them their sense of diaspora is weaker and they operate through family ties and looser social networks. This may be particularly true of the recent migrants to Africa who are motivated by short term economic gains. The sense of affinity with a Chinese 'home' varies over time and with levels of hostility locally. Hu-Dehart (2005: 432) sees this as a compensation mechanism whereby the migrants' 'deterritorialization' results in "reterritorializing at home; that is, by strengthening their roots in village and nation". We will see later how this is manifested in organisations and active links with homelands and hometowns.

However, some older Chinese communities, as in South Africa, do have a diasporan identity (Wilhelm 2006). The Chinese community here dates back to the 19th Century. Growing up through Apartheid they were well aware of racial categories and restrictive citizenship laws meant that they were encouraged to hold onto a sense of Chinese identity. Subsequent generations view themselves as South African-Chinese (Wilhelm 2006). However, diasporas are not homogenous and we see divisions between sub-groups (Hsu 2007, Wilhelm 2006). This is partly along class and age lines, with the older established Chinese communities resentful of the recent, seemingly avaricious working class arrivals.

For the Chinese migrants there are strong pressures to conform to the norms of the patriarchal family structure, which underpins the business network. This strong ethos helps explain the success and longevity of some Chinese business dynasties as found in South Africa and Mauritius (Brautigam 2003). However, where multiple generations cement a sound economic position subsequent generations may be encouraged into non-commercial professions. And as with all business networks, diasporic communities are enabled by informal social capital in the form of shared social spaces, such as bars and clubs (Dobler 2005) where information is exchanged and bonds strengthened.

Despite the earlier observation that identification with and connection to China can be ambivalent and dynamic, there is no doubt that many migrants engage in activities which link them to home in the form of remittances, charity and FDI (Young and Shih 2003, Zhu 2006). Since the early 1980s the PRC governments have been keen to attract the wealth of the Chinese diaspora (Young and Shih 2003). This has been successful where as much as 70% of China's FDI has come from overseas Chinese. While some remittances do go on direct consumption a great deal is invested in productive ventures, often facilitated by local or provincial government (Zhu 2006).

6.2 Integration/separation

Most Chinese migrants to Africa did not know much about the countries to which they travelled. During the colonial period they were usually met with hostility, if not outright racism, which sometimes generated their sense of togetherness as opposed to any innate Chinese identity (Park 2006, Wilhelm 2006). Indeed the Chinese, as the derogatory phrase 'Jews of the East' suggested, were treated as outsiders and often scapegoated as the reasons behind a society's ills.

In the early days of Chinese settlement there appears to have been more integration with Africans, as evidenced by inter-marriage (Snow 1988, Hsu 2007), although many Chinese males were married back in China and dropped their African wives when they were reunited with their Chinese wives. While the public discourse on the Chinese was as devious, criminalised, and money-grabbing most Chinese settlers were quite law abiding. Park (2006) shows that they actually adopted the demeaning 'Jews of the East' label, turning it into a positive when making claims for citizenship by emphasising their business-like civiness.

However, despite this ambivalent and politicised self-identification, Chinese communities in Africa have generally remained relatively self-contained. One important upshot of this for integration and business is that language remains a problem. Very few recent migrants speak any local languages and have rudimentary English or Portuguese at best. That said, like any cultural contact, we see interesting hybridisation where Chinese cultural practices are adopted and adapted by Africans. Hsu (2007) provides an interesting example of this in the case of noodle production on Zanzibar which have become a staple of Ramadan feasting at the same time as diasporic Chinese have shunned them for not tasting good enough, being 'unhygienic' and inauthentic.

6.3 Organisation and institutions

Alongside the family and clan as important institutions of diaspora are more formal organisations (McKeown 1999). These often started as social organisations and help maintain a diasporic community in a number of other ways. First, they maintain Chinese 'culture' for migrants and their offspring. Second, these organisations can function as the formal links between a migrant community and its hometown (Young and Shih 2003). Third, religion can act as social glue and has also been diffused through the diaspora, with Buddhism coming to Africa via Chinese migrants (Wilhelm 2006). A further role played by these organisations is political and economic. For example, during the early 20th Century in South Africa the Chinese community lobbied hard to oppose restrictive citizenship laws (Wilhelm 2006). There has also been a long history of Chinese Chambers of Commerce and business associations, with the one in Mauritius forming in 1908 (Brautigam 2003).

6.4 Long standing and emerging tensions

Many of the tensions relate to economic factors, but are expressed in terms of cultural difference. As such the level of tensions depends on the degree of impact that the Chinese have on any given African economy. 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 (Sautman 2006). However, there is a growing body of anecdotal evidence that tensions are growing, some founded on older prejudices and others born of contemporary circumstances (Trofimav 2007).

Running through these tensions are a number of recurring themes. The first is that low cost imports are driving domestic traders and manufacturers out of business (Okere 2006, Amankwah 2005). This appears to be true in some countries and some sectors, especially textiles and garments, and there is evidence that African marketers have packed up in Zambia (McGreal 2007), Togo (Sylvanus 2007) and Nigeria (Okere 2006). Second, there are tensions around the poor quality of Chinese goods (Lee 2006). Third, are accusations of unfair competition (Dobler 2005, Lee 2006), because the Chinese state backs them and/or the Chinese are believed to be exempt from certain regulations and taxes through

bribery. The frustration is compounded by the ability of these Chinese networks to source goods cheaper. However, at a larger scale similar accusations have come from the USA (Lyman 2005) which accuses Chinese corporations of having an unfair advantage compared to other international firms, because the Chinese state cross-subsidises them with aid. Fourth, are tensions over labour practices in factories and mines (Trofimav 2007), both among African and Chinese workers (Wong 2006). On the Chinese side a perceived lack of trust is a problem for further business development and integration (Broadman 2007, Haugen and Carling 2005, Dobler 2005, Hsu 2007).

7. Political processes

So far we have described the economic activities of the Chinese diaspora in Africa and examined the underlying social relations and institutions that enable these transnational communities to flourish. However, political factors are also at play, at the international, national and local levels.

7.1 Geopolitics, multilateralism and China's African strategies

Over the past 150 years there has been a waxing and waning of pro-emigration policy in China (Biao 2006), but since the post-Mao reforms there have been a raft of reforms which have encouraged overseas expansion by Chinese firms of all sizes. On top of this there has been a 'neutralisation' of emigration legislation (Biao 2003) seeking to disentangle outward movement from geopolitical and ideological concerns. It is now much easier for Chinese business people, and tourists, to travel outside China. Finally, there has been a significant deregulation of labour recruitment and a growth in private labour contractors in populous provinces such as Sichuan, Hubei and Henan (Wong 2006), which come under the umbrella of the Chinese International Contractors' Association (CHINCA). It is estimated that 82000 workers were dispatched to Africa in 2005, two-thirds of whom were in construction (Wong 2006).

The 'resource diplomacy' that has accompanied the oil boom has seen various high level visits by Chinese politicians over the past decade and various conferences and agreements (King 2006). The Beijing Sino-African ministerial conference in October 2000 led to the establishment of a permanent Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC). FOCAC gatherings in Addis Ababa (2003) and Beijing (2006) have seen various bilateral agreements reached, and in January 2006 China published the equivalent of a white paper, *China's Africa Strategy*, (PRC, 2006). Whilst re-affirming older principles of non-interference and the 'one China' policy, the white paper emphasises trade, investment and economic co-operation as the basis for engagement and also outlines China's intention to intensify and deepen political relations. A China-Africa Development Fund was also recently launched (which will reach US\$5 billion) that aims to encourage Chinese firms to invest in Africa whilst the 2006 Beijing FOCAC meeting pledged to open three to five trade and economic cooperation zones in Africa by 2009 (Beijing Review 2007).

7.2 Africa's China policies

Although African countries are sometimes treated as passive in the growing China-Africa trade, there are marked differences in their official attitudes to China. In general, they are accepting of China's presence. They, like the Chinese, deploy the rhetoric of anti-imperialism and a shared 'Third World' status to legitimise their interactions. However, as we have seen South Africa has been very proactive in encouraging Taiwanese firms in the 1980s, setting up EPZs and decentralising industry. There is also talk of an imminent

South African Customs Union with China. Likewise, Mauritius set up the whole island as an EPZ and actively sought Chinese investment.

African civil society responses to China's activities have been relatively mute (Burke 2007, pers. Comm.), but is growing. For example, the South African TUC has organised debates around the future of African textiles (Amankwah 2005) and following the Chambishi mining debacle a damning report by the Civil Society Trade Network of Zambia (Fraser and Lungu 2007) openly accused Chinese firms of malfeasance and urged the Zambian government and mining firms to develop and enforce better standards.

Despite the relative suppression of African civil and political society the tensions that are evidently bubbling away have, in some localities, resulted in protest as in the case of Zambia (Trofimav 2007). However, here a political party played the anti-China card to win votes in Lusaka and The Copperbelt. In Ethiopia and Nigeria there have been attacks on Chinese oil facilities by militias, which are linked to other campaigns for redistribution and recognition but are targeted at an obvious symbol of private gain and resource extraction (Questionnaire 8).

7.3 Activism among Chinese migrants

As we said Chinese migrants have generally been quite mute in political life, as is common among migrants who are treated with suspicion by 'hosts'. However, there have been times when they entered the public realm, either through organised politics or more violent rebellion. At the turn of the 20th century there was a rebellion in South Africa by Chinese and other races over local labour and residency laws (Park 2006: 215) and organised by Mahatma Gandhi. The Taiwanese in South Africa are also well organised and have entered formal politics (Wilhelm 2006: 356). Politically, there may be parallels with other 'ethnic' merchant classes such as the Indians in East Africa and the Lebanese in West Africa. Studies, such as Reno's (1995) of Sierra Leone, suggest politics will be organised via a 'shadow state' which ties ethnic entrepreneurs into circuits of state power.

We have noted that Chinese labour has been a part of African economies for many years, but with Chinese reforms labour recruitment by private firms has increased and we see labourers coming to countries like Namibia, Mauritius and South Africa where they compete with African workers. The working and pay conditions in these Chinese factories are poor which has recently prompted worker protests (2002, 2005) in Mauritius by contract labourers (Wong 2006). A CHINCA 2005 report discloses that a total of 20 disputes involving more than 2500 workers have occurred between Chinese workers and management in Mauritius (Wong 2006). While displaying limited solidarity with African workers or trade unions the flexibility, efficiency and low cost of this imported labour encourages a race to the bottom, which harms workers in Africa and China.

7.4 UK policy responses

The phenomenon of Chinese in Africa is known to policy makers and researchers, but there is little systematic knowledge. This is reflected in response to the questionnaire which we have circulated in preparing this review. The UK government is concerned with political and economic imbalances between Africa and China, the problems of governance that it creates (Hansard 2007), and the issue of aid conditionality. DFID's policy towards China is based on 'constructive cooperation' over the Millennium Development Goals and Africa (Benn 2004). More recently Thomas (2005) urged China to use its 'soft power' and

experience to enhance aid impact and that lessons could be learnt from China's different approach to aid. DFID also sees trade as a critical issue where China is well placed as a 'bridge' between developed and developing nations. Although not yet a concerted policy consensus, similar recommendations have been raised in Scandinavian policy circles (Melber *et al* 2007, Tjonneland *et al* 2006).

The questionnaires revealed an awareness of some of the emerging tensions and many echoed the concerns already expressed by the UK government. As one respondent observed "We see China as a major competitor to ***** - and UK more widely- across Africa. On the one hand we welcome this - UK will have to sharpen up our act. On the other hand, we're worried about increasing intransigence of some African leaders (Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Zimbabwe), reducing levels of democracy" (Questionnaire 2). A similar issue, but this time concerning sovereignty, was that "there is some concern about whether Africa is losing its autonomy once again but to a new world power" (Questionnaire 7). All the key UK actors – DFID, FCO and The British Council – were dealing with this issue actively and are promoting strategic dialogues between key UK ministries and their Chinese and African counterparts.

7.5 Implications for U.S

The response in the USA is even more tightly focused around oil and governance issues. In the USA some sections of the political establishment are clearly threatened by China's actions (Fishman 2005). However, more sanguine analysis sees China as a legitimate player and one who should be engaged with rather than demonised (Lyman 2005). Key issues for the USA, then, are how China's involvement can complement or compete with existing US 'goodwill' on the continent, and as a beacon for setting standards for human rights and governance.

They argue that authoritarian African regimes, desperate to invigorate their fraying economies while maintaining a strong grip on political power, are attracted to the Chinese economic development model in preference to the liberal Washington Consensus promoted by the United States and the European Union (Ramo 2004, Sautman 2006). A Congressional hearing on oil and Africa (Wilson 2005) concluded that the current state of China-Africa links is not a significant foreign policy threat to America's interests in Africa, due to the shift from 'Maoism to Markets' in China. But they did note that the most direct and deleterious impact of China's policies on many African countries is their massive export machines, especially textiles, which swamped fledgling African producers.

8. Conclusion

Emerging from this survey is the conclusion that China's presence is not uniformly a good or bad thing, but has variable and context specific impacts depending upon the nature of the economic ties, the size of the existing diaspora community, and the institutionalisation of government policies in China and the African country concerned. What all agree upon is that China is in Africa to stay and so monitoring the unfolding of these relationships is an obvious conclusion from this review. Given that these different trajectories unfold contextually the most general issue for future research is *the need for systematic case studies examining the same issues across countries and localities*. This should address similar questions to this survey in more depth and through primary data collection.

In terms of the Chinese Diaspora the number of migrants is set to increase, but as we do not know the current levels it is hard to predict the future numbers. Future research needs to *monitor the numbers of labour migrants and the labour policies and labour relations unfolding within factories and local labour markets*. In many localities Chinese traders are already experiencing profit squeezes and are moving into new sectors of the economy, so we need to *monitor the ownership patterns of Chinese trading firms and identify emergent business strategies*.

Most African countries have not been too strategic about encouraging China, so may need to develop more strategic policy. At present most countries seem to operate an open-door policy, but this lacks a longer term strategy. We also saw that local multipliers and local content agreements are not in place so that linkages to African economies are weak while much resource extraction tends to be based on Chinese expertise so not much technology transfer occurs either. Moreover, there is little sense of how immigration policy is being used to encourage Chinese migration in strategic ways. So, future research would need to *assess whether and how African countries learn from one another in steering Chinese investment and migration in ways that supports a broader development policy*.

Finally there is a set of governance questions aimed at the Chinese state and firms. History suggests that nations pursuing resources and markets but making a policy not to interfere in domestic governance usually end up getting more involved in governance. For a country keen to make a mark on international politics this suggests that China will have to become more adept at playing local politics and not simply relying on a rhetoric of socialist ‘brotherhood’ as the basis of its aid. And as Beijing relies more and more on an increasingly complex set of government oversight agencies to accomplish its Africa policy this becomes even harder to manage because they do not enjoy direct lines of authority over Chinese corporations overseas. So, a major research agenda is to *monitor and analyse the unfolding of China’s deepening embeddedness in African governance*.

In terms of more specific research questions:

Levels and types of migration

- What government data exists on numbers of Chinese immigrants in African countries?
- What are the source regions of Chinese emigrants?
- Where are new Chinese immigrants settling, and what determines their locational choice?

Chinese firms’ strategies

- What multipliers are Chinese SOEs generating for smaller African and Chinese firms?
- How are African entrepreneurs engaging with Chinese firms and/or the opportunities generated by Chinese FDI?
- What strategies are Chinese SMEs adopting to address new market opportunities or respond to competition?
- To what extent and through what means are Chinese entrepreneurs becoming more embedded in local economies in terms of employment, supply chains, or joint ventures?

- To what extent are Chinese SMEs re-investing in African economies and what are their levels of savings and profit repatriation?

African responses

- How are ordinary Africans responding to the increasingly commonplace presence of Chinese migrants?
- How do ordinary Africans perceive the quality and price of Chinese imports?
- How are African business and labour organisations responding to Chinese competition?
- Is there any evidence of African politicians politicising the Chinese presence for personal or party political gain?
- Is there evidence of rivalry between Chinese and African workers? Conversely are there cases of labour solidarity between African and Chinese workers aimed against Chinese firms?

Policy responses

- To what extent and in what ways are individual African states encouraging and regulating Chinese businesses?
- What, if any, immigration policies are being enacted by African states to encourage Chinese immigration?
- To what extent and in what ways are Chinese individuals and/or communities becoming involved in local politics in Africa?
- What mechanisms does the Chinese state within African countries use to promote Chinese firms?
- How far has the Chinese government honoured its 2006 commitments to Africa and what impacts is this having on new and existing diasporic economic activity?

The types of studies required to address these are primarily qualitative and include:

- Ethnographies of Chinese driven supply chains in Africa
- Ethnographies of 'China Towns' in African cities
- Surveys among African consumers
- Autobiographical histories of Chinese migrants in Africa
- Qualitative case studies of Chinese owned firms in Africa
- Participant observation in Chinese social clubs in Africa
- Semi-structured interviews with Chinese and African workers in enterprises where they work together
- Elite interviewing of Chinese and African diplomats and civil servants

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Appendices

Appendix A: Policy makers, researchers and journalists contacted, 18/6/07-6/7/07

	Name	Organisation and contacts
1	Adrian Davis	Head of the DFID Office in Beijing
2	Rosemary Arnott	Regional Director of the British Council in South Africa
3	Roli Asthana	DFID's Pan Africa Strategy department
4	Philip Goodwin	Regional Director of the British Council for East and West Africa
5	Marcus Manuel	Director within DFID responsible for Pan-African issues
6	Stephen Chan	Professor of International Relations, SOAS
7	Lindsey Hilsum	Channel 4 China Correspondent
8	Michal Lyons	Lecturer, London South Bank University
9	Heidi Haugen	Researcher, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo
10	Jørgen Carling	Researcher, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo
11	Arjan de Haan	DFID
12	Mark George	DFID
13	Rosemary Stevenson	DFID
14	John Burton	DFID
15	Bridget Dillon	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
16	Li Anshan	Peking University
17	Kenneth King	Edinburgh University
18	Dan Large	SOAS
19	Chris Alden	LSE
20	Deborah Brautigam	American University Washington
21	Stephen Forbes	British Council Director, Botswana
22	Yu Zhu	Fujian University (maybe Fujian)
23	Gregor Dobler	PhD student, University of Basel
24	Elizabeth Hsu	Anthropology, Oxford University
25	Martyn Davies	Director, Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Stellenbosch
26	Sanusha Naidu	Research Fellow, Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Stellenbosch
27	Olu Ajakaiye	African Economic Research Consortium
28	Mike Morris	University of Cape Town
29	He Wenping	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
30	Barry Sautman	Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
31	Stephen Muyakwa	Zambian NGO
32	Firoze Manji	FAHAMU and Pambazuka News
33	Carlos Castelbranco	Economics, Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique
34	Charles Mutasa	African Forum and Network on Debt and Development
35	Inyambo Mwanawina	African Economic Research Consortium
36	Thierry Vircoulon	EU officer in the DRC
37	Lucy Corkin	Projects Director Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Stellenbosch
38	Chris Burke	Research Fellow Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Stellenbosch
39	Elin Ullebø	Norwegian Masters student
40	Luis Mah Silva	Mozambican born Portuguese-Chinese journalist/academic